

## ATTITUDES OF STUDENT TEACHERS TOWARD TEACHING- PRACTICE EXERCISE IN NORTH EASTERN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This paper deals with attitudes of student-teachers to teaching practice exercise in North-Eastern colleges of education in Nigeria. Two objectives were formulated to guide the research. Descriptive survey design was employed to conduct this study. Six colleges of education were selected in North Eastern Nigeria. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) student-teachers were sampled using convenience sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection; fifteen-itemed questionnaire was designed and administered to the selected participants. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The finding revealed that student-teachers' attitudes to teaching practice exercise were positive. It is recommended that government should facilitate teacher training centers with necessary infrastructure to enable them to produce quality prospective teachers.*

Keywords: *Attitude, student-teachers and teaching-practice*

### Background to the Study

Education is an indispensable tool for enhancing economic growth and national development. Education is seen as the cornerstone of every development forming the basis for literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancement as well as the ability to harness the natural resources of the state (Arinde, 2010). The key in the entire education programme is the teacher who can make or mar the best educational programme in the world. Education therefore is what teachers make of it. Thus, competent, devoted and professionally-qualified teachers are an essential foundation for a good education system. In other words, the attainment of national objectives for the adequate preparation of students for their examinations and achievement of educational objectives depend largely on teachers.

Esther O. et al (2013) opined that “The central thrust of reforms in the teacher education programme is to produce teachers who can perform adequately in the world of work and meet the present day challenges. Teaching practice is a vital aspect of the teacher preparatory programme in teacher training institutions and in Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities. It serves as an opportunity for student-teachers to be exposed to the realities of teaching and professional activities in the field of education.

Esther et al (2013) also quoted Adesina, Daramola and Taiabi (1989) teaching practice can be defined as a teacher education programme or activity which involves the student-teacher putting into practice his/her acquired theory of teaching under the genuine experience of the normal classroom situation. It is an opportunity for student teachers to face the realities of their chosen career in terms of its demands, challenges and excitements. It can also be seen as periods when student teachers are aided to put into practice the theories and principles of education which they have learnt in the classroom as they teach (Ogonor and Badmus, 2006).

The aim of the teaching practice exercise according to Ogonor and Badmus (2006) are:

1. To provide the teacher trainee some type of pre-service training which serves as an opportunity to be exposed to the realities of teaching and performance of professional activities.
2. It provides opportunities for students to test theories learnt and ideas in the classroom as they come in contact for the first time with real life situations.
3. It provides trainees the opportunity to utilize the various teaching methods in actual classrooms/school conditions under the constant supervision of competent and experienced teachers.
4. It exposes student teachers to professional activities, which are part of the teacher roles in schools.

Ogonor and Badmus (2006) asserted that “Teaching practicum provides the “neophytes” some type of pre-service training which serves as opportunity to be exposed to the realities of teaching and performance of professional activities. It is the only opportunity for students to test theories learnt and ideas developed in the classroom, as they come in contact for the first time with real life situations.

Teaching practice provides trainees the opportunity to utilize the various teaching methods in actual classroom/school conditions under the constant supervision of competent and experienced teachers. Furthermore, besides teaching activities, student teachers are exposed to professional activities, which are part of the teacher roles in schools (Ogonor and Badmus, 2006).

Many empirical studies revealed that student-teachers perception and attitude to teaching practice exercise is quite positive but a lot has to be done to make it effective and efficient. For instance Patricia, Anne and Joel (2013) investigated the student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice assessment in Egerton University, Kenya. Three teaching practice zones namely; Kericho/Bomet, Uasingishu, /Keiyo and Nyeri/Kirinyaga were randomly selected. From the zones 68 students were selected using stratified random sampling technique based on gender and subject area specialization. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and it used a questionnaire which had a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.906 to collect data. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that the student teachers' perceptions towards teaching practice assessment were favorable. The findings also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in their perceptions by area of specialization. However there was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of teaching practice between male and female student-teachers at alpha level of 0.05.

Similarly, Ogonor and Badmus (2006) in their study reflective teaching practice among student teachers: the case in a tertiary institution in Nigeria 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. Three hundred and four students who were in the final and penultimate years of graduation comprised the sample for the study. Six research questions were raised to direct the thrust of the study. Four sets of instruments were used. They were all open ended, targeted at eliciting information on student teachers' activities and support by teachers of partnership schools during the teaching practice, perception of student teachers' performance by Faculty and mentor teachers, as well as the challenges encountered by trainees during the exercise. The findings from this study indicated that student teachers were elated and had opportunity for professional growth as they practiced reflective teaching. However, they stated that teachers of partnership schools could not provide specific professional support to them during the practice period. Faculty's perception of trainees' activities during the practice period was that student teachers had more problems with the application of pedagogy than knowledge of subject matter while mentor teachers rated students' general performance as very high. Student teachers enumerated the constraints they had to perform effectively during the teaching practicum, as intense pressure for time, inability of school authorities to provide required basic materials and non performance of the role of mentoring by staff of partnership schools. However, this paper focuses on attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise in North-Eastern Colleges of Educations in Nigeria.

