



Promoting teacher education through effective teaching practice: The host teachers perception

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Abstract

Teaching practice is seen as the clinical aspect of teacher training programme designed to bridge the gap between theory and real teaching in a classroom setting. To achieve the desire outcome of teaching practice exercise, the roles of host teachers need to be emphasized. Thus, this study aimed to investigate perceptions of host teachers on the use of effective teaching practice in promoting quality teacher education. Descriptive research design was adopted and purposive sampling technique was used to select participating schools while 72 respondents were randomly selected. Additionally, questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and analysis of data involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings from the study revealed that teaching practice instills teaching skills in student teachers, enhances their personal growth and promotes teacher education. The finding would help teacher training institution managements, and other stakeholders to prioritize teaching practice in promoting quality teacher education.

Keywords: Teacher education, teaching practice, host teacher, perception

Introduction

It is the desire of every nation to give her members especially the young ones sound and quality education that will guarantee and promote national development. An education that leads to attainment of key goals of imparting desired values, skills and knowledge to its recipients (Omede, 2012) ^[11], reflects and responds to societal needs and expectations. Quality of education deals with how relevant, functional and efficient an education programme is in achieving the goals and objectives of a nation. Attaining a quality education is not just acquiring a body of knowledge but also inspires critical thinking and capacity to adapt and adjust to man's dynamic society (Alemu, 2014) ^[3]. It is a common conviction that teachers are key in achieving quality education. That is, a sound and quality teacher education is required for attainment of desired education goals of imparting the right values, skills and knowledge to learners for overall development. This explains the various efforts, policies and programmes put in place by governments at different levels towards promoting teacher education.

Teacher education involves training of pre-service teachers and re-training of in-service teachers. It is designed to equip trainee teacher with the necessary skills and knowledge required for effective performance of their duties as classroom teachers and members of the community. Teacher preparation programme is based on the desire to meet the nation's educational needs (Aglazor, 2017; Oancea, 2014; Omede & Oguche, 2016) ^[1,10,12]. Thus, the basis of teacher education is to produce well informed teachers to meet the needs and aspiration of the society. According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) ^[5] the main purposes of teacher education are to; produce classroom teachers who are motivated and efficient, provide teachers with skills and intellectual background, help teachers to adapt and adjust to social life of their community and improve their commitment to teaching profession. Teacher education has always been a major issue in the implementation of any education programme and policy. Also, changing education

applications has called for frequent review in teacher training programmes (Gorgoretti & Pilli, 2012) ^[6]. Effective training of teachers cannot be achieved merely through theoretical curriculum, rather, it involves both theory and practical. The theoretical aspect equips in-training teachers with various theories and principles of teaching while the practical aspect (teaching practice) exposes students to teaching in real classroom setting (Nasir & Zafar, 2018) ^[8]. Teaching practice (TP) is a major part of teacher education programme in which student-teachers are deployed to various cooperating schools to teaching and partake in some other school activities. During teaching practice, student teachers are subjected to supervision and evaluation by team of supervisors. This exercise provides prospective teacher opportunity to translate theories and principles of teaching into actual teaching in an actual classroom setting where he/she obtains experience such as classroom management, communication skill and understanding learners' individual differences. This allows trainee teachers to discover their strengths and weaknesses, makes them feel like a professional teacher and serves as a base on which student teachers build their professional identities (Aglazor, 2017; Gorgoretti & Pilli, 2012; Musonda, 2021; NCCE, 2015; Poveda Garcia-Noblejas *et al.*, 2023; Sylod, 2017) ^[1, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15]. Objectives of teaching practice according to NCCE (2015) ^[9] include; exposing pre-service teachers to actual classroom experience, providing forum for translation of theories into practice and helping student teacher develops positive attitudes towards teaching. However, the continuous change in societal educational needs calls for prioritization of practical aspect of teacher training programme. This accounts for the review of length of teaching practice by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and payment of allowance to supervisors by TETFUND. Despite their efforts, effective implementation of teaching practice has been hindered by challenges such as; poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching resources, crowded classes, poor attitude of school management, poor guidance and rigid

scheme of studies which does not allow student teachers to think beyond the teaching scheme designed by the school administration (Nasir & Zafar, 2018; Aldabbus, 2020; Yusof *et al.*, 2014; Turan & Bayar, 2017) ^[2, 8, 16, 18].

