

RESEARCH ARTICLE

TEACHING PRACTICE ATTITUDE AND BELIEF AMONG TEACHERS' TRAINEES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT - *The effective conduct of teaching practice exercise enhances the quality of teacher education programme and build pre-service teacher confidence in the teaching profession. Thus, the study examines teachers' beliefs about the teaching profession and the attitudes gained by pre-service teachers during the teaching practice exercise that will enhance their career growth. The study used a descriptive survey with structured and unstructured questionnaires to collect data from 125 respondents who were pre-service teachers in teacher education institutions. Data were analysed using descriptive. The findings showed that pre-service teacher participation in the teaching practice exercise provides them with the opportunity for professional growth and development in their career. The findings further revealed that students should be given the opportunity to provide answers to practical problems because it will enhance their thinking and reasoning processes rather than the teacher showing them how to solve the problems. Also, that instructions on what must be done should be built around problems and must have clear and correct answers so that students can quickly grasp them. The study concluded that teaching subjects should be used to allocate students to schools and these schools must be close to the abode of the student as this would remove fear and absenteeism and this would go a long way to achieve the objectives of the teaching practice exercise.*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice is an essential component of the teacher education programme that leads to the award of a teaching degree. The goal of the professional activity known as "Teaching Practice" is to assist the student-teacher in bridging the gap between theory and practice and the acquired experiences either academic, professional, or personal for use in the classroom and school situation in the full glare of the world. As part of the process of bridging the gap between educational theory and practice, the student-teacher gains invaluable skills in the art and management of teaching from experienced teachers/supervisors through a program of cooperative and interactive coaching, as well as practical training and exercise on several daily school activities (Bichi, A.A. and Musa, A., 2017). It is indeed a moment of decision or the 'D Day' for the prospective teacher. According to Perry, D. (2016), this exercise creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement, and apprehension for the pre-service teacher at the commencement of the teaching practice. This provides an opportunity for the pre-service teacher to express their personal educational philosophies, theories, and understanding of the teaching profession. Their performance at the exercise mirrors the quality of preparation, the kind of school they had acquired the knowledge in, and what to expect from them eventually. Thus, the beneficiaries of this exercise would be the student-teacher the school, society, and the students. A meaningful TP incorporates field teaching and laboratory/clinical (microteaching) experiences in actual classroom settings.

According to research, one component of the student teachers' professional development program that involves teaching skill development is the teaching practice. With the support of the theories and principles they have learned, this exercise gives student teachers the chance to begin creating their own methods of instruction and highlights the disconnect between ideas and reality (Jekanyinfa A.A., (n.a); and Orji, N.O et al., 2018). To better prepare them for the real world of work in the teaching profession, students' instructors are also given the chance to experience the actual teaching and learning environment from trained and experienced teachers. Additionally, it is intended to examine the student teacher's level of fitness for the teaching profession by having students and their external supervisors assess their proficiency and level of instruction in a real classroom setting. According to Amuda, A. (2017) and Nakpodia, E.D. (2011), student teachers can get familiar with the educational ethics, laws, and standards that govern the teaching profession by participating in classroom instruction. Additionally, it will help the student teachers comprehend the workload, classroom management, and daily activities of the permanent teaching staff and non-teaching staff, the school environment, the administration, and the other pupils in the practice school. It has to do with all the experiences that pre-service teachers have gained while embracing real teaching in a real classroom, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The current policy of the Colleges of Education in Nigeria shows that 300-level students are expected to undergo the teaching practice exercise in their first term for a period of three months. During this training period, they are expected to assume the full range of duties of a teacher with the guidance of their host or cooperating teacher. Therefore, teaching practice exposes student-teachers to a real school and class setting, allowing them to obtain some hands-on experience in the art of teaching while also acclimating to the social environment of the institution. This supports the research of Ogonor, B.O., and Badmus, M.A (2006) that student teachers were elated to participate in the teaching practice exercise as it provides them with the opportunity for professional growth and enables them to practice reflective teaching.

Teaching practice exercise is a mandatory requirement of the teacher education programme, leading to the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor's degree in Education (B. Sc., Ed or B.Ed.), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) in Nigeria. This made the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE) a regulatory body for the Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria in 2015 and has put in place objectives for the successful conduct of the exercise.

- 1) Expose student teachers to real-world classroom experiences while being supervised by experienced teachers,
- 2) Give them a platform to put educational theories and principles into practice,
- 3) Help student teachers identify their own teaching strengths and weaknesses and provide them with opportunities
- 4) To address these weaknesses and build upon their strengths.
- 5) To help student teachers develop a positive attitude toward the teaching profession,
- 6) To give student teachers an opportunity to further acquire professional skills, competencies, personal
- 7) Characteristics, and experience for full-time teaching after graduation and
- 8) To serve as a method of evaluating the calibre of training being provided by teacher training institutions,
- 9) To serve as a method of evaluating the type of training being provided by teacher training institutions (National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2015)

Due to the new policy of NCCE students that failed EDU 213 which is the Micro Teaching course, will not go for the teaching practice exercise. Therefore, students must attach much importance to the course and the exercise. They have lots of anxiety about posting to their place of primary assignment, transport costs, accommodation, and the attitude of staff and students towards them. As a result, they tend to have a different attitude which could be positive during and after the teaching practice exercise. According to Flores, R.C. (2017), attitude is a critical framework for students' relevant ways of thinking and representations of climate change. Similarly, it is an individual's propensity or tendency to react favourably or unfavourably to a certain concept, thing, person, or circumstance that affects the course of behaviour and reactions to challenges, incentives, and rewards Flores, R.C. (2017) went further to categorize four major components of attitude to include:

- 1) Affective: This describes feelings or emotions,
- 2) Cognitive: this refers to consciously held beliefs or opinions,
- 3) Conative: This is the propensity to behave,
- 4) Evaluative: A stimulus's positive or negative reaction.

Shah, Z.A. et al., (2013) categorized attitudes toward the educational profession into four main categories in addition to the ones mentioned above: (a) attitudes toward the profession; (b) the nature of the profession; (c) professional career interests; and (d) scientific attitudes. A student will be more motivated to succeed in a course if they approach it with optimism. As a result, different presumptions and attitudes about teaching practice held by important stakeholders may have an impact on how well an exercise in teaching practice is conducted. Therefore, the would-be teacher needs the utmost cooperation of all categories of staff in his assigned school to carry out his "laboratory test". Their cooperation if fully given would ensure a free-smooth teaching practice if it is, otherwise, it could be disastrous. There are schools of thought on the attitude of co-operating school staff to would-be teachers.

- 1) Some schools of thought regard the would-be teachers as half-baked students. The cooperating teachers under this category believe that, due to the falling standard in education, the student can not measure up to standard or display good content knowledge of the subject. Sometimes they tend to be hostile or unfriendly to the would-be teachers since the cooperating teachers believe that they would be blamed for any inadequacies or misfortune that befalls their own students.
- 2) Similarly, this school of thought regards Teaching practice students as Teachers' Substitution. To them, anytime a would-be teacher is posted to their school, automatically they are a substitute for permanent teachers. Teachers in this category may make the exercise unfruitful.
- 3) Also, another school believes it is an Automatic holiday and that the time of teaching practice is their own period of holiday. They come to school at will and do not monitor the would-be teachers in the assigned subjects or how to tackle or manage situations within the school or classroom.
- 4) This school of thought, views teaching practice students as birds of passage and unnecessary evil for a period of the teaching practice. The proper mentoring during this mentorship of the would-be-teacher is being denied.

Therefore, some of the problems of teaching practice exercises highlighted in the literature include student absenteeism, inadequate supervision and time frame, insufficient incentives for supervisors, and inadequate mastery of the subject matter by the students (Amuda. A., 2017). Other challenges faced by students during the teaching practice exercise include intense pressure for time and the inability of the practicing school authorities to provide basic materials needed for effective teaching and learning and the non-performance of mentoring roles by cooperating teachers (Ogonor, B.O., and Badmus, M.A, 2006). In addition, there is too much work given to the pre-service teacher by staff, a lack of cooperation from the practicing schools, the attitude of pupils towards the pre-service teachers, and the difficulty on the part of the pre-service teachers to manage the class effectively. Therefore, this study will examine teaching practice attitudes and beliefs among teacher trainees in Lagos State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To examine teachers' beliefs about the teaching profession.
- 2) To examine attitudes gained by student teachers that enhance the teaching profession.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are teachers' beliefs about teaching practice?
- 2) What are the attitudes gained by students during teaching practice that would enhance they're being a teacher?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed the descriptive survey design to examine teaching practice attitudes and beliefs among teacher trainees in Lagos, State, Nigeria. In this study, data were collected from teaching practice students in colleges of education and universities in Nigeria using Google Form an online platform that is an effective, easy-to-use technologically based system that replaced the paper-based system of questionnaires. This platform was made popular because of the Covid-19 pandemic which restricted face-to-face learning in schools. As a part of the Google Docs service, Google Form is a piece of software that is simple to use, free to use, and relatively well-developed as a tool for assessing the learning process. It has an advantage over manual surveys since it is paperless, environmentally friendly, and time efficient. Additionally, it lowers the cost of preparing the questionnaire, accurately recapitulates respondents' responses, and is useful (Rohmah, N., et al. 2018).