### Statement of problem

It is one of the most prior objectives of teacher education centers (colleges of education) to train individuals to carry out task of teaching diligently and professionally. To achieve this objective, many instructional practices are to be done under close supervision of experts. Professional competence is believed to be a crucial factor in classroom and school practices (Shulman, 1987, Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Baumert and Kunter, 2006). However, the attitudes of prospective teachers to teaching practice exercise are quite paramount to determine whether or not student-teachers have perceived the practicum positively or the otherwise.

### Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise in North-Eastern Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to determine:

1. Perception of student-teachers to teaching practice exercise and assessment in North-Eastern Colleges of Education in Nigeria.
2. Attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise in North-Eastern Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

### Research Questions

1. What is the perception of student-teachers to teaching practice exercise in North-Eastern Colleges of Education in Nigeria?
2. What is the attitude of student-teachers to teaching practice in North-Eastern colleges of Education in Nigeria?

### Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Osula (1985), in Nasir (2001), the survey method is widely used because of its suitability for researches. The survey method facilitates a scientific selection of a representative small sample of a large population such that the findings from the sample can be fairly generalized to the parent population. The population for the study consisted of all the college of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. Due to the security constrain in the zone, the researchers selected six colleges of education; one college of Education from each state. Convenience sampling technique was employed to select a total number of one hundred and twenty (120) student teachers who successfully responded to the questionnaire during their teaching practice exercise. The instrument used for collecting data was questionnaire. The fifteen-itemed questionnaire consists of two sections; demographic information of the respondents and main section that elicit answers of the respondents regarding attitudes and perception of student-teachers to teaching practice. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

### Results and Discussions

The demographic information of the respondents is given in the tables 1.1 and 1.2. The table 1.1 indicates that 35.8% of the respondents were female student-teachers and 64.2% of the participants were male student-teachers.

Table 1.1: Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	43	34.7	35.8	35.8
	male	77	62.1	64.2	100.0
	Total	120	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.2		
Total		124	100.0		

The below table 1.2 represents the area of specialization (teaching subjects) of The respondents. The table indicates that 56.7% of the participants were art-based student-teachers. And 32.5% of the participants teach social sciences subjects. While 10.8% of the respondents teach science subjects during their teaching practice exercises.

Table 1.2: Respondent`s area of specialization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	arts subjects	68	54.8	56.7	56.7
	social science	39	31.5	32.5	89.2
	science subjects	13	10.5	10.8	100.0
	Total	120	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.2		
Total		124	100.0		

Table 2: Attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I come to the school on time	120	1.53	.501
2. I always get there before opening time	120	1.98	1.085
3. I feel enthusiastic to arrive timely	120	2.80	.975
4. I will be in my posted station when supervisor comes	120	3.04	.902
5. I discontinue reporting to my posted stations after being supervised	120	2.68	.889
6. I maintain a cordial relationship between me and my students	120	1.63	.520
7. I relate positively with the school-staff	120	1.68	.565
8. I get it easy to maintain my class	120	2.33	.920
9. I employ corporal punishment too often than not	120	3.07	.827
10. I feel reluctant to teach when my class go noisy	120	2.68	.801
11. I draft lesson plan for every topic and period	120	2.28	.945
12. I design lesson note for every topic	120	3.27	.753
13. The duration of time allocated to me is quite enough	120	1.82	.741
14. I design and use lesson plan when there is a supervisor	120	2.92	.729
15. I employ appropriate instructional materials in my class sessions	120	1.52	.518
Valid N (listwise)	120		

Based on the above table 1, there is clear indication that that responses to the positive statements show that respondents have a positive attitude towards teaching practice exercise. However, the negative responses to the statements were (items 3 and 12) which the participant ticked against the statement. Thus, student-teachers feel unenthusiastic to come to their posted stations and they do not design lesson notes.

#### Conclusion

Based on the result of the analysis, the student-teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching practice exercise. However, the result indicated that most of the students were not enthusiastic to report to their posted schools. And their attitudes towards lesson notes found to be negative. Regarding the punctuality, the attitudes were very much desirable. Student-teachers report to school timely and their attitudes towards class management and control was very much likeable. Only few of them apply corporal punishments.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Government should facilitate teacher training centers with materials necessary for better professionalism.
2. Colleges of educations and other teacher training centers should reorient student-teachers on the essence of teaching practice exercises to their future teaching career and therefore they should perceive it as the step to their career development.
3. Primary and post primary schools` heads should closely supervise the activities of student-teachers and guide them appropriately so that the aim of producing quality teacher for sound education will be achieved.

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