Several studies have been conducted on teaching practice, for instance, Nasir and Zafar (2018) ^[8] investigated the challenges confronting future teachers in the course of teaching practice. The study involved 259 participants drawn from University of Punjab and University of Gujrat, Pakistan. Questionnaire was used to collect data and analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics. Results revealed that, despite the various challenges, teaching practice helps to bridge the gap between students' expectations and the classroom reality. Similarly, Aldabbus (2020) ^[2] examined the challenges facing pre-service teachers during teaching practice exercise. The study was conducted at Tripoli University involving 16 participants. Data were collected with the use of questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Findings from the study identified poor cooperation between the host teachers and student teachers, inadequate facilities and poor classroom management as major challenges encountered during teaching practice. Also, Musonda (2021) ^[7] conducted a study on the challenges of teaching practice implementation in Zambia. The study involved 34 teachers and students selected with the use of purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through focus group discussion and thematically analyzed. Results showed that, the implementation of teaching practice faced many challenges, such as poor funding, classroom over crowded and inadequate teaching facilities.

Furthermore, Alemu (2014) ^[3] investigated the role of teaching practice in enhancing quality higher education in Ethiopia. A total of 133 students and instructors participated in the study and a structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Mean, ranking and standard deviation were used to analyze data and results indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of students and instructors. Likewise, Wambugu, Barmao and Ng'eno (2013) ^[17] examined perception of pre-service teachers on teaching practice assessment. 68 students were randomly selected and data analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study revealed a non significant difference in students' perceptions based on gender. Also, Gorgoretti and Pilli (2012) ^[6] conducted a study on the opinions of teachers in-training on the effectiveness of teaching practice. The study adopted a qualitative research method which involved 50 participants (25 students & 25 teachers) drawn from Eastern Mediterranean University. Result showed that, teaching practice exercise equips student teachers with the teaching skills required for their professional life. Similarly, Poveda Garcia-Noblejas *et al.* (2023) ^[13] explored the perceptions of student teachers on the benefits of teaching practice. Questionnaires were administered to 455 University students in Madrid and data collected were qualitatively analyzed. Results showed that, period of the practicum and gender influenced student teachers' perceptions.

The foregoing shows that there is a gap between theory and practice in actual classroom setting which posts challenges in effective implementation of the exercise. Also, much attention has not been given to teachers of cooperating schools (host teachers). To address these challenges and enhance effective teaching practice, the roles of host

teachers cannot be overemphasized. Thus, there is need to examine the views of this key stakeholder on effectiveness of teaching practice. Based on this, this study aims to investigate perceptions of host teachers on how quality teacher education can be achieved through effective teaching practice. Thus, the question which comes to mind is: what would be the views of host teachers on effectiveness of teaching practice in promoting quality teacher education? Specifically, the study intended to: (i) investigate host teachers' perception on promoting teacher education through effective teaching practice, (ii) examine the difference in the perception of host teachers based on gender and teaching experience.

The study is anchored on Kolb (1984) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). The theory underlines the significance of experience in learning process. According to this theory experience transformation creates knowledge which lead to learning. ELT has four steps; experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. When a learner has a new experience, he reflects on the experience, then think about likely ways to accommodate it. After reflecting and thinking about the experience, the learner then transfers his thought into action which lead to construction of learning. During teaching practice exercise, student teachers are exposed to new experience which they reflect and think about. The students thereafter put their thoughts into actions which lead to learning or new experience.

The result of the study is expected to have implication for regulatory bodies like NUC, NCCE, managements of teacher training institutions, teaching practice coordinators and committees.

Research Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in Ilorin, Kwara state, North Central Nigeria. A purposive sampling method was used to select 18 cooperating schools and 4 teachers were randomly selected from each school. Therefore, the study sample size was 72 participants. A questionnaire containing two parts was used for data collection. The first part of the questionnaire was on the demographic characteristics of respondents (gender and teaching experience). While the second part contains questions on perception of respondent on the effectiveness of teaching practice in promoting teacher education based on a 4-point Likert-scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- agree and 4- strongly agree). Cronbrach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire which gave 0.821 co-efficient. Both descriptive statistics (percentage, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Chi square) were used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

1. Result Analysis

The results of the analysis of data is presented as follows:

1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Characteristics		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	32	44.4
	Female	40	55.6
Teaching Experience	1 – 5	12	16.7
	6 – 10	32	44.4
	>10	28	38.9

Gender distribution of respondents shows that 55.6 percent are female while 44.4 percent are male. Also, distribution of participants based on teaching experience shows that 16.7 percent of respondents have less than 6 years teaching experience, 44.4 percent have between 6 to 10 years teaching experience while 38.9 percent have more than 10 years teaching experience. This implies that more female participants are involved in the study than their male counterparts. Similarly, majority of the respondents have more than 5 years teaching experience.

