

ASSESSING PRE-SERVICE BUSINESS EDUCATION TEACHERS CHALLENGES IN THEIR PURSUIT OF QUALITY TEACHING PRACTICE IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study assessed the pre-service teachers challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated and one hypothesis of no significant difference guided the study. Survey designs were adopted for the study. The population comprised of all 181 final-year students 2022/2023 session of business education from the two public universities in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. Namely Alex Ekwueme Federal University and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The entire population was studied without sampling because the size is manageable. A structured questionnaire/title: Assessing Pre-Service Teachers' Challenges in Their Pursuit of Quality Teaching Practice in Nigeria, which consisted of 20 items in two sections was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was face validated by three experts from Business education and Test and Measurement Department. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and a coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis were tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed some challenges facing pre- service in their pursuit of quality teaching practice exercises which include: difficulty in planning lessons; difficulty in using a variety of teaching methods to sustain the students interest; inadequate time; lack of instructional materials in their schools of practice; non-professional attitude of the school administrators and supervisory challenges. Based on the findings, It was recommended among others that: Government and non-governmental organizations should assist in supplementing educational materials and learning resources that would prepare the students for learning; competent and dedicated supervisors should be used in teaching practice supervisory, adequate curriculum guidelines, facilities, reference materials (such as text-book) should be made available.

Key words: *Business education; preservice teachers, teaching practice; challenges.*

Introduction

Business education is one of the programme that is richly provided by Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria. Akpan and Okiridu(2018) defined business education as an

aspect of vocational education, a specialized attitude leading to employability and advancement in business office occupations, business operations as well as teaching business subjects. Umoru and Jimoh (2020) viewed business education as a conglomerate of courses that are concerned with the acquisition, development inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society. Thus, business education being an aspect of vocational education emphasizes teaching skills acquisition. Amoor in Timaya and Ductar (2023) opined that the goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. Amoor in Timaya and Ductar (2023) added that the primary aim of business education is to prepare people for roles in enterprises, such roles could be as employee, entrepreneur and or simply self-employed. Igboke (2021) stated that the main objective of business education at all levels of education is to equip the recipients with skills in business occupation, office management and entrepreneurial skills for self-employment and job creation.

Business education is taught at different levels of education with different nomenclature. The junior secondary level, the programme is taught as business studies with book-keeping, commerce, typing, short-hand and office practice as component parts. In the senior secondary level, business education is taught as financial accounting, commerce, marketing, and entrepreneurship (practical). At the tertiary level, the programme is operated by universities, polytechnics and college of education a four-year, two-year or three-year course, depending on the nature of the programme (Ezeani & Ogundola, 2016). At the university level of education, the programme is divided into specialized options in accounting, marketing, and office technology and management. These options usually run general courses in the first and second level of study after which students focus on specialized subject areas at their third level. To teach business education as a subject in senior secondary school and tertiary institutions require trained personnel who are competent and resourceful. The professional training of teachers in Nigeria is carried out in designated institutions like Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education in the Universities, (FRN, 2013). The above institutions award certificates such as the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), and Bachelor's degree in Education.

For the teacher trainee to be effective, he or she must acquire needed competencies and skills. Agogo; Okoh and Agogo (2020) established that the students' teacher can only survive the teaching practice exercise provided they acquire the following qualities/skills and work ethics which are as follows: good personal appearance; audible and non-pitched or harsh voice during teaching; good emotional control and well-mannered; good teaching entering behaviour punctuality to all the school activities. The above authors went further to say that if students teacher were able to possess the above work ethics and skills he or she would be able to teach the student well during the teaching practice exercise (that is subject competence); others are, apply all the best teaching methods for maximum learning to take place; adhere to all the professional ethics in the class; accessing his or her students after teaching and relate well with the students, fellow teachers as well as other stakeholders in education sector.

Before the actual teaching practice in the school, the students are given opportunities to do some micro-teaching in universities with the classmates. Each student has to give at least two lessons in the presence of the course instructor. Based on their performance in the micro-teaching, they receive constructive feedback from classmates as well as instructors. Only those who pass teaching practice strategies I and II courses can go for the teaching practice in the schools in the following semester (Aldabbas, 2020). Micro-teaching prepares trainees on what they need to master before going to the field for teaching practice. It is an organized practice teaching which aims at giving students and teachers' confidence, support and feedback. It is worth of note that micro-teaching programme prepares students teachers for the micro-teaching practice by

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enabling the students observe and acquire teaching skills. Thus, the practical aspect of teacher training referred to teaching practice (Fatimeyin, 2019).

