

Managing Teaching Practice for Quality Assurance in Teachers Production in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study focused on managing teaching practice for quality assurance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were answered and tested respectively in the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey design while the population of the study consisted of four tertiary institutions offering teacher education programmes in the state. The population of respondents comprised 5,978 students and 802 supervisors thus, giving a total of 6,780 respondents. The sample size of 475 respondents, comprising 385 students and 90 supervisors was drawn from the population of the study through Taro Yamane sample determination technique using disproportionate sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection was the questionnaire titled “Questionnaire for Managing Teaching Practice for Quality Assurance in Teachers Production in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State (QMTPQATPTIRS)”. The questionnaire items were responded to on a four point modified Likert scale. The face and content validity were determined by experts while the reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha with reliability index of 0.72. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistic. The findings of the study revealed that co-operating school teachers did not have any input in the grading of student-teachers they mentored which in turn had informed their indifference to teaching practice. The study further revealed that student-teachers were ill-motivated by what they see of the teaching profession in Nigeria which had contributed to the unserious attitude of some of them. The study therefore concluded that teaching practice exercise was not well carried out in the state and such recommended that Teacher training institutions should incorporate at least fifty percent (50%) inputs from co-operating teachers in their teaching practice assessment score sheet. This is to make difficult for faculty supervisors to sideline them.

Key Words: Teaching Practice, Quality Assurance

Introduction

Education is widely seen as a viable tool for economic and social development of any society or country. This is the reason governments world over invest in it. However, education cannot achieve its mandate except quality teachers are available in their right quantities. The vital role teachers' play in the education system of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. As long as education remains a vital instrument for national development, the position of the teacher as an essential factor in the development of the nation's manpower will continue to be of prime importance. This emphasizes the place of the teacher in quality education. For any meaningful development to take place in any country, its education system must be of the right quality. However, there cannot be quality education system without quality teachers. The Nigerian National Policy on Education recognized this fact when it stated that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2014). The document therefore emphasizes that teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. What this implies is that quality teachers can only be a product of quality education particularly teacher education. It is believed that if skilled, knowledgeable, competent and motivated teachers are sent to schools in their right numbers, given the enabling environment, students' performance morally and academically will improve, and consequently, the laudable national educational goals and objectives will also be achieved.

The focus of teacher education is the teacher in that it equips the teacher with knowledge and skills. As the saying goes "one can only give what one has". This saying applies to the teacher also as he can only teach what he knows. This brings the business of teacher production in the Nigeria teacher education system to the fore. Teacher education as conceived in the nation's National Policy on Education, is an aspect of tertiary education meant to professionally trained teachers or would-be teachers. It is structured to equip teachers for effective performance of their duties. Thus, the following constitute the goals of teacher education in Nigeria.

1. Production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
2. Encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
4. Provision of teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments and make them adaptable to changing situations
5. Enhancement of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession (FRN, 2014).

Based on these, the following institutions have been charged with the responsibilities of providing professional training for teachers or would-be teachers provided they continuously meet the required minimum standards: Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education, Institutes of Education, National Teachers' Institute, Schools of Education in the Polytechnics, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and National Mathematics Centre (NMC). It should however be noted that teacher education comprises of two aspects: The theoretical aspect which gives theoretical knowledge and the practical aspect which imparts practical knowledge. The theoretical knowledge is acquired in teacher training institutions while practical knowledge is acquired in the field during field work, that is, internship popularly known as teaching practice.

In Nigeria, there is a policy framework supporting internship for the teaching profession. Number 78c of the Nigeria National Policy on Education provided for internship (popularly known as teaching practice) when it stated that "Newly qualified teachers shall serve a period of internship one (1) year for degree holders and two (2) years for NCE holders"(FRN,2014 :31). Additionally, the National Teachers Education Policy (NTEP), Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) all provided for teaching practice for would-be teachers (NTEP, 2009; NUC, 2007; NCCE, 2009; TRCN, 2007). NTEP (2009) and TRCN (2007) recommended one full year of teaching practice exercise for would-be teachers, to be taken in the 5th year of their study, thereby advocating a 5-year teacher education programme. In a similar manner, the National Universities Commission (2007) benchmark minimum academic standards for undergraduate education programmes in Nigerian universities tagged teaching practice as 'Edu 500' with six(6) credit units attached to it (NUC, 2007:19-20). The document further stated in number 2.1.5.2 (9 and 6) that students who secured admission into education faculty through Unified Matriculation Examination (UME) shall spend 5 years while Direct Entry (having passed NCE or Diploma) shall spend four (4) academic years. The emphasis here according to the NUC document is that teaching practice shall be taken in the 5th year of study for a whole semester that is, an average of 6 months. The reason for this provision is because of the importance of teaching practice.

