
Perception of University for Development Studies, Faculty of Education Lecturers on the Preparation and Competences of the Student Teachers in the Faculty of Education

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Abstract: Teacher quality matters enormously in the total scheme of schooling and student learning. Teachers and their roles influence students' performance in significant ways. Therefore, this study intended to finding out the perception of lecturers on the preparation and competence of student teachers in the Faculty of Education of the University for Development studies. The case study design was used for all the 33 lecturers with professional teacher education background in the Faculty of Education for the data collection. The finding of the study shows that 23 (70.8%) of the lecturers perceived the student teachers to be fair in their preparation while only 10 (29.2%) perceived their preparation to be good. In terms of competence, 25 (75.8%) and 8 (24.2%) of the lecturers perceived student teachers to be fair and good respectively. Based on the findings, the duration of teaching practice exercise could be increased to ensure that student teachers gain more experiences on the field before graduation.

Keywords: Student-Teachers, Competence, Preparation, Perception and Professional Graduate Teachers

1. Introduction

Education is recognized the world over as the single most important social institution that influences and is influenced by other social institutions. It is recognized that the social economic, political and cultural development of nations depends largely on the quality and amount of education their citizens have. The rise of Japan into the status of an economic giant today, as well as the emergence of Hong-Kong, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and recently Malaysia, into economic miracles, have all been attributed to the heavy investments these countries made in the education of their citizens (Evans 2001). It is because of this great potential of education as an engine of growth and development that Ghana is investing more resources into the development and promotion of education with the expectation that in the long run, the nation will gain enormously from those social institutions. Thus, human capital development has become one of the paramount issues in the country's development agenda.

The school system is designed as a place for ensuring the human capital developments of most societies. Teachers play a pivotal role in the actualization of the school system in a country. Teachers working in the school system play important roles in the facilitation of knowledge development and transmission of knowledge and skills to students within the framework of a designed curriculum. Neena Aneja (2014) opined that 'teachers play an important role in infusing the knowledge of "Para Vidya" to make students aware of knowledge of our self^(sic); the knowledge of the supreme reality to keep oneself away from vices'. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, a former India President in his book "India 2020: A Vision of the New Millennium" has rightly remarked that "If you are a teacher in whatever capacity, you have a very special role to play because more than anybody else it is you who are shaping the future generation. A teacher has a higher responsibility as compared to other professionals as students look upon the teacher as an embodiment of perfection" (Anaja, 2014. Pp.230).

The teacher's role is foundational, formative and directive

in the initiation, advancement and development of growth pattern for every single individual coming into the school system. A high quality standard is therefore expected of the teacher and his/her teaching at every level of education. This is because the primary purpose of the teaching and learning process is to bring about in the learner desirable change in behaviors through logic and critical thinking. This implies that if the quality of teaching is poor, learners are negatively affected and the society at large also suffers many problems both in the short and long run. The quality of students of any educational system depends on the quality of teachers in the school system. In line with this assertion, Okpala and Ellis (2005) considered teacher quality as a key requirement for success and progress in any educational system and linked it with the qualifications held by teachers in the school.

Teaching is the key to all successes in the educational system, especially as it encapsulates all that it is to do with the training of human resource in various fields to meet the work force base of every country. Consequently, the teacher needs to be properly educated and trained for professional efficiency, and be inculcated with not only a positive attitude that will enable an individual go through the training properly but also come out well equipped to assume his/her responsibilities in the educational system.

The debate over competence of teachers has revolved around the question of whether teachers are born or trained. Thus, the question is always asked: is teaching a profession or a craft. In the past, there were people who argued that teachers did not need training; that what they learned on the job was of far greater value than anything taught formally. Levine (2006) opined that there exist polemics between those who see teaching as a profession because it requires exposure to specific classroom instruction and acquisition of certain competences prior to practice and others who see it as a craft because it is learned on the job. However, in recent times, few people would support the assertion that teaching is a craft; for teaching has become a much more professional job, with the teacher called upon to fill roles and perform skills that need precise preparation and training. The overwhelming view today is that there is a dire need for diverse professionally trained teachers. Alter and Cogshall (2009) asserted that teaching is not only academically taught but it is a profession in which clinical practice is involved. Clinical practice professions are noted for directly observing or treating their patients or clients, specialist knowledge and skills, use of evidence and expert judgments, professional body and standard of practice (that is code of ethics) and exposure to rigorous academic and practical training (Darling-hammond,2009).

The qualities of a good teacher include what Farrant (2005) terms professional skills of a good teacher. According to him, professional skills include a teacher who has a good understanding of what his pupils need to learn and also of their capabilities for learning. The good teacher is able to judge just how much he needs to intervene in each. He establishes a productivity classroom atmosphere from the start by means of good organization and carefully planned

teaching structures. He can create specific kinds of climate settings for different lessons, e.g. serious and businesslike or relaxed and enjoyable. He uses friendly humor and creates excellent teacher-pupil relations. He uses pupil's ideas as much as possible. He gives praise generously to pupils. He teaches in a relaxed manner with no sign of nervous strain. He exercises good class control and discipline. He explains things to pupils very clearly. He includes a variety of children's activities in his lessons. He deals with problems promptly before they escalate or get out of hand. He uses efficient systems for dealing with routine administrative matters such as registration, giving out books, tidying up after practical lessons. He does not over-react to children's misbehavior but uses appropriate punishments.

Whitney (1996) as cited in Alabi and Owolabi (2013) on his part term the qualities of a good teacher as professional characteristics and competences. Professional characteristics according to him, include professional values, personal and professional development, communication and relationships, synthesis and application while professional competences of a good teacher cover knowledge and understanding of the learner, their learning subject matter knowledge, curriculum competences, knowledge of the educational system and familiarity with teacher's roles. Medley and Shannon (1994) stated that these qualities are represented in terms of competence, effectiveness, and performance of the teacher. Teacher competency considered in this paper is any single knowledge, skills, or professional value which a teacher may said to possess, and the possession of which is believed to be relevant to the successful practice of teaching. Teacher performance on the other hand, refers to what the teacher does on the job rather than what he or she can do; it is, therefore, specific to the job situation while teacher effectiveness refers to the effect the teacher's performance has on the pupils.

The qualification of professional graduate teachers in Ghana rests mainly on the faculties of education of universities which provide the highest level of professional training. Ijaiya (2008) observed in her study conducted in Nigeria that poor teaching skills is suspected as one major factor responsible for declines noticed in the quality of students graduating from school at different levels of education and poor students' performance in public examinations. She attributed these to problems in teacher preparation programs in Nigerian universities due to the quality of student in-take, deteriorating teaching-learning facilities and criteria for promotion of universities lecturers that do not support quality in teacher training.

The quality of teachers determines the quality of students in the educational system. Therefore, any educational system in a country that undermines the quality of teacher education or pushes it to the background will be doing damage to the progress of the nation. This implies, teacher education should be given a major emphasis in educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers in the country. One thing that can be said about teacher quality is that it is multidimensional and these multiple

dimensions interact to form the chemistry of what makes good teachers good. Hence, the quality of teacher preparation has become the order of the day, probably because the quality of teachers and their competence depend very much on the quality of teacher preparation.

Faculties of education across the world are very much concerned with the three core mandates of training high quality teachers for their respective countries by engaging in research to ensure that quality is maintained and improved, and community service as a way of reaching society for the total development and progress. As a result of this, in Ghana, efforts are being made to improve the competence of teachers by using the competence-based approach to Initial Teacher Training, leading to the award of qualified professional teachers. In Ghana, the National Accreditation Board serves as the controlling body to regulate and ensure teaching standards in the training of professional graduate teachers at the University level in the country. Professional teaching standards describe what a teacher needs to understand and be able to do. The National Accreditation Board provides the direction and structure for guiding the preparation of teachers by all faculties of education offering professional training. The purpose of teacher education in Ghana is to:

- a. Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
- b. Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- c. Help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- d. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world;
- e. Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

The purpose of a teacher preparation programme is to introduce the teacher trainee to the knowledge and skills needed to do a professional job in teaching as the National Accreditation Board stipulates. The teacher trainee is introduced to general education and the principles that underline teaching such as the aims of education, the curriculum, the nature and characteristics of child development, methods of learning and teaching and the resources on which pupils and teachers can draw for learning and teaching. Also, to develop in each teacher-trainee the personal culture and ability to teach and educate others, teacher trainees are expected to develop an awareness of the principles which underlie good human relations, within and across national boundaries, and a sense of responsibility to contribute both by teaching and lead by showing examples that could bring about social, cultural and economic progress. A teacher becomes competence when he/she is well groomed in the areas that give all the skills of a good teacher.

The effective preparation of teachers as a pre-requisite for quality in the teaching in our schools has engaged the

attention of stakeholders. Wilson, Floden and Ferini-Mundy (2001) examined the disagreement over who a qualified teacher is and what it means for a teacher to be well prepared, particularly in the United States of America. Their observations included making changes in the subject matter preparation of teachers by including more related courses: giving attention to such critical aspects of pedagogical preparations such as instructional methods, learning theories, foundations of education and classroom management; harmonizing university-based teacher education components with field experiences; and the effects of policies and accountability systems. Key among the issues relating to teacher preparation observed by Education Commission of the States (2003) are subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, field experience prior to certification, best alternative teacher training programmes, effective teacher preparation strategies, entrance requirements, accreditation of teacher preparation programmes and institutional warranties.

Alibi (2000) studied teacher preparation in Nigeria and found that though the subject matter preparation of student-teachers during their training was adequate, they had weak pedagogical skills due to such factors as inadequate planning, supervision and poor lesson delivery techniques demonstrated by trainee teachers particularly in the Teaching Practice component of their training. She recommended an adequate knowledge by all participants-students, participating school heads and teachers – through appropriate enlightenment programmes and workshops. The duration of the teaching practice exercise should also be increased and provision made for experiences that will help the trainees to acquire relevant skills.

Standards for teaching professionals set by the Ontario College of teachers (2011) as cited in Alabi and Owolabi (2013) include commitment to students and student-learning, professional knowledge, professional practice in the form of appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, leadership in learning communities and on-going professional learning. In Ghana, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service have set standards to ensure that the quality of teachers is improved in the country. The Teacher Education Unit under the Ministry of Education has professional standards for teachers in the country. All the institutions responsible for teacher education corroborate to ensure that preparation of teachers by institutions of higher learning are tailored to meet international best practices in teaching.

The European Commission (2004) devised common principles for teacher competences to ensure that teachers respond appropriately to challenges brought by the knowledge of society and aimed at taking the EU to the highest level of performance as a knowledge driven economy in the world by 2010. The common principle emphasis opportunities for professional development in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, ability to guide and support learners and a good understanding of social context in which education is taking place; positioned for lifelong learning in the context of continuing education; be mobile

within the European Union; and be able to collaborate with schools, community, training providers and sponsoring agencies. Recommendations were also made by international labour organization and UNESCO (2005) on the guiding principles. These included educational objectives and policies, preparation and further education for teachers, conditions for effective teaching and learning as well as teachers' rights and responsibilities (Alabi and Owolabi, 2013).

There is scanty information about the competences of teacher trainees passing through faculties of education in the universities in Ghana especially University for Development Studies, Faculty of Education. This has made it imperative to find out the perception of the UDS, Faculty of Education lecturers on the preparation and competences of the student teachers they are training for both Basic and Senior High schools in the country and beyond.

2. Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study addressed the following research questions.

1. What is the perception of Lecturers on the competence of the student teachers in the faculty of Education, University for Development Studies?
2. What is the perception of Lecturers on the preparation of Students teachers in the Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies?
3. What aspects of the teachers' professional skills do lecturers in the faculty of education perceive student teachers to be good at?
4. What aspects of the teachers' professional skills do lecturers perceive university student teachers to be most deficient in?
5. How does the background characteristics of the lecturers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies, affect their perception of student teachers preparation and competences?

The following hypotheses were also tested:

1. The lecturers' gender, status and their number of years of experience have no significant effect on their perception of the competence of student teachers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies.
2. The lecturers' gender, status and their number of years of experience have no significant effect on their perception of the preparation of student teachers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies

Methodology: The descriptive survey research design was adopted because the existing variables were observed and evaluated. Best and Kahn (2003) reiterate that the descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. The participants for the study included faculty members in the University for Development Studies with at least first degree in professional teacher education.

Faculty of Education of the University for Development Studies which trains and awards professional certificate to teachers was the unit under study. The quality of certificates obtained in this faculty is of the same standard as certificates of faculties of education in other Ghanaian universities where professional teachers are trained. The minimum academic and professional qualifications are common to all faculties of education. The lecturers that give pedagogical training to school teachers were employed under similar conditions of service with respect to their qualifications as it pertains in other Universities' faculties of education in Ghana.