For the qualifications of an envisaged teacher and is required to be conducted effectively. According to Kuross (2016), teaching practice is a requirement in the teacher education programme where a student cannot graduate without having gone through the teaching practice process. According to Chikezie (2017), teaching practice goes beyond what to teach and know how to teach. Chikezie (2017) went further to say that the purpose of teaching practice is to develop several competencies in the trainee teachers which include interpersonal, pedagogical, intercultural, and psychological competencies. Kuross (2016), stated further that teaching practice is an organized guidance whereby students are posted to schools and teach for a term (13–14 weeks) with the guidance of cooperating teachers and school management. Kuross (2016) summarized that the teaching skills are acquired in teaching practice are not something new in the African educational system and concluded The Traditional African society skills such as hunting, singing, reciting, carving and drawing were learned through practices. In the view of Davidson in Aldabbos (2020), teaching practice is the opportunity given to trainee teachers to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired during the theoretical part of their preparation period with the hope of become proficient practicing teachers.” Okorie in Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2017) further described teaching practice as a period that enables the students to learn about the actual work of the teacher in the classroom as well as out of class experience.

According to the National Universities Commission (Benchmark) and The National Commission for Colleges of Education (Minimum Standard) in Aglezor (2017), the following sets of objectives have been established for why teaching practice is a mandatory component of teacher training: to expose student-teachers to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers; to provide the forum for student-teacher to translate educational theories and principles into practice; to enable student-teachers discover their own strengths and weaknesses in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them to address their weaknesses and enrich their strength to familiarize student-teachers with the real school environment as their future work place; to provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics, and experience for full-time teaching after graduation; to help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and to serve as a means of assessing the quality of training being provided by teacher training institutions.

An integral part of teaching practice is student teachers supervision and assessment. The supervision is done through a coordinated partnership between the teachers in the school of practice and the institution lecturers (Ayelagbe & Bello, (2015). Ideally, the supervisor should visit and meet with the student teachers at their assigned postings at least three (3) times. During the twelve (12) weeks of field experience to enable the supervisors to make informed decisions regarding the aspiring teachers progress and performance as prospective classroom teachers. At the first meeting, which is at the beginning, supervisors would set expectations, answer any questions that the student teachers may have. The second visitor meeting should be evaluative in nature, where the supervisors observe the student teachers and provide feedback, set on-going goals, and answer any questions that the students may have. The final meeting should be a conclusive evaluation meeting to determine the completion of the field experience and the final grade (Aglezor, 2017).

Teaching practice has attracted many researchers, and most of the findings show that teaching practice has more strengths than weaknesses. Some of the strengths established by the research are: teaching practice enable students teachers to understand their students environment and accept students diversity; it helps the students teachers to participate in teaching before

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getting into the real world of the teaching profession; it provides a high degree of emotional involvement of a mostly positive nature; teaching practice makes students teachers feel engaged, challenged, and empowered. It exposes the trainee teachers to the realities of effective teaching and helps them to try out new method of teaching and gain practical classroom experience under the guidance of experts. Teaching practice provides some basis for predicting the future success of the teacher and the quality of teacher education programme. It grants students and teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment. The authors concluded by saying that teaching practice allows students and teachers to discover their abilities and creativity that help them in their future teaching processes (Kuross, 2016).

(Kuross, 2016). In another development, Ayelaagbe and Bello (2015) expressed in their submission that teaching practice is important in teacher training and contributes to a better understanding of the teaching process in the following ways: It helps in the personality development and confidence building of trainees; It is effective in the retention of learned behaviors; It enhances and develops communication, problem solving, and critical thinking skills; and it helps the teacher trainee think on the go when faced with daily classroom encounters with students and school management issues; it improves learning through realistic and practical applications of learned theories; and it allows for feedback to help improve on shortcomings. During visits, supervisors have to give written and oral feedback. Improvement and best practices were commended, shortcomings highlighted and suggestions for improvement made. However, despite the importance of teaching practice, it sometimes becomes a demoralizing and frightening experience. It is on this background that this study assesses the challenges faced by pre-service teachers challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite that, business education programme, prepare students to become teachers of business subjects and courses. Some of the graduates of business education do not get practical knowledge of the teaching and are still incapable of putting theories into practice. So, the need to expose the student to practical experiences in the teaching profession through teaching practice is exigent. There appears to be a wide gap between the knowledge possessed by university graduates of business education and the requirements for securing school teachers. Business education students are not equipped with the required skills for their employability skills in Nigerian secondary schools and higher institutions in the present advanced technological era. Teaching practice is actually supposed to bridge the gap and provide the students with the current knowledge of the teaching profession. This has not been the case, as students appear to face a lot of difficulties before, during, and after the teaching practice. Inspecie, personal observations show that some students feel reluctant to practice teaching in a real classroom situation. The above reasons led the researchers to carry out this study to further assess the challenges faced by pre-service teachers challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the challenges faced by pre-service teachers challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed:

1. The personal related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice.
2. The school-based challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to guide the study;

1. What are the personal related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice?
2. What are the school based related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice?

Research Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 the level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in business education pre-sevice teachers challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in federal and state universities.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all final year (181) students 2022-2023 session of business education from two public universities in Ebonyi State Nigeria. Namely, Alex Ekwueme Federal University and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The entire population was studied without sampling because the size is manageable. Data for this study were collected by means of twenty (20) Items questionnaire developed by the researchers titled: Assessing Pre-Service Teachers Challenges in quality teaching practice In Nigeria (APTCPQTP). The questionnaire was structured into three parts. Part A was designed to obtain the personal data of the respondents, part B was structured to obtain the prevuous data on personal challenges encountered by pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice during teaching practices and part C was to obtain data on school based challenges encountered in their pursuit of quality teaching practice. The responses obtained for parts B and C were structured on 4 points adopted on a like or scale as follows; strongly agreed (SA) = 4, agreed (A) = 3, disagreed (D) = 2 and strongly disagreed (SD) = 1. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in business education, testing and measurement. Internal consistency of the instrument using Cornbach alpha yielded a reliability coefficiency of 0.88. The instrument was administered to the respondent by researchers. Copies of the questionnaire administered were dully filled out and returned, thus representing 100% return. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using mean rating. The decision rule was that any item with a mean score of 2.50 or above was taken as agreed upon, while items with a mean score below 2.50 were taken as disagreed. The hypothesis was tested using a t-test statistic at the 0.50 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

What are the personal related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice?

Table 1: Challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice

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S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	X	SD	REMARK
1	Difficulty in planning lesson note	3.7	0.10	Agreed
2	Difficulty in using a variety of methods to sustain students interest	3.6	0.21	Agreed
3	Inadequate training period	3.4	0.11	Agreed
4	Poor interpersonal relationships with subject teachers during teaching practice	3.6	0.12	Agreed
5	Finding it difficult to use instructional materials	3.6	0.43	Agreed
6	Not enthusiastic about teaching	3.4	0.55	Agreed
7	Teaching practice is very stressful for me	2.8	0.24	Agreed
8	Inadequate orientation to the teaching practice	3.9	0.42	Agreed
9	No allowance is given for the teaching practice	3.6	0.27	Agreed
10	Clash in fixing lecture period in my school teaching practice exercise	3.8	0.32	Agreed
CLUSTER MEAN		3.54	0.28	AGREED

Note: X = mean; SD = standard deviation; N = Number of respondents; N = 118

Table 1 revealed that the mean values of the respondents on the 10 items ranged from 2.8 to 3.8, which are all greater than the cutoff point value of 2.5 on the 4 point rating scale. This indicated that the respondents agreed that the ten (10) identified items are the personal related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice. The overall cluster mean was 3.54, which is greater than the 2.50 cutoff point. Indicating that the cluster items are rated highly by respondents.

Research Question Two

What are the perceived school based challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice?

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	X	SD	REMARK
1	Lack of instructional materials in my school of practice	2.8	0.22	Agreed
2	Overcrowding of classrooms	2.7	0.46	Agreed
3	Poorly equipped libraries	2.5	0.35	Agreed
4	Poorly equipped laboratories	2.7	0.35	Agreed
5	Misunderstanding on the part of the school administration	3.6	0.14	Agreed
6	Lack of feedback from supervisors to enable me to make corrections	2.5	0.23	Agreed
7	Non spaceprofessional attitude of school administrators	3.8	0.13	Agreed
8	Supervision is not regularly and uniformly done.	2.6	0.34	Agreed
9	Interference from the side space the of school teacher	3.0	0.43	Agreed
10	Impose difficult expectations on the trainee students	2.6	0.46	Agreed
CLUSTER MEAN		2.98	0.35	AGREED

The result in Table 2 shows that the mean values of the respondents on the 10 items ranged from 2.6 to 3.8, which are all greater than the cutoff point value of 2.50 on the 4 point rating scale. This implied that the respondents agreed that the identified ten (10) items are the school related challenges encountered by business education pre-service teachers in their pursuit of quality teaching practice. The overall cluster mean was 2.98, which is greater than the 2.50 cutoff point. Indicating that the cluster items are rated highly by respondents.

