

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF STUDENT TEACHERS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE AND POOR PERFORMANCES IN TEACHING PRACTICE

By

DR. V. N. DURU

*Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology,
Faculty of Education,
Imo State University,
Owerri*

Abstract

This research work investigated the causes of student teachers' negative attitudes and poor performances in teaching practice and also strategies to revert these negative attitudes and enhance their performances in teaching practice. Imo State University Owerri was used as a case study. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population was 3600 final year students in the faculty of education and forty-five lecturers in the faculty of Education who were also supervisors. An instrument developed by the researcher titled Attitude to Teaching Practice Questionnaire (ATPQ) was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores for the three research questions and t-test analysis for the hypothesis. The result of the finding among others were that student teacher's negative attitude to teaching practice were caused by the following factors, lack of adequate preparation of students through micro teaching and observational visit, lack of commitment on the part of the students and unfriendly attitude of some supervisors, lack of co-operation from the hosting schools. The findings also showed that there is no significant difference between the perception of supervisors and students teachers on the causes of these negative attitude, Based on these findings, recommendations were made and conclusion drawn.

Education is the most important tool for achieving national development Duru (2008). As a result of this important function of education, there is need to uphold the quality and standard starting with teacher education. This is because no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers and her educational system. Akuma (2008) noted that the importance of teachers and the role they play in the education process are very central to basic education. The need for investigating quality teacher production is apt with the launching of Universal Basic Education of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Based on the important roles which teachers play in education generally Awotua-Efebo (1998) outlined several roles of teachers as follows:

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Teacher as a person

Teacher as an interpreter of the school curriculum

The teacher as a deliverer of instruction (classroom teaching)

Teacher as a manager

Teacher as a counsellor

Teacher as a locoparentis

Teacher as community relation officer

These roles show how effective a teacher should be considering quality and relevance. Still on the need for quality teacher education many Nigerian educators have observed that there is direct relationship between the quality of teachers and the quality of education. Such educators include; Ukeje, (1966), Fafunwa 1967, Ukoli 1981, Esu 2005 and Omojuwa 2007.

They noted that the determinant of quality education is the teacher. Therefore teacher education in Nigeria should be the foundation of quality and relevance of education at all levels. It is against this background that FRN (2004: 39) clearly outlined the goals of teacher education as follows:

Produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system. Encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers. Help teachers to fit into 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 make them adaptable to changing situations.

To achieve these goals the Federal Government relied on the Institute or colleges of education and Faculties of Education to improve the quality of teacher education through proper training for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Government has already embarked on laudable programme of training and re-training of in-service teachers throughout the country, through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and National Teachers Institute (NTI). This programme was slated to run for five years starting from the year 2006. With regard to the Faculties of Education, Institutes of education and Colleges of education, there are courses or programs established for the professional training of student teachers. Such programmes include micro-teaching, teaching practice and observational training.

Kanno (1997) saw teaching practice and micro teaching as the two most important professional training programmes for pre-service teachers. According to Kanno (1997) the development of worthy professional teaching ability requires series of intensive preparation and constant practice. Kanno (1997) therefore approved that teaching practices is a preparation for student teachers' practical experience which embraces all the learning theories and learning experiences in school.

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In stressing the importance of teaching practice Kanno (1997) maintained that before one can claim to be effective teacher, he must be a professional and so professional teacher must exhibit what it takes to convince one that he is a professional.

Despite the important place occupied by teaching practice in teacher education, it is observed that pre-service teachers show negative attitudes to teaching practice exercise and teaching profession generally (Akuma 2008). The attitude of some student teachers leaves much to be desired in Imo State University, some students make every effort to avoid it or abandon it completely. Those who tried to do the practice do it half haphazardly and end up with poor performances. The attitudes of these pre-service teachers show that they are not happy to be associated with teaching profession. One wonders what could be the cause of this poor attitude, could it be as a result of poor image associated with the status of teacher in the society. The worry of the researcher is that if this downward trend in the attitude of students in the teaching practice exercise is not reverted, the goals of teacher education will not be attained and the educational system will be filled with teachers who have nothing to offer professionally and this situation will immensely affect the standard of education generally.

The researcher is therefore poised to investigate the causes of students' negative attitude and poor performance in teaching practice and the strategies to enhance students' performance in teaching practice.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching practice is one of the important training programmes meant to enhance student teachers professional skills and competencies, without this exercise, their professional training is incomplete. The federal government has shown great concern over quality teacher education by undertaking re-training programmes for in-servicing teacher of primary and Junior secondary schools; using its teacher education institutions and agencies such as State Universal Primary Education Commission and National Teachers' Institute. This is in support and for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) unfortunately, the researcher has observed that students in Faculty of educations, Imo State University and other Institutes of education show negative attitude to teaching practice which is the most important professional training programme for trainees. This negative attitude is in opposition to training of quality professional teachers intended by the Federal Government. This situation is worrisome to the researcher. The problem of this study can therefore be stated thus:

1. What are the causes of student teacher's negative attitude towards teaching practice?
2. How do supervisors and student teachers perceive the causes of these negative attitudes and poor performances of students' teachers in teaching practice?
3. What strategies can be used to positively revert negative attitude of student teachers' and improve their performances in teaching practice?

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Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study:

1. What is the perception of teaching practice supervisors on the negatives attitudes of students teachers' towards teaching practice?
2. What do student teachers and supervisors perceive as the causes of the negative attitudes of student teachers and poor performances in teaching practice?
3. What strategies can be used to positively revert these negative attitudes and enhance the performances of student teachers?

Research Hypothesis

Ho 1: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of supervisors and student teachers on the causes of negative attitude and poor performances of student teachers in teaching practice.

Research Design

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey design in which questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents based on the research questions and an analytic design in which “t” test was used to analyze data collected based on the hypothesis.

Population for the Study

The population for the study comprises of all students and all the lecturers (who are also the supervisors) from faculty of education in Imo State University in the year 2011, which is made of three thousand, six hundred students and forty five lecturers.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study comprises one hundred and sixty students and the forty five lecturers which gave a total of four hundred and five subjects. Purposive simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 students from each of the three departments in the faculty and the census of the lecturers was involved since they were not many. A total sample of 195 respondents was used.

Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire which was structured by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire titled Students Teachers Attitude towards Teaching Practice Questionnaire (STATPQ) consist of 22 item statements which were structured based on a modified four point likert scale of:

Strongly Agree	(SA)	-	4
Agree	(A)	-	3
Disagree	(A)	-	2
Strongly Disagree	(SD)	-	1

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The first part of the questionnaire sought for information on the demographic data of the students while the second part (Section B) addressed the two research questions. The midpoint of a modified four-point likert scale is 2.50. Any value at and above 2.50 indicates agreement while any value below 2.50 indicates disagreement on the items in the questionnaire.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was given to two lecturers in measurement and evaluation. Based on their corrections and comments, some of the items were restructured while some were expunged. In this way validity was ensured before administering to the respondents.

Reliability of the Instrument:

The reliability of the instrument was ensured through pilot test using test re-test method. This means that the instrument was first administered to some lecturers and education students who were not used for the study. After two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same set of respondents. The two set of scores obtained were co-related using Pearson Product Moment Co-relation (PPMC). The co-relation, co-efficient obtained was 0.72 which indicates that the instrument is reliable, to collect data for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The two research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested using t'test statistical method at 0.05 level of significant.

Presentation of Results

The results of the study are presented in the tables below according to research questions and hypothesis.

Research Question One

What Are the Perceptions of Supervisors on Students' Attitudes towards Teaching Practice?

Statement Items					
What are the perceptions of supervisors' on students' attitude towards teaching practice?	N	\bar{X}	SD	A	
1. Student teachers so much dislike teaching practice	150	3.33	0.79	A	
2. Teaching practice is a waste of time and resource		3.47	0.62	A	
3. Teaching practice is a tension packed period.		3.31	0.73	A	
4. Writing of lesson notes makes		3.60	0.88	A	

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	teaching practice so hectic.				
5.	Teaching practice should not be included in teacher education curriculum.	150	3.56	0.69	A
6.	Teaching practice should be organized with the University in form of Micro teaching.		3.52	0.69	A
7.	Teaching practice outside the University should not exceed one week.		3.47	0.62	A
8.	Student teachers are not adequately prepared on the procedures for teaching practice before posting them out.		3.56	0.69	A
9.	Student teachers feel so shy to stand before students in the class.		3.60	0.60	A
10.	Teaching practice should be made optional for students.		3.80	0.37	A

The result in table 1 above shows that the mean scores of all the items (1-10) are above 2.50 which is above the acceptable positive mean response. This indicates that the respondents generally agreed on the items as the negative attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice. (Mean range 3.31-3.80).

Research Question Two

What do student teachers and supervisors perceive as the causes of negative attitudes of students teachers and poor performances in teaching practice.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Supervisors and Student Teachers Perceptions of the Causes of Poor Attitude and Poor Performances among Student Teachers

S/N	Statement Items	Students Teachers				Supervisors			
		N	\bar{X}	SD	Dec	N	\bar{X}	SD	D
	What are the perceptions on supervisors' on the causes of poor attitude and poor performance among students' teachers in teaching practice?								
1.	Students are not given proper orientation about teaching practice before posting.	150	3.47	0.84	A	45	3.42	0.70	A
2.	Lack of co-operating from hosting schools.	150	3.43	0.80	A	45	3.33	0.74	A

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3.	Distance between their current accommodation and hosting school.	150	3.61	0.61	A	45	3.56	0.69	A
4.	Lack of basic skills and competences that are supposed to be acquired during micro-teaching.	150	3.44	0.81	A	45	3.51	0.69	A
5.	Lack of commitment on the part of students to the teaching practice.	150	3.56	0.69	A	45	3.53	0.58	A
6.	Lack of confidence (shyness).	150	3.52	0.62	A	45	3.42	0.70	A
7.	Fear of being humiliated in the classroom by the students or supervisors.	150	3.44	0.71	A	45	3.53	0.58	A
8.	Lack of proper orientation about teaching practice.	150	3.47	0.84	A	45	3.13	0.89	A
9.	Lack of funds to cover the transportation and other needs during this period.	150	3.49	0.81	A	45	3.33	0.66	A
10.	Being afraid of preparing instructional materials.	150	3.51	0.62	A	45	2.98	0.86	A
11.	Dislike of the teaching profession.	150	3.56	0.71	A	45	3.333	0.79	A
12.	Uncooperative attitude of some supervisors.	150	3.44	0.71	A	45	3.58	0.50	A
13.	Lack of observational practice for students teachers.	150	3.60	0.65	A	45	3.29	0.65	A
Total or Grand Mean		150	3.51	0.72	A	45	3.33	0.70	A

The result of the study in Table 2 above shows that the mean scores of all the items in table 2, with respect to students and supervisors are above 2.50 which is the minimum positive acceptable mean response. This indicates that both students and supervisors generally accepted the items (1 - 13) as the causes of poor attitude to teaching practice.

Research Question 3

What strategies can be used to revert these negatives attitudes and enhance the performance of the students' teachers?

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Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation on Perceptions of Supervisors on Strategies to Enhance Students’ Performance and Change Their Attitude

S/N	Statement Items	Students		Supervisors	
		N	X	SD	A
	To What extent do you agree on the following as was to change students’ attitudes and enhance their performances in teaching practice?				
1	Proper orientation on teaching practice should be given to students.	45	3.56	0.60	A
2	The training institutions should pay courtesy visits or write notification letters to the schools authority of the co-operating school before posting the students.	45	2.89	1.05	A
3	Micro teaching laboratories used in a crediting all the teacher training institutions.	45	3.33	0.80	
4	Micro teaching should be made one of the courses for student teachers.	45	3.29	0.65	A
5	Observational practice/visit should be organized for student teachers before teaching practice.	45	3.47	0.63	A
6	Seminars and workshop should be organized regularly for supervisors on the supervision and assessment of student teachers during teaching practice.	45	3.53	0.58	A
7	There should be correlation of the assessment format among supervisors in every teacher training institution.	45	3.51	0.69	A
8	Students should not be posted to schools very far from their locations.	45	3.47	0.62	A
9	Both supervisors and students should be giving some amount of money by the training institutions to support their transportation.	45	3.33	0.80	A
10	Supervisors should be paid honorarium after supervisions to encourage them.	45	3.58	0.50	A

The result of findings in tables 3 show that all the item statements have scores above 2.50 (mean range is 2.89-3.58). This is above the acceptable positive mean score of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents generally agreed that these items are the

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strategies for positively reverting students' attitudes and increase their performance in teaching practice.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean perception of supervisor and students teachers on the causes of negative attitude and poor performances of student teachers in teaching practice.

