

PERCEIVED CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY HOME ECONOMICS STUDENT-TEACHERS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE

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Abstract

The study investigated the perceived challenges encountered by Home-Economics student teachers during their teaching practice exercise. To guide the study, three research questions were raised. The descriptive survey design was employed. The population of the study comprises of all 300 and 400 level home Economics students of department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin, Edo state. A total population of Seventy-eight (78) students was used for the study because it was manageable. The Instrument used for data collection was validated by three experