

Teaching Practice Exercise and Classroom Performance of Ideal Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study focused on Teaching Practices Exercise and its Impact on the Classroom Performance of Ideal teachers in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study practically sought to find out the influence of content knowledge, knowledge about the learners, proper lesson preparation and teaching methods on the classroom performance of an ideal teacher. Four research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A sample of 600 teachers from 60 secondary schools out of 355 secondary schools in Kwara State formed the subjects for this study. A researcher made questionnaire was used to elicit data from respondents. The research instrument has a 4 point rating scale and 20 items based on the study variables. After the administration, scoring and collation of the instrument, the data obtained were subjected to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The finding of this research revealed that teaching practice exercise to an extent has impact and influence on the classroom performance of an ideal teacher. Based on the conclusion, recommendation was made with the view of improving teacher's performance and securing a brighter future for the future generation through participation in teaching practice.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Classroom Performance, Ideal Teachers, Secondary Schools

1. Introduction and Literature Review

Teaching practice refers to the preparation of student-teachers for teaching by practical training using teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques; and exercise of different activities of daily school life. "The term teaching practice embraces all the learning experience of student- teachers in schools [2]". Teaching practice exercise occupies a key position in the programme of teacher preparation. Perhaps, in order to improve the teaching profession in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in its Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian universities (2007) stipulates that all faculty of education students in the university should undergo a compulsory teaching practice exercise and it is a necessary condition for graduation. This is also stipulated in the Colleges of Education Minimum Academic Standards of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for students in the colleges of education. "It provides a culminating experience in teacher preparation and also provides

opportunity to student teachers to become socialized into the profession [7]". Performance of teaching practice exercise provides basis for predicting the future success of the teacher. The entire process involved in teaching practice exercise is an important contributing factor towards the quality of teacher education programme. "During teaching practice exercise, interaction with students in the school provide a high degree of emotional stability within the student -teacher because such process of socialization enables the student -teacher to gain experience by linking to a culture of teaching and also feeling engaged, challenged and even empowered [16]". It should therefore be noted that going into teaching profession without undergoing teaching practice exercise could result in future poor performance. Teaching effectiveness criteria involve content knowledge, knowledge about learners, lesson preparation and teaching methods as well as understanding learners' behaviours. Student- teachers gain various experiences in schools with different resulting assumptions about teachers' role such as abilities, methods and qualities.

Classroom performance refers to the accomplishment of a

given teaching task. Effective teaching involves acquiring relevant knowledge about the contents that a teacher intends to teach and the ability to explore appropriate teaching techniques in the classroom. Teachers need to understand subject matters deeply and flexibly so they can help students to create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to reflex everyday life activities.

Educationist like Brown, Morehead, Smith (2008) defined an ideal teacher as one who holds educational degree in a specific subject area required for teaching. "Hence, the impact of teaching practice exercise in the development of teacher education and the enhancement of classroom performance of an ideal teacher has been recognized globally [13]". Therefore, effective teaching practice exercise is expected to make the student-teachers to have content knowledge of their disciplines, knowledge about the learners, preparation of lesson notes and various methods of teaching which will be useful to them when they later become ideal teachers.

"Content knowledge is knowledge about the actual subject matter that is to be learned or taught [5]". To teach all the students according to today's standards, teachers need to understand subject matters deeply so that as educators, teachers can help students relate one idea to another. Teachers need to see how ideas connect contents of academic and to everyday life. "This kind of understanding provides content of knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas clear and well understood to others, especially the learners [15]". Content knowledge is very important in the classroom performance of a teacher as it deals with the teaching process. It is a useful form of representing and communicating content and how student's best learn the specific concepts and topics of a subject. "If student teachers are to be effective in their future career, they must understand the content of their course of study as well as well as general knowledge on generic teaching principles [14]" and this can be better known during teaching practice exercise. "Through proper knowledge of the content, the aim of teaching which is to help students gain literacy, enable students to use and enjoy their learning experiences and to help students develop broader understandings of new information is being achieved [8]".