Concept of Teaching Practice and Quality Assurance

Teaching practice has to do with practical implementation of teaching/learning strategies in the classroom (NUC, 2007). Afolabi (in Ekundayo, Alonge, Kolawole&Ekundayo, 2014) noted that teaching practice aim to acquaint student-teachers with the practical knowledge of teaching and learning process including lesson plan preparation, presentation, classroom control and management, communication skills, evaluation and to acquire the personality of a professional teacher. Also Nwakezi, Okoli and

Mezieobi (2011) observed that teaching practice is the name given to preparation of student-teachers for teaching by practical teaching. According to Tanega (2000), the term teaching practice can be viewed from three angles: the practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher, the whole range of experiences that students go through in co-operating school of practice, and the practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies. From the foregoing therefore, it is pertinent to say that teaching practice as a crucial component of teacher education is designed to give opportunities to teacher-trainees to experiment, test-run and experience the result of application of the theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher training institutions. The importance of teaching practice lies in its objectives. The objectives of teaching practice according to Akbar (2002) include but not limited to the following:

- 1 Provision to prospective teachers the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher-students relationship
- 2 Provision of an opportunity to evaluate the students potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession
- 3 Development of personal relationship with others such as administrators, teachers, parents and students.
- 4 To provide future teachers with experience in school to overcome the problem of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control.
- 5 To provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and developed experience understanding of educational principles and their implication of learning.
- 6 To enable the student teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons.
- 7 Development of skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and method of teaching.
- 8 Development of desirable professional values and ideals relative to teaching profession.
- 9 To enable students acquire desirable characteristics and traits of a good teacher.
- 10 To provide student teachers with opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to gain from constructive criticism
- 11 To provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover one`s strength and weakness.
- 12 To develop skill in future teachers related to teaching like fluent speaking, meaningful reading, using blackboard and other teaching materials (P.12).

From these objectives, it can be seen that the main goal of teaching practice is to develop future teaching manpower who will turn develop the nation`s manpower. Thus, the focus of teaching practice is the development of student-teachers.

Quality assurance as a concept, presupposes that there is a set standard or requirements that should be adhered to, conformed to or surpassed. It relates to the standard of something when compared to other things like it. Quality assurance can be seen as the practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to ensure they are kept at a high standard (Hornby in Njoku, 2011). According to UBE (2002), quality assurance is the management of goods, services and activities from the input stage through the process to the output stage of production. Similarly, Babalola (2004) opined that quality assurance in education is a proactive measure of ensuring quality in inputs, teaching-learning process and academic achievement of pupils and environment before things get out of hand. Accordingly, Education Quality Assurance (EQA) is a means of implementing quality policy objectives and responsibilities within a quality system at all levels of the education system. Thus, it involves the identification, promotion and maintenance of the required education standards or generally acceptable yardstick for measuring and maintaining effectiveness and efficiency of the school system (Babalola, 2011).

Areas of Concern in Quality Assurance in Teaching Practice

This study focused on two areas of concern in quality assurance in teaching practice. These are:

1. Co-operating schools' contributions to teaching practice and
2. Attitude of students towards teaching practice.

Co-operating Schools' Contributions to Teaching Practice

The importance of co-operating schools to teaching practice cannot be over-emphasized as they represent the laboratory or field where practical or experiments are carried out (Robin, 2017). Collaborating schools refer to the schools where student-teachers are posted for the purpose of putting to practice the theories they have learnt in their colleges, schools and faculties of education as well as gaining first-hand pre-service experience in the teaching profession (Grossman, 2010). In collaborating schools, there are three categories of people pre-service teachers have to interface with. These are: the school management (comprising the principal and his deputies), the co-operating teachers and the students/pupils. Of the three, the co-operating teachers are the closest to student-teachers because they are colleagues. Collaborating teachers according to Aijaz (2015) and Cohen & Ferree (2014) are mentors and role models in the teaching business whose tasks have direct bearing and influence on student-teachers and as such, they are meant to understudy collaborating teachers as they develop in the teaching profession.