Hypothesis one: There are no significant differences in the mean rating of Federal and state Universities business education pre-service teachers challenges in pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the mean responses of AE-FUNAI and EBSU business education pre-service teachers to challenges encountered in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in Nigeria

S/N		N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cri	L/significant	Remark
1.	AE-FUNAI	62	3.5	0.28					
					116	-1.76	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
2.	EBSU	56	2.9	0.35					

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of -1.76 is less than the t- critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It is observed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of pre-service business education at federal and state universities, teachers on the challenges experienced in their pursuit of quality teaching practice. Consequently, the hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected.

Discussion of Finding:

The findings of the study in Table 1 revealed that pre-service teachers personal related challenges in pursuit of quality teaching practice include: difficulty planning in lesson notes; difficulty in using a variety of methods to sustain students interest; inadequate training period; poor interpersonal relationships with subject teachers during teaching practice; finding it difficult to use instructional materials; not being enthusiastic about teaching; teaching practice is very stressful for me; inadequate orientation on the teaching practice; no allowance is given for the aching practice; clash in fixing lecture periods in my school teaching practice exercise. The findings of the study corroborate the findings of Sarocobena in Annan and Arihin (2022), who found that most of the problems take place due to a lack of mainly audio-visual materials, other supplementary materials needed, pronunciation, translation, reading, speaking, and writing activities. Also, Al-monani(2016) found that fear of fear, communication skills, and putting theories into practice were common challenges. Aldabbus (2020) concluded that dealing with a large number of students in the class, a poor lesson plan, and designing differentiated task, were also common.

The findings of the study in Table 2 revealed the pre-service teachers school related challenges in pursuit of quality teaching practice to include: lack of instructional materials in my school of practice; overcrowding of classrooms; poorly equipped libraries; poorly equipped laboratories; misunderstanding on the part of the school administration; lack of feedback from

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supervisors to enable me to take corrections; non professional attitude of school administrators; Supervision is not regularly and uniformly done; Interference from the side of the school teacher; Impose difficult expectations on the trainee students. In agreement, Mahmood and Igbal (2018) found that the major challenges include dealing with poor physical infrastructure, scarce and underused academic resources, inflexibility in classroom management, the non-professional attitude of school administration, and trying out innovation without challenging the prevailing school norms. The findings are consonance with Okwonko and Chiwkuedu (2017), who reported that a lack of tables and chairs, the non-cooperative attitude of regular teachers, lack of good classrooms; poorly equipped libraries and laboratories pose a big challenges to the student teachers.

The findings also indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean rating of pre-service teachers in business education at federal and state universities based on the challenges experienced in their pursuit of quality teaching practice

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that pre-service teachers encountered challenges in their pursuit of quality teaching practice in the Faculty of Education at AE-FUNAI and EBSU. The challenges are similar to those found by other researchers, as shown in the literature review. There were, however, two types of challenges. Firstly, personal related challenges, some of the pre-service teachers lacked the necessary confidence to carry out the teaching practice, and others showed very little class room management skills. Secondly, there were school related challenges that pre-service teachers confronted in the pursuit of quality teaching practice. For instance, the cooperative teachers did not provide the trainees with adequate support. The participants complained about the lack of facilities and the restrictions that hindered them from using a more advanced method of teaching. Based on these findings, those responsible for the teaching practice programme at the university should study these challenges and conduct a comprehensive review of the programme at with an emphasis on the role of the supervisor and cooperative teacher.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made for this study:

1. The pre-service teachers should be encouraged in all possible ways to enable these students to perform their teaching practice with minimal problems.
2. The pre-service teachers should meaningfully integrate themselves into the systems of their cooperating schools to gain maximally from their teaching practice exercises.
3. Workshops on teaching practice supervision by the training institutions should be organized regularly for all supervisors to clarify issues that will affect the quality of teaching practice and supervision such as proper interpretation, supervision instruments, so that there is supervision consensus in dealing with similar student issues and supervisor bias is in check.
4. Government and non-governmental organizations should assist in supplementing educational materials and learning resources that would prepare the students for learning.
5. All teacher training institutions should have a well equipped micro-teaching laboratory where students will be well exposed to the rudiments of teaching before the actual teaching.

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