Knowledge about students enables teachers to make sound judgement about students' progress and achievement in accordance to the National Standards. "It also helps the teacher to consider students' individual differences in terms of poor sight or vision, poor hearing, shyness, poor speech development, tension, hyperactive behaviour, noise, studying habits and the background of the student [4]". Effective communication between the teacher and the students is necessary for learning to be ensured. For teachers to conduct the classroom and shape the mind of the learners, interaction between the students and teachers becomes extremely important.

Effective lesson preparation is another germane area being emphasized in teaching practice exercise. Proper lesson preparation helps the teacher to control the way time is used. "Thus, for ideal teachers to systematically and carefully plan for productive use of instructional time, planning a lesson

should not be an incidental affair [12]". A conscientious teacher takes deliberate steps to lesson preparation.

Teaching method comprises the principles and methods used for instruction. The issue of teaching methods is very crucial in any learning process. It determines to a large extent the learning outcomes and instructional programme. The choice of teaching method has to be made, taking into consideration major factors such as the objectives of the lesson and unit of instruction, individual differences of the learners, the nature and climate of the teaching environment, the nature of the subject matter and topic to be taught, the ability of the teacher and policies of the school and class size.

It should therefore be echoed at this juncture that all the attributes and pedagogical characteristics elucidated above are impacted on to the student-teachers which they later practicalized during teaching practice exercise. It is therefore expected that these should have impact on the classroom performance of ideal teachers, compare to their counterparts who did not undergo or shy away with teaching practice exercise. "Ituen (2005) conducted a study on the importance of teaching practice on teaching profession and the result showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' content knowledge and classroom performance of the teacher [9]". "Also, a study on lesson preparation and how it affects the classroom performance of the teachers carried out by Ekpo (2006) revealed the fact that there was a significant relationship between lesson preparation and classroom performance of an ideal teacher [6]".

1.1. Statement of Problem

It has been observed that many teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State cannot manage classroom situation effectively, in terms of audibility and student – teacher relationship. This has therefore been traced to the fact that some of them (teachers) had shy away from teaching practice exercise during school days while some did not undergo the exercise at all. It is based on this that this study intends to examine the relationship between teaching practice exercise and classroom performance of ideal teachers in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Content knowledge and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between knowledge about the learners and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between lesson preparation and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between teaching methods and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

2. Methodology

The survey research design was utilized in this study. The

population of this study consisted of 355 public secondary schools in Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 secondary schools. In each of the schools, ten teachers were selected. On the whole, 600 teachers served as subjects for this study. Questionnaire titled "Teaching Practice and Teachers' Classroom Performance Questionnaire (TPATCPQ)" was used to elicit data from the sampled respondents. The instrument was divided into two sections, Section A and B. section A consisted mainly items on personal data and sections B consisted of 20 items relating to the subject matter of this study. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. In that, copies of the instrument were given to experts in Educational Evaluation and History of Education for comments and suggestions before the instrument was finally administered. The instrument was pilot tested on a sample of twenty teachers in secondary schools in Oyo State and the reliability co-efficient

of 0.63 was obtained. The researcher personally visited the sampled schools and administered the questionnaires. This enabled the researcher to explain and interpret some of the items of the questionnaire to the respondents. Permissions were taken from the school principals before the administration of the questionnaire really commenced. Hence, data collected from the respondents were collated and coded; and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to analyse the data in relation to the earlier formulated research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between Content knowledge and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Table 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between content knowledge and ideal teachers' classroom performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	Df	r-Cal	R-Crit
Content Knowledge	600	299.8	87.6			
Teachers' Performance	600	301.8	118.3	598	0.340	0.196

As shown in the table 1, the calculated r value (0.340) is greater than the critical r table value (0.196) at 598 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between knowledge about the learners and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Table 2. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between knowledge about the learners and ideal teachers' classroom performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	Df	r-Cal	R-Crit
Knowledge about the learners	600	268.5	89.2			
Teachers' Performance	600	284.3	104.1	598	0.263	0.196

As indicated in the table 2, the calculated r value (0.263) is greater than the critical table value of (0.196) for 598 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between lesson preparation and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between lesson preparation and ideal teachers' classroom performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	Df	r-Cal	R-Crit
Lesson preparation	600	275.3	85.8			
Teachers' Performance	600	282.7	105.6	598	0.275	0.196

From table 3 above, the calculated r value (0.275) is greater than the critical table value of 0.196 for 598 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between teaching methods and classroom performance of ideal teachers.