It is widely reported that effective learning does not occur by letting student-teachers "swim and sink". Rather, guidance, direction and mentorship from co-operating teachers as well as peer support are important ingredients in gaining experiences that allow for sound development of the student-teacher (Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Robin, 2017;

Sykes, Bird & Kennedy, 2010; Torrez & Krebs, 2012). Although, researches have shown that co-operating teachers are crucial to the attainment of teaching practice objectives (Marais & Meier, 2004; Grossman, 2010; Zeichner, 2010), but it appears that collaborating teachers are least prepared for this role either in terms of willingness or skills. Thus, it is difficult to find a willing, ready and skilled co-operating teacher, since being a good teacher of children does not automatically translates into a good and effective school-based teacher-educator (Norman, as cited in Robin, 2017). Teachers face difficulties in an effort to teach novice to teach. The co-operating teacher is aware that he/she lacks the authority to properly check student-teachers excesses. There is also the feeling that his efforts are, at best, seen as kind gestures to student-teachers. The co-operating teachers feel that they have their primary assignment and as such, providing mentorship and guidance to pre-service teachers is secondary (Hammerness& Darling-Hammond, 2005; Robin, 2017). Thus, there is the temptation to treat this important role as secondary and “if it is convenient”. Also, some may see the role as extra burden and unnecessary distraction which does not attract extra remuneration after all. This does not however mean that all co-operating teachers feel this way. There are some that are very interested in assisting student-teachers to learn and develop, and such, providing them with quality guidance, mentoring and support which they require for excellence in the teaching profession.

Collaborating teachers play critical roles of a mentor, a guiding angel as well as a role model to pre-service teachers while on practice. As a mentor, the co-operating teachers help student-teachers to establish realistic professional goals, assist them to achieve a life-work balance, develop meaningful professional relationships and encourage professional growth. As role-models, co-operating teachers demonstrate effective instructional strategies, establish supportive and safe learning environment, model valid assessment procedures, demonstrate flexible thinking and actions, demonstrate positive school relationships, and so on (Cohen & Ferree, 2014). As guiding collaborator, the co-operating teachers co-plan lessons and other class activities, co-teach when appropriate, share authority in the classroom, include the student-teachers in reflection tasks, share resources and materials, and so on. The co-operating teachers as evaluators complete both formative and summative evaluations according to state and university standards (Cohen & Ferree, 2014). Nevertheless, the above describes what should or ought to be taken place in an ideal situation.

There are also other activities outside the classroom which student-teachers are to be exposed for all-round development. According to Cohen & Ferree (2014), co-operating schools have the responsibility to involve student-teachers in co-curricular or extra-curricular activities such as inter-class debates, quiz, speech making or presentation, school sports, labour or farming as well meetings and other social gathering and events in the

school. Student-teachers are to participate actively in all of these. However, it has been observed that student-teachers are hardly exposed to these aspects of the school life because of shortness of duration teaching practice (Cohen & Ferree, 2014).

Finally, co-operating school teachers play the role of school supervisions and assessors to teaching practice. In addition to guiding and mentoring student-teachers, co-operating teachers also supervise them Okajugu (2005). According to Sykes, Bird & Kennedy (2010), the essence of supervising them is to ensure that they are doing the right thing. Similarly, resident teachers also assess and score or grade student teachers during teaching practice. Co-operating teachers share this role with the faculty teachers/supervisors. However, Norman (in Robin, 2017) observed that some co-operating school teachers see the tasks of supervising or assessing student-teachers as additional work which attracts no pay. As such, they exhibit low level of commitment to the tasks. Norman reiterated further that it is a common knowledge among resident teachers that their assessment scores hardly count when it comes to grading student-teachers during teaching practice. They hold the view that faculty supervisors are the ones empowered to assess and grade teaching practice. The attitude of the student-teachers too on citing the faculty supervisors add impetus to this view, as you see them shivering, fidgeting and suddenly become afraid, struggling to compose themselves because they believe that the lecturer holds the key to their passing or failing the course. What this means is that co-operating schools contribute little or nothing to grading of student-teachers during teaching practice.