As a result, Google Forms responses are automatically compiled in a web-based spreadsheet that can be viewed online or exported to specialized spreadsheet programs like Microsoft Excel, facilitating simple data analysis (Djenno et al, 2015). As already indicated, it is one of the greatest options for alternate learning assessment tools that are useful and simple to use during the COVID-19 epidemic. It is beneficial to build online registration forms for schools, collect feedback from the public, gather various student and instructor data, and give out questionnaires to the public online (Kumar. K, and Naik, I. 2016)

RESEARCH FINDING

RQ1: What are the teachers' beliefs about teaching practice?

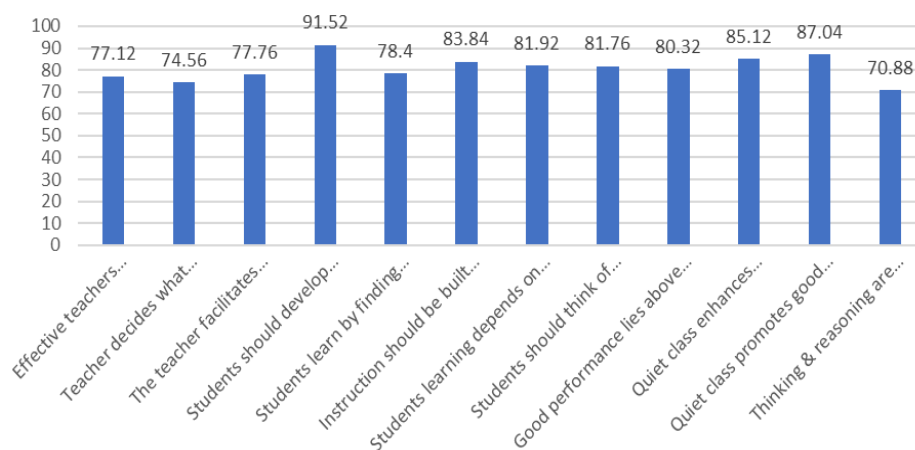


Figure 1. Depicts pre-service teachers' various beliefs about teaching practice exercises

Figure 1 depicts pre-service teachers' various beliefs about teaching practice exercises. It shows that respondents have 77.12% believe that effective/good pre-service teachers ought to demonstrate correct ways to solve a problem; 74.56% believe that it is better when the teacher decides what activities are to be done instead of the students; 77.76% think that teachers' primary responsibility is to support students' independent exploration; 91.52% think that professors should let

students come up with their own solutions and then assist them if such solutions are incorrect. 78.4% think that pupils learn best when they solve problems for themselves; 83.84% think that problems with obvious solutions and concepts that many pupils can easily comprehend should be the foundation of instruction. 81.92% think that most of the students' learning is influenced by their background knowledge; 81.76% think that before teachers demonstrate how to solve practical problems, pupils should be given time to come up with their own solutions. 80.32% think that a student's good performance is above their prior achievement level; 85.12% believe that quiet classrooms generally enhance effective learning; 87.04% believe that quiet classrooms promote good classroom management while 70.88% believe that thinking and reasoning processes are more important than specific curriculum content.

RQ2: What are the attitudes gained by students during teaching practice that would enhance them as teachers?