Table 4: Summary of T-Test Analysis on the Mean Perceptions of Supervisors and Students Teachers on the Causes of Negative Attitude and Poor Performances

	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-table	0.05 L/s
Students teachers perceptions	150	3.51	0.72	193	1.82	1.98	
Supervisors perceptions	45	3.33	0.70				

Result of findings in table 4 show that t-calculated 1.42 is lesser than table t-1.98 ($t\text{-cal } 1.82 < \text{table } t\text{-}1.98$) at 0.05 level of significant and 1.93 degree of freedom. This implies that there is no significant difference between the perception of supervisors and students teachers on the strategies to positively influence students' attitude and enhance their performances in teaching practice. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected.

Discussion

With regards to research question one, it was found that students have negative attitude towards teaching practice (see mean scores of items 1-10 table 1). Negative attitude of students towards teaching practice can undermine the intention of teacher education programme which is meant to prepare students teachers in professional competencies and skills to enable them excel in the profession.

The finding is in agreement with the work of Amadi (2001). She stated that teaching practice is very important in teacher development training without which the desired quality of teacher education cannot be achieved. She further stated that before a student teacher is awarded a professional certificate he must have practiced how to teach under a close supervision of co-operating teacher.

With respect to research question two both the student teachers and supervisors generally agreed on the items as the causes of negative attitude and poor performances of students in teaching practice see table 2 mean range for students perception is 3.43-3.61 while that of supervisors is 3.13 and 3.58. The finding agrees with the observation

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of Amadi (2001). She noted that several factors cause students' negative attitude to teaching practice, she listed such factors as lack of commitment on the part of students, lack of co-operation from the co-operating teachers, uncooperative attitude of some supervisors. She however advised that teaching practice constitute an important part of a teacher education programme which is an art that should not be treated with levity or carried out in half haphazard manner because it helps practicing teachers to imbibe the teaching culture which they will depend on in life.

The mean perception of student teachers and supervisions on the causes of negative attitude of teaching practice were further tested with t-test statistics for no significant difference. It was noted that there is no significant difference in the mean perception of both groups on the causes of negative attitude of students towards teaching practice. (See table 4, $t_{cal} < t_{table}$) (i.e. $1.82 < 1.98$).

With regards to research question 3, the respondents generally agreed on the items listed as the strategies to revert negative attitude of students and enhance their performance in teaching practice. (See table 3, item 1-10, mean range 2.89-3.58). This finding is in line with the strategies listed by Farrant (1981). Farrant stated that the essence of practice teaching is to enable students teachers apply the theories and principles of teaching and learning they have learnt. He further explained that in teaching practice exercise, they experience the real world of teaching professions and have opportunity to test and perfect the skills and competencies they were taught. He emphasized that before posting students, they should offered opportunity for observational visit, whereby they familiarize with the co-operating teacher and know the schools. Amadi (2001) stressed that students should be exposed to micro teaching where they learn how to use language and how to prepare instructional materials based on their unit of lesson.

Conclusions

The study investigated the attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practices, causes of negative attitudes and strategies to positively influence their attitudes and enhance their performances in teaching practice. Faculty of education, Imo State University was used as case study. The sample size was 195 respondents comprising final year students from the three departments and 45 lecturers who were involved in the teaching practice, supervision in the 2010.

The findings among others were students teachers show negative attitude to teaching practice. This is caused by some factors. Different strategies were determined to positively revert the poor attitudes and based on that recommendation were made.

Recommendations

Based these findings the following recommendations were made:

- i. Student teachers should be sent to the school of practice for observational visit before the actual posting.

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- ii. Micro teaching should be made compulsory and used for assessment for every student in education before teaching practice.
- iii. Proper orientation should be organized for the students before posting them to school for teaching practice.
- iv. Seminars on teaching practice should be organized for supervisors on regular basis.
- v. There should be harmonization of assessment format among supervisors.
- vi. Admission into the faculties of education should be based on both interest and merit and not because students were denied admission to other faculties they disappointedly opt for courses in faculties or college of education.

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