Attitude of Students towards Teaching Practice in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

The attitude of students towards teaching practice is partly derived from their perception of the teaching profession. Punch (2016) discovered that there are many students of education who are being trained for the profession but do not have intention to practice, all things being equal. Their reasons range from poor welfare packages to lack of attention and commitment by government and other stakeholders. The same report noted that large percentage of teachers both serving and retired are dissatisfied with their welfare package thereby lamenting their poor state and sufferings to the hearing of the public including would-be teachers and thus, concluded that all these and many more have made the young ones to erroneously hold wrong opinion of the teaching profession (The Punch, 2016).

Similarly, teaching practice in recent times, has been witnessing practices that are fundamentally unethical from supervisors and their students as well as the co-operating school teachers. As observed by Nwaokugha and Okoro (2017), there are lots of frauds and dishonesty on-going in teaching practice beyond the eyes can see. According to Nwaokugha and Okoro, one behavior that is worthy of mention in this category is the use of mercenaries by students for the teaching practice exercise. In this case, they hire other persons whom they pay to do the exercise for them. This act is out rightly condemnable and unacceptable.

The reason being that knowledge as an asset is not transferable unlike other assets as machinery, money and landed properties. Thus, what is to be learnt in person through practice cannot be by proxy.

Also, researches have shown that for many students and supervisors, their commitment towards teaching-practice can best be described as partial commitment (Robert-Okha, 2005; Marais & Meier, 2004; Sykes, Bird & Kennedy, 2010). According to Ogonor and Badmus (2006), many students are found to combine work with teaching practice, while others abandon the exercise entirely for opportunity to seek paid job. Supporting the above, Ojakugu (2005) shared similar observation with Ogonor and Badmus but concentrated on Supervisors. Ojakugu (2005) observed that many supervisors attitude towards teaching practice are completely unethical and unprofessional, noting that some supervisors do not only abuse the exercise but encourage practicing students to abuse it also. Ojakugu therefore list some of the common abuses by supervisors to include; inadequate visits, absentee supervision, inadequate observation, arranged supervision and purchased supervision (either in cash, kind or both).

Furthermore, Farauta and Amuche (2013) observed that student-teachers are being wrongly influenced by the attitude of both faculty supervisors and co-operating teachers. They noted that co-operating teachers are supposed to be partners-in-progress with faculty supervisors but instead have become partners-in-crime by complementing their bad attitude. According to Farauta and Amuche, some co-operating teachers have become bad examples to student-teachers through their exhibition of such attitude as late-coming, irregularities in schools and classes, poor dressing, lack of respect to school rules and regulations, indifference towards discipline, complaints, and so on. As such, student-teachers may be discouraged and may not want to practice after graduation seen that those currently in the profession are far from being satisfied with situations in the profession.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching practice as an internship programme, designed to equip students with practical teaching skills, has come a long way. However, looking at the objectives of teaching practice, one is poised to ask if these teaching practice objectives are still being achieved? The question is crucial considering what is happening in schools nowadays in terms of teachers' quality. A situation where teachers cannot write lesson notes, communicate the content to students effectively and be abreast with the basic ethics of the teaching profession has certainly necessitated the question. Also, employers of labour appear to be supporting the above as they too complain about the quality of products from the system. They lament the state of quality of teacher training institutions graduates that many of them lack skills in writing of lesson notes, management of classrooms, lesson

presentation, and so on and argued that they spend the same amount of money in training education graduates just as their counterparts who had no education background. Does this therefore means that teaching practice has little or no impact on graduates of education or why is there no difference in the cost training of newly employed teachers with education background from their counterparts who had no education background?

The foregoing calls for urgent attention as well as appraisal of teaching practice exercise (as currently being implemented) in tertiary institutions in Rivers State in order to ascertain its level of contributions in equipping teacher-trainees as well as developing teaching manpower in the state and the country at large. The assessment is apt in order to ascertain the role of variables such as contributions of co-operating schools to teaching practice as well as attitude of students toward teaching practice. This is to determine whether or not quality assurance tenets are followed in the way pre-service teachers are prepared for work life in Nigeria. It is on this note that the researcher is compelled to carry out this study.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. Examine the contributions of co-operating schools to teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain students' attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. What is the attitude of students towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in the course of the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the meanscores of students and co-operating teachers on the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the meanscores of male and female students on their attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey design while the population of the study consisted four tertiary institutions offering teacher education programmes in the state. The population of respondents comprised 5,978 students and 802 supervisors thus, giving a total of 6,780 respondents. The sample size of 475 respondents, comprising 385 students and 90 supervisors was drawn from the population of the study through Taro Yamane sample determination technique using disproportionate sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection was the questionnaire title “Questionnaire for Managing Teaching Practice for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State” (QMTPQATIRS). The questionnaire items were responded to on a four point modified Likert scale. The face and content validity were determined by experts while the reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha with reliability index of 0.72. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. In scoring the questionnaire, the weighted points were added thus $(4+3+2+1) = 10/4 = 2.50$. The 2.50 became the criterion mean. Items above the criterion mean were agreed to and items below it were disagreed.