1.2. Perception of Respondents on the Effectiveness of Teaching Practice in Promoting Teacher Education

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents’ Perspective

Item		SA	A	D	SD
TP instills teaching skills and confidence in student teachers	N	42	20	7	3
	%	58.3	27.8	9.7	4.2
TP enhances student teacher’s personal growth	N	23	32	12	5
	%	31.9	44.4	16.7	6.9
TP promotes overall teacher education	N	18	30	16	8
	%	25.0	41.7	22.2	11.1

Table 2 shows that 58.3 percent of the participants strongly agree that teaching practice instills teaching skills and confidence in student teachers, 27.8 percent agree while only 13.9 percent disagree. This means that, majority of respondents are of the view that teaching practice instills teaching skill and confidence. This agrees with the finding of Gorgoretti and Pilli (2012) [6]. Also, 55 respondents representing 76.3 percent agree that teaching practice enhances student teacher’s personal growth. While only 17 participants representing 23.6 percent disagree with the statement. This finding is in line with previous studies (Aglazor, 2017) [1]. On effectiveness of teaching practice in promoting overall teacher education, 18 respondents strongly agree and 30 respondents agree, representing 66.7 percent (25% and 41.7% respectively). While a total of 24 participants disagree (8 strongly disagree and 16 disagree) representing 33.3 percent (11.1% and 22.2% respectively). The finding is in agreement with study conducted by Nasir and Zafar (2018) [8].

1.3. Difference in Respondents Perception based on Gender

Table 3: Difference based on Gender

Item	N	Mean	SD	Sig
TP instills teaching skills and confidence in student teachers	72	3.40	0.83	0.000
TP enhances student teacher’s personal growth		3.01	0.88	0.000
TP promotes overall teacher education		2.81	0.94	0.003

Analysis of data for the difference in the perspective of respondents based on gender show that p value for each item is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05, 0.000 < 0.05 and 0.003 < 0.05). This indicates that there are no significant differences in respondents’ perspective based on gender (male and female). This is in line with finding of Wambugu *et al.*, (2013) [17] who found that there is no significant

difference in perceptions of male and female participants. However, it contradicts the finding of Poveda Garcia-Noblejas *et al.* (2023) [13] which revealed that, student teachers’ perception is influenced by gender.

1.4. Difference in Respondents Perception based on Teaching Experience

Table 4: Difference based on Teaching Experience

Item	N	Mean	SD	Sig
TP instills teaching skills and confidence in student teachers	72	3.40	0.83	0.000
TP enhances student teacher’s personal growth		3.01	0.88	0.000
TP promotes overall teacher education		2.81	0.94	0.000

Table 4 shows that for all items $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This implies that there is no significant difference based on participants teaching experience for all items. This finding is in contradiction with the study of Snell *et al.* (2019) [14] who found a significant difference in the opinions of teachers based on teaching experience.

2. Discussion

Teaching practice is seen as the clinical aspect of teacher training programme designed to bridge the gap between theory and real teaching in a classroom setting. However, it has been observed that school and class environment differ from the expectations of trainee teachers. Thus, the study investigated perception of host teachers on the use of effective teaching practice in promoting quality teacher education. Questionnaire was used as instruments for data collection and analysis of data involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings from the study revealed that; i) teaching practice instills teaching skills in student teachers, this agrees with Gorgoretti and Pilli (2012) [6], ii) enhances their personal growth, this is in line with the findings Aglazor (2017) [1] and iii) promotes teacher education, this finding is as well in agreement with Nasir and Zafar (2018) [8] study. Also, there is no significant difference in the perception of host teachers on the effectiveness of teaching practice in promoting teacher education based on gender and teaching experience, this however, contradicts the findings of Poveda Garcia-Noblejas *et al.* (2023) [13] and Snell *et al.* (2019) [14].

Additionally, the study has implications for teacher training institution managements, the regulatory bodies and other stakeholders to prioritize teaching practice in promoting quality teacher education.

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank Centre for Research Development, Innovation, Incubation and In-House Training (CREDIIT), Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin and acknowledge the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund), Abuja, Nigeria for funding this study through the Institution Based Research (IBR) grant; TETF/DR&D/CE/COE/ILORIN/IBR/2023/VOL. II

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