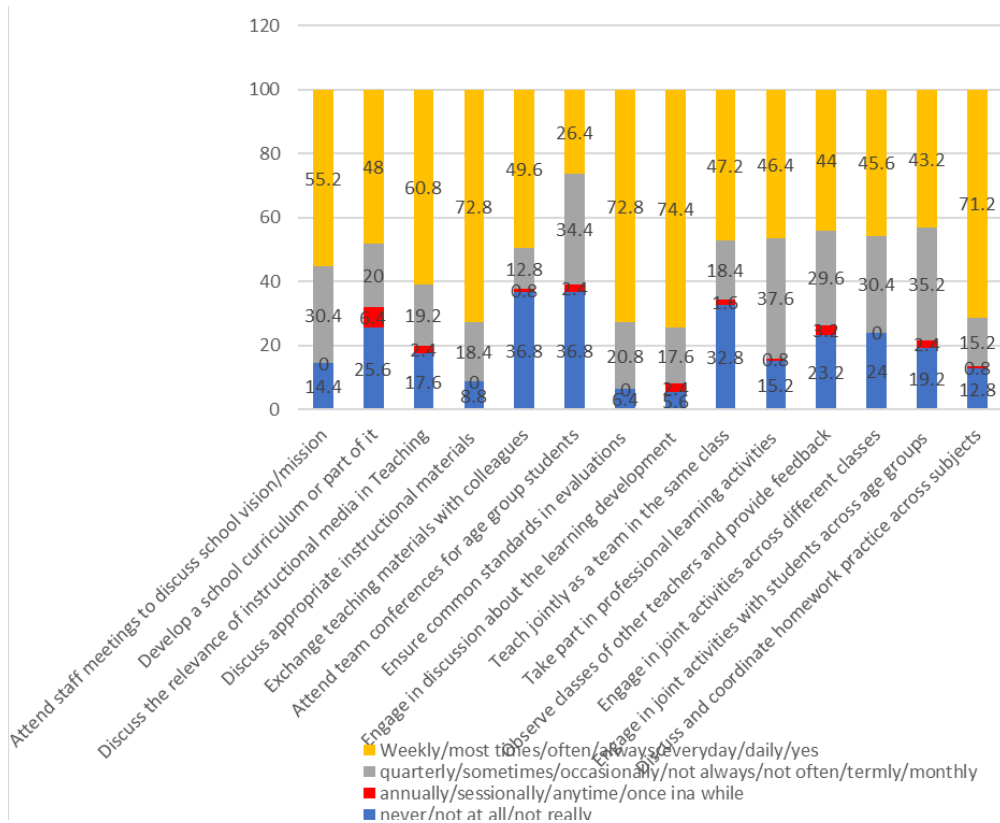


Figure 2: Attitudes gained by students during teaching practice that would enhance them as teachers

From the multiple-column bar chart in Figure 2, no pre-service student attended staff meetings on annual basis or anytime they like to discuss the vision and mission of the school, but 14.4% never attended, 30.4% did quarterly or occasionally and 55.2% attended often or daily. Those who never contributed to the development of the school curriculum were 25.6%, 6.4% did it occasionally, 20% on monthly basis, and 48% always or every day. About 17.6% discussed the relevance of instructional media to teaching, 2.4% participated annually or per session, 19.2% did it sometimes or occasionally and 60.8% took part always or daily. Those who never discussed how to select appropriate instructional materials were 8.8%, 0% participated annually or occasionally, 18.4% termly or monthly, and 72.8% often or daily. There are those who never exchanged teaching materials with colleagues 36.8%, 0.8% did it occasionally, 12.8% did not often or monthly, and 49.6% did it always or most times. Of those who did not attend team conferences at all for the age group of students they taught 36.8%, 2.4% attended annually or occasionally, 34.4% did it quarterly or occasionally while 26.4% attended weekly or most often.

There were 6.4% who did not really ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing student progress, 0% did it annually or per session, 20.8% termly or monthly and 72.8% did it often or daily. There were 5.6 people who never participated in discussions regarding the academic progress of specific students, 2.4% who did so yearly or whenever they pleased, 17.6% who did so occasionally or not frequently, and 74.4% who did so frequently or always. 32.8% of teachers never worked together as a team to teach the same class, 1.6% did so rarely, 18.4% did it quarterly or occasionally, and 47.2% did so weekly or frequently. 15.2% never engage in professional development activities such as team supervision, 0.8% did it annually or any time they like, 37.6% participated sometimes or occasionally and 46.4% took part weekly or daily. About 23.2% never observed other teachers' classes and provide feedback, 3.2% did it anytime they like, 29.6% occasionally did it and 44% did it weekly or daily.

Of those who engaged in joint activities across different classes 24%, 0% took part annually or anytime they like, 30.4% sometimes participated and 45.6% did it often or always. There were 19.2% who never engaged in a joint project with students across age groups, 2.4% did it annually or occasionally, 35.2% were occasional or not often about it and

43.2% did it often or daily. Of those who never discussed and coordinated homework practice across subjects 12.8%, 0.8 did it annually or occasionally, 15.2% sometimes or occasionally participated and 71.2% took part weekly or daily.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Teaching practice is an essential component of the teacher education programme so that pre-service teachers can demonstrate in a real-world setting the information and abilities they have learned during their training (Nnenna, E.E., and Olanrewaju, M.K., 2015). It enhances interactions between the pre-service teachers, school environment, teaching and non-academic staff, and students, in the school and makes them be familiar with how to manage the classroom as well as the teaching workload (Amuda, A., 2017). According to Jekanyinfa A.A., (n.a) and Orji, N.O et al., 2018, the teaching practice exercise provides an opportunity for the would-be teacher to develop their own approach to teaching based on what they have learned and above all helps them to know the differences between concepts and realities. This is consistent with the NCCE's goals for teaching practice, which include providing pre-service teachers with real-world classroom experiences while they are under the guidance of experienced teachers. This will enable them to teach full-time after graduation, they would be able to develop further professional abilities, competencies, personality traits, and experience.