Results

Research Question One: What are the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Mean and standard deviation of students and teachers on contributions of co-operating schools to teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Note please: The response options for the questionnaire items below were Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Hence, the use of means for analysis.

ITEMS	STUDENTS			TEACHERS		
	MEAN	SD	REMARK	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1. Student-teachers were given orientation on arrival at the schools they were posted for teaching practice.	3.60	1.57	Agreed	3.42	1.45	Agreed
2. During the orientation, student-teachers were attached to experienced resident teachers in their respective subject areas for mentoring.	3.71	1.65	Agreed	3.44	1.46	Agreed
3. Student-teachers were introduced to school members on the assembly ground by the most senior official of the schools.	3.57	1.55	Agreed	3.40	1.44	Agreed

4. Student-teachers were introduced to classes by mentoring teachers.	3.71	1.65	Agreed	3.25	1.35	Agreed
5. Student-teachers usually watch senior teachers for sometimes before they are allowed to teach on their own.	3.72	1.65	Agreed	1.99	1.23	Disagreed
6. Student-teachers had the freedom of teaching on their own, without any guidance from the mentoring teachers, almost immediately during teaching practice.	3.68	1.63	Agreed	3.07	1.25	Agreed
7. Student-teachers were provided with instructional materials by the co-operating schools during teaching practice.	3.64	1.6	Agreed	3.31	1.38	Agreed
8. Student teachers were in involved in extra-curricular activities of co-operating schools during teaching practice.	3.57	1.55	Agreed	3.28	1.36	Agreed
9. Student-teachers were sidelined when it comes to sensitive tasks during teaching practice.	3.43	1.45	Agreed	1.75	1.35	Disagreed
10. Co-operating schools, especially mentoring teachers were actively involved in the grading of student-teachers during teaching practice.	1.51	1.49	Disagreed	1.68	1.39	Disagreed
11. Mentoring teachers submit their assessment records to faculty supervisors which were often combined to generate the cumulative scores for students on teaching practice.	1.56	1.46	Disagreed	1.78	1.33	Disagreed
12. Co-operating teachers have no role at all in the grading of student-teachers during teaching practice.	3.35	1.4	Agreed	3.23	1.34	Agreed
GRAND MEAN & STD. DEV.	3.25	1.55	Agreed	2.80	1.36	Agreed

The table posted average means of 3.25 and 2.80 for students and co-operating teachers respectively and thus indicating that co-operating schools contributed meaningfully to teaching practice exercise and its success in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What is the attitude of students towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of male students and female students on attitude of students towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Note please: The response options for the questionnaire items below were Strongly Positive, Positive, Negative and Strongly Negative. Hence, the use of means for analysis.

ITEMS	MALE STUDENTS N=170			FEMALE STUDENTS N=215		
	MEAN	SD	REMARK	MEAN	SD	REMARK
13. I am fully aware of what I stand to gain from teaching practice.	3.67	0.47	Positive	3.64	0.53	Positive
14. Over the years, it appears I am not aware of what I stand to benefit from teaching practice.	1.88	0.92	Negative	1.73	0.83	Negative
15. I did not take the teaching practice serious.	1.38	0.52	Negative	1.46	0.58	Negative
16. I am ill-motivated and do not intend to practice after school.	3.12	1.01	Positive	3.22	0.95	Positive
17. I see teaching practice exercise as an avenue to socialize rather than have a feel of the teaching profession.	1.8	0.94	Negative	1.79	0.88	Negative
18. I have intention to practice after graduation and so take teaching practice serious.	3.64	0.53	Positive	3.56	0.57	Positive
GRAND MEAN & STD. DEV.	2.58	0.73	Positive	2.57	0.72	Positive