Table 4. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between teaching method and ideal teachers' classroom performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	Df	r-Cal	R-Crit
Teaching methods	600	259.4	79.6			
Teachers' Performance	600	278.1	89.3	598	0.226	0.196

Table 4 above shows that the calculated (r) value (0.226) is greater than the critical table value (0.196) for 598 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected .

4. Discussion of Findings

The results of the findings in the study are discussed as follows:

Research hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between content knowledge and classroom performance of ideal teachers was rejected. By implication, it means that there is a significant relationship between content knowledge and ideal teachers; classroom performance. This result is in line with the view of Shulman (2007) which states that the understanding of the content to be taught enables teachers to make ideas clear and well understood to others especially learners. Also, Ornstein and Lasley (2000) states that if student- teachers are to be effective in their future career, they must understand the content of their course of study as well as general knowledge on generic teaching principles. Similarly, Grimmett and Mackinnon (2002) opines that through proper knowledge of the content, the aim of teaching which is to help students develop broader understanding of new information is being achieved.

Research hypothesis two which states that there is no significant relationship between knowledge about the learners and ideal teachers' classroom performance was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between knowledge about the learners and ideal teachers' classroom performance. This finding corroborates with the view of Bernard (2008) who states that teacher's knowledge about learners helps the teacher to consider students' individual differences in terms of poor sight or vision, poor hearing, shyness, poor speech development, tension, hyperactive behaviour, noise, studying habits and the background of the students. "It is also in support of the views of Ituk (2000) which states that the teacher while teaching considers students with poor hearing by giving them seats preferred by them where they can hear from and by being audible at all times [10]". Therefore, teachers need to familiarize him or herself with the students and this will help him to have adequate control and management of the classroom situation.

Research hypothesis three which states that there is no significant relationship between lesson preparation and classroom performance of ideal teachers was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between lesson preparation and classroom performance of ideal teachers. This finding is in agreement with the opinion of Ogunniyi (2006) who states that teachers should systematically and carefully plan for productive use of instructional time. In the same vein, Akinboye (2000) posits that precise lesson preparation must allow for flexible delivery by the teachers. Teachers should always prepare for lesson before presentation.

Research hypothesis four which states that there is no significant relationship between methods of teaching and classroom performance of ideal teachers was rejected. This follows that there is a significant relationship between methods of teaching and classroom performance of ideal teachers. In connection with this, Abdullahi (1992) submits that the choice of teaching method had to be made taking into consideration major factors such as the objectives of the lesson, and unit of instruction, individual differences of

the learners, the nature and climate of the teaching environment, the nature of subject matter and topic to be taught, the ability of the teacher and policies of the school. This finding agrees with the view of Balogun (2007) who reveals that the choice of teaching method or methods used largely depend on the information or skill that is being taught and it may also be influenced by the aptitude and enthusiasm of the students.

5. Conclusion

This paper has critically examined the relationship between teaching practice exercise and classroom performance of ideal teachers. It can therefore be concluded that the teachers given the experience from teaching practice exercise have vehemently indicated that significant relationship exist between content knowledge, knowledge about the learners, lesson preparation as well as teaching methods which they had practicalized during teaching practice and their classroom performance. It is therefore obvious that ideal teachers who have undergone teaching practice exercise during the course of their study will be able to positively enhance classroom performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

- (1) The Ministry of Education should ensure that teaching profession is restricted to only those people who studied education.
- (2) School authorities should ensure that student- teachers while on teaching practice exercise are strictly supervised to ensure that they are ready for their future teaching profession.
- (3) Students on teaching practice should be seriously monitored and assessed to ensure that they don't take this practical aspect of the teaching profession with levity.
- (4) There should be orientation programme for students before going on teaching practice exercise and this programme should be packaged in such a way that will make the exercise interesting and appealing to the students.

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