Since the exercise would lead to certification, most students have anxiety about posting, transport costs, and the attitude of staff and students towards them which make them have a different attitude which could either be positive or negative during and after the teaching practice exercise. This is in line with the various schools of thought earlier mentioned on the attitude of co-operating staff to would-be teachers. Whereas the cooperation of all staff is needed to achieve the objectives of the teaching practice by the pre-service teacher.

The results show that effective/good teachers exhibit the right techniques to solve problems and that a teacher's main responsibility is to support students' independent inquiry since kids learn best when they solve problems on their own. Additionally, it is preferable for professors to choose the class activities rather than the students because it will result in greater learning and understanding. The results show that training should be based on concepts that most students can immediately understand as well as problems with obvious, accurate solutions. Additionally, as thinking and reasoning processes are more significant than specific curricular knowledge, students should be permitted to come up with their own solutions to practical problems before the teacher demonstrates how they are addressed. This shows that how much students learn depends on how much background knowledge they have – that is why teaching facts is so necessary and that effective classroom management enhances effective teaching and learning. According to the study, many pre-service students attended staff meetings on a yearly basis or whenever they felt like it to discuss the goals and objectives of the schools. Additionally, a significant portion of the respondents had the chance to contribute to the growth of the institution. Also, a significant portion engaged in conversation on the academic progress of specific students, shared activities involving many classes, and the best teaching resources to be employed in the classroom.

The findings further reveal that posting pre-service students to a distant place from home affects the area of specialisation as well as allocating teaching subjects different from the area of specialisation affects the effectiveness of students. Thus, a higher percentage of the respondents agreed that allocation should be based on the proximity of the student's teacher to his house and that accommodation should be provided for student teachers staying too far from their TP Schools. Also, that teaching subjects should be used to allocate students' teachers to school/subject/unit. However, a low percentage of the respondents said they engage in professional learning activities like monitoring other instructors' classes and giving comments or co-teaching in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed teaching practice attitudes and beliefs among teachers and trainees in Lagos State, Nigeria. Teaching practice is significant as it enables pre-service teachers to learn the basic skills of teaching and put into practice the theory learned in class. It also them to be familiar with educational ethics, rules and regulations, teaching workloads, and classroom management (Jekanyinfa A.A., n.a; and Amuda, A., 2017). An effective teaching practice exercise enhances teacher education programme as a mandatory requirement for teaching certification. Therefore, students should be posted near their residences and allocated based on their specialty. In addition, it is recommended that school-based cooperating teachers should be a mentor by example to the students and that student teachers should be exposed to all activities going on in the school for a wholesome teaching and learning experience. Also, students should be well equipped in the Micro teaching classes as this will help them to be better graduates to face the challenges of teaching or equip them with the rudiments of teaching before sending them out on teaching practice.

The study recommends uniform assessment guidelines and time frames for all students. In addition, facilities should be put in place for supervisors to enable them to perform their duty as it would enhance the quality of education. This study adds to the existing knowledge of teaching practice attitudes and beliefs among teachers and trainees in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study highlights the various challenges faced by teaching practice students on teaching practice and their impact on the teacher education programme. Similarly, it shows the perception and understanding of cooperating teachers' attitudes toward teacher trainees and the teaching practice exercise.

This study would enlighten school administrators about the factors that contribute to improving students' teaching practice attitudes and beliefs. By so doing, they can incorporate professional learning activities which will make the pre-service teachers observe other teachers' classes and provide feedback that would enhance teaching and learning. This study offers colleges of education a useful resource to use as they consider how their conduct of teaching practice enhance students' attitude and belief toward teaching practice. The study is limited to data gathered from the study participants and its research findings.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

F. Omosein: Study conception and design; manuscript preparation; review the results and approved the final version of the manuscript

O. Olujuwon: Data collection, study conception and design; manuscript preparation; review the results and approved the final version of the manuscript

N. B. Bamiro: Analysis and interpretation of results; manuscript preparation; review the results and approved the final version of the manuscript

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