The table revealed average means of 2.58 and 2.57 for male students and female students respectively thereby indicating that both male and female students had positive attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and co-operating teachers on the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 3: z-test of the significant difference between the mean scores of students and co-operating teachers on the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	z-calculated	z-critical	Level of Significance	of Decision
Students	385	3.25	1.55	779	5.23	1.96	0.05	Fail to accept
Teachers	396	2.8	1.36					

The table showed the summary of the mean, standard deviations and the z-test of the difference between the mean scores of students and co-operating teachers on the contributions of co-operating schools to teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. At 0.05 alpha level and 779 degree of freedom, the value of z-calculated stood at 5.23 while the value of z-critical was ± 1.96 . Since the value of z-calculated falls outside the range of the value of z-critical, the researcher therefore failed to accept the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores of students and co-operating teachers on the contributions of co-operating schools in teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male students and female students on their attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test of the significant difference between the mean scores of male students and female students on their attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Variables	N	X	SD	df	z-calculated	z-critical	Level of Significance	of Decision
Male Students	170	2.58	0.73	383	0.11	1.96	0.05	Fail to reject
Female Students								
	215	2.57	0.72					

The table revealed the summary of the mean, standard deviations and the z-test of the difference between the mean scores of male students and female students on the attitude of students towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. At 0.05 alpha level

and 383 degree of freedom, the value of z-calculated stood at 0.11 while the value of z-critical remained ± 1.96 . Since the value of z-calculated falls within the range of the value of z-critical, the researcher therefore failed to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores of male students and female students on their attitude towards teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion

On the contributions of co-operating schools, the study found that co-operating schools provide orientation to newly posted trainee-teachers as well as attach them to experienced teachers for mentorship. The study however revealed that resident teachers were not carried along in the assessment of student teachers whom they mentored. Thus, student-teachers were graded with too little or no input from the co-operating teachers who were better positioned to give account of them. This may be the reason some of the teachers are indifferent to teaching practice as revealed during interview. This finding supports the assertion of Norman (in Robin, 2017) that it is a common knowledge among resident teachers that their assessment scores hardly count when it comes to grading of student-teachers during teaching practice as they believed that they are often sidelined by faculty supervisors. Also, it was found that student-teachers hardly watch experienced teachers for sometimes before they are allowed to teach on their own. This is not supposed to be the case as the essence of internship is to learn from experienced hands through observation during practice. The study also discovered that student-teachers were sidelined when it comes to sensitive talks. This negates the principle of thoroughness in exposure to the school full life cycle. Moreover, since they are being trained for future similar tasks, it is logical to expose them to such tasks now so that in the future, they would not be ignorant of them, and would have been better equipped to do well in such sensitive tasks.

Also, regarding attitude of students towards teaching practice exercise, the study discovered that students were aware of what they stand to benefit from teaching practice exercise and as such there was no reason why they should not take it serious but that they were ill-motivated by what they see of the teaching profession in Nigeria. The study further revealed that many trainee teachers do not intend to practice after graduation and as such do not look forward nor get excited by teaching practice. This finding corroborates Punch (2016) report that there are many students of Education who are being trained for the teaching profession but do not have intention to practice after graduation. The reasons for this may be poor welfare packages as a result of lack of attention and commitment from governments and other stakeholders to the profession over the years. It has been observed over the years that even though the teaching profession remains a noble one that is pivotal to national development, attracting well trained and motivated personnel into the profession and retaining them has been a major challenge due to poor welfare. They often lose their best hands to other well-paying sectors of the same economy or to the same sector of other economies. Thus, it is revealing

enough from the average means of 2.58 and 2.57 for both male and female students respectively that the rating is not strong enough.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Rivers State is not well carried out. This is so going by the revelation from co-operating teachers that assessment of student-teachers was one-sided as there was no input from co-operating school teachers because they were sidelined by faculty supervisors. This has led to indifference rather than mentorship by co-operating teachers. In addition, the study further discovered that student-teachers were ill-motivated as a result of what they see of the teaching profession in Nigeria. This is contrary to the goal of teacher education of producing highly motivated, conscious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system (see page 4 above).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the author made following recommendations:

1. Teacher training institutions should incorporate atleast fifty percent (50%) inputs of co-operating teachers in their teaching practice assessment score sheet. This is to make difficult for faculty supervisors to sideline them and thereby encouraging them to rise to their responsibilities.
2. Teaching in Nigeria must be given serious attention in terms of improve welfare packages in order to get the desired attitude towards teaching practice and studying education courses in general. This is the major motivation needed to reposition teacher education.

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