Participants for the study were all the lecturers in the four campuses of the University with professional education background and were part of the teaching practice supervision team for both the on and off campus teaching practice. In all, there were 33 lecturers in the University who were part of the study of which 8 (24.2%) were females and the remaining 25 (75.8%) were males. The Researcher had discussions with the participants and explained to them, the purpose and importance of the study, and assured them of confidentiality and the freedom they had to choose to be part of the study or not. Such a stand took care of the ethical dimension needed in the research. A questionnaire was adopted from a similar study conducted by Alabi and Owolabi (2013) and modified by the researcher and used for the data collection exercise. The data was collected during the second and third trimesters of the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 academics sessions. These periods were appropriate and used because they were the times that student teachers undertake the teaching practice components of their professional training. The descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and percentage, and inferential statistics of analysis of variance, were used to analyze the data.

3. Results and Discussion

The background characteristics of lecturers in the Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies.

Background information obtained from lecturers included age, qualification, years of teaching experience in the university and current status. Their responses are summarized and presented as answer to the first research question. The rate of return of completed questionnaires were found to be 100% as all the 33 lecturers with professional education background responded to the questionnaire administered on them. The academic and professional qualifications held by the lecturers are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Highest qualifications of participants.

Qualifications Held	frequency	percentage
Doctors of philosophy	7	21.2
Master's degree	26	78.8
Total	33	100

Table 1 depicts that holders of the highest professional and academic qualification for the training of teachers in the faculty were clearly in the minority because majority of the participants were master's degree holders as compared to the doctor of philosophy degree holders.

The study obtained information about the gender of the respondents and it is summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Gender of the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	75.8
Female	8	24.2
Total	33	100.0

Survey, 2014

Table 2 shows that 25 of the participants representing 75.8% were males while the remaining 8 of the participants representing 24.2% were females. This is an indication that a greater number of the participants for this study were males. The faculty has more male lecturers with professional education background than their female counterparts. This may be a reflection of fewer females from within the population who have obtained higher qualifications required for university appointments.

Shown on table 3 is the data on the years of teaching experience of lecturers of the faculty of education of the University for Development Studies.

Table 3. Years of University Teaching Experience of Lecturers.

Years	Frequency	percentage
1-2	6	18.2
3-4	17	51.5
5-6	7	21.2
7-10	3	9.1
11- above -	--	--
Total	33	100.0

Survey, 2014

Table 3 portrays that 6 (18.2%) of the participants had taught for 1-2 years in the University, 51.5% had 3-4 years teaching experience and 7 representing 21.2% of the participants had taught for 5-6 years in the university. None of the lecturers had more than 11 years and above in the University teaching experience because the faculty has been in existence for only five years in the University. Only 3 (9.1%) had taught for 7-10 years in the university. These are lecturers who were moved from the older faculties to the education faculty when it was established because of their background in professional education to help the young faculty members. This implies that less than 10% of the lecturers are available to provide leadership and mentorship to the rest of the new lecturers in the faculty.

Given on table 4 are the data on ranks of the participants.

Table 4. Ranks of the Participants.

Ranks	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant Lecturer	--	--
Lecturer	32	97
Senior lecturer	1	3
Associate professor	--	--
Professor	--	--
Total	33	100.0

Survey, 2014

None of the participants is lower than Assistant lecturer status, 32 (97%) are Lecturers while only one (3%) is a senior lecturer. The number of teaching staff at the lower rank of the academic ladder is low and shows that the Faculty of Education in this university may not be lacking career personnel that could spur up the system in future.

Research question 1: What is the perception of Lecturers on the competence of the student teachers in the faculty of Education, University for Development Studies?

Lecturers who participated in the study were requested to indicate how competent they considered student teachers. The lecturers assessed the student teachers on the bases of poor, fair and good. These results were summarized and presented in Table 5

Table 5. Participants' Perception of Student Teachers' Competence.

Assessed Competence	Frequency	Percent
Poor	----	--
Fair	25	75.8
Good	8	24.2
Total	33	100.0

Survey, 2014

Table 5 shows that 25 (75.8%) of the lecturers perceived the competencies of student teachers as fair. The remaining 8 of the Lectures representing 24.2% perceived as good. The low percentage considering the student teachers to be good called for alarm because those making this assessment are themselves involved in the training of the teachers. Thus, if independent Lecturers not so involved in their training were to carry out the assessment, possibly the rating might be lower. The low percentage of the Lecturers perceiving the student teachers to be fair confirms similar studies by Alabi & Owolabi (2013) in Nigeria on the perceived quality of trained teachers by Lecturers in faculty of education of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Research question 2: What is the perception of Lecturers on the preparation of Students teachers in the Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies?

The question seeks to find out the perception of Lecturers on the quality preparation of student teachers' training in the Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies. The lecturers were requested to indicate whether the student teachers' preparation was poor, fair or good. The responses of the participants are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Perception of Lecturers on the preparation of student teachers.

Assessment Of Teacher Preparations	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	--	--
Fair	23	70.8
Good	10	29.2
Total	33	100.0

Survey, 2014

Majority of the lecturers 23(70.8%) considered the preparation of student teachers to be fair but none rated them poor while 10 representing 29.2% perceived the student teachers' preparation to be good. This high

percentage of the Lecturers perceiving the preparation of the student teachers to be fair implies that there are some lapses in the preparation of professional teachers at Faculty of Education.

Research question 3: What aspects of the teachers' professional skills do lecturers in the faculty of education perceive student teachers to be good at?

Lecturers were tasked to arrange in order of priority skills that are most possessed professional skills by student teachers in the faculty of education. The ranking was done in such a way that the most ranked skill was 1 and the least ranked was 5. Their rankings were collated and arranged from the highest occurring to the least. The summary is presented in table 7.

Table 7. Ranking of Professional Skills Possessed by Student Teachers.

Skills	Rank
Subject matter skill	1 st
Lesson note preparation skill	2 nd
Selection of learning/teaching materials	3 rd
Communicative skills	4 th
Classroom management	5 th
Pedagogic skills	6 th

Field work 2014

Subject matter skills came 1st among the skills that lecturers perceive the student teachers to possess and this was followed by Lesson note preparation skill and Selection of learning/teaching materials. Pedagogic skills, however, occupied the 6th position coming behind classroom management. This implies the student teachers are perceived to be very good in the subject matter skills but find it difficult to use appropriate methods in teaching the subject content to the students. This affirms a study by Alabi (2000) on teacher preparation in Nigeria and found that though the subject matter preparation of student-teachers during their training was adequate, they had weak pedagogical skills due to such factors as inadequate planning, supervision and poor lesson delivery techniques demonstrated by trainee teachers particularly in the Teaching Practice component of their training. This is because, the student teachers preparation in terms of subject matter skills during their training was perceived to be adequate. It is refreshing to note that communicative skills was ranked as one of the least deficient skills which means the student- teachers can somehow communicate effectively in the English language (the

language of instruction in Ghanaian schools). The communicative skills is key in teacher preparation because communication is such a pivotal process in teaching that teachers should make every effort to develop skills in it (Farrant 2005).

Research question 4: What aspects of the teachers' professional skills do lecturers perceive University student teachers to be most deficient in?

Table 8 presents a summary of skills student teachers are deficient in as ranked by the lecturers.

Table 8. Ranking of Teachers' Professional Skills deficient in by student teachers.

Professional Skills lacked by trained teachers	Rank
Pedagogic skills	1 st
Classroom management	2 nd
Communicative skills	3 rd
Lesson notes preparation	4 th
Selection of learning/teaching materials	5 th
Subject matter knowledge	6 th

Lecturers ranked pedagogy as the skill which the student teachers are most deficient. Coming next to this are classroom management followed by communicative skills. The ranking shows that the skills which were ranked first as most possessed were ranked last at least deficient. The lecturers were very analytical in ranking these skills because of the critical emphasis put on the importance of communication, mystery of subject matter and pedagogy to teaching in the training of professional teachers (Medley & Shannon 1994; Whittey 1996; education commission of the state, 2003, the European commission, 2004). However, in a study conducted in Nigeria by Alabi and Owolabi (2013) a contradiction was found between the skills which university trained professional teachers were assessed to be good at and deficient as the first three in which they were indulged good at also came on top of those skills in which they were to be poor in.

Hypothesis 1: The lecturers' gender, status and number of years of experience have no significant effect on their perception of the competence of student teachers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies.

Data on perceived competence of student teachers were subject to analysis of variance to test whether significant difference exists based on the gender, number of years teaching in the University and qualification of lecturers. The results are summarized in tables 9.

Table 9. ANOVA Summary of Perceived Differences in student teachers Competence based on Lecturers' Gender, years of teaching and highest qualification.

Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Significance
Gender	Between groups	.104	1	.104	.415	.524
	Within groups	7.775	31	2.51		
	Total	7.879	32			
Years of teaching	Between groups	.048	1	.048	.064	.803
	Within groups	23.467	31	.757		
	Total	23.515	32			
Highest qualification	Between groups	.204	1	.204	1.566	.220
	Within groups	4.038	31	.130		
	Total	4.242	32			

Table 10. ANOVA Summary of Perceived Differences in Student-teachers Preparation based on Lecturers' Gender, years of teaching and highest qualification.

Variable	source of variation	sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	significance
Gender	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	.002	.964
	Within Groups	7.878	31	.254		
	Total	7.879	32			
Years of Experience	Between Groups	2.159	1	2.159	3.133	.087
	Within Groups	21.357	31	.689		
	Total	23.515	32			
Highest qualification	Between Groups	.329	1	.329	2.609	.116
	Within Groups	3.913	31	.126		
	Total	4.242	32			

As shown in table 9, in terms of competences of student-teachers, the gender differences of lecturers have no significance effect on their perception. Also, there were no significant differences in the perception of lecturers based on their qualification and number of years of teaching in the University. The outcome is that lecturers' perception of student teachers competences has no relation with lecturers' gender, number of years of teaching and qualification of the lecturers.

Hypothesis 2: The lecturers' gender, status and their number of years of experience have no significant effect on their perception of the preparation of student teachers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies

Results in table 10 shows that the lecturers' gender has no significant differences on their perception on the preparation of student-teachers by lecturers in the faculty of education, University for Development Studies. Similarly, in terms of preparation of student-teachers, there were no significant differences in the perception of lecturers based on their years of teaching experience and qualification. Lecturers perform virtually the same task in the training and preparation of student-teachers in the faculty and as such, gender, years of teaching and qualification may not make any significant difference in their perceptions of the competences and preparation of the student-teachers. Also, because the faculty is one of the young faculties in the University, most of the lecturers have similar years of teaching in the faculty, the years of teaching experiences of lecturers from existing faculties posted to the education faculty because of the professional education background and newly appointed lecturers in the faculty are similar. Hence, years of experience could not have made any significance difference in the perceived preparation and competence of the student teachers (Alibi, 2000; Noraini, Loh, Norjoharruddeen, Ahmed & Rahimi, 2007; Ijaiya 2008; Alabi & Owolabi, 2013).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

It cannot be gainsaid that the success of teacher preparation and competence will significantly impact on the quality of education in the country and thereby improve the educational standard of students which currently stakeholders consider to be poor. Generally, the lecturers in the Faculty of Education perceived the student teachers in the faculty to be fair in their preparation. The finding of the study shows that

23 (70.8%) out of 33 of the lecturers perceived university student teachers to be fair in their preparation while only 10 (29.2%) perceived their preparation to be good. This implies there are some lapses in the preparation of professional teachers at the Faculty of Education in the University for Development Studies. They further rated the student teachers' professional competencies as also fair. In terms of competence, 25 (75.8%) out of the 33 lecturers perceived student teachers to be fair and only 8 (24.2%) perceived them to be good. Also, student teachers were perceived to be deficient in lesson preparation skills.

However, quality education is not only found in the outcome but also in the inputs and process. Hence, lecturers play a pivotal role in the quality preparation of student teachers and therefore the lecturers need to pay urgent attention to the preparation of the student teachers than they have hitherto received if quality preparation and hence quality education is to be achieved. Since it is the Universities that should promote standards for their professional programmes and dictates what should go in regarding preparation and competence, the Faculty of Education in the University for Development Studies should intensify efforts to develop appropriate teaching skills in student teachers. Such skills should include communication skills which could be developed through improved general studies curriculum with English language as a component and pedagogical skills which could be enhanced through improved subject methodology curriculum to address the lapses that were found in the preparation of student teachers in the faculty. For teaching, inputs also have to be obtained from other stakeholders especially the institutions the student teachers are finally going to render their services. Further, in view of the importance of teacher competence to educational qualities in schools, student intake into the teacher education programmes in the university should be based mainly on merit and program background of the students but not on other criteria of catchment and educationally disadvantages areas. Also, the duration of teaching practice exercise could be increased with adequate plans to ensure that student teachers gain more useful experiences from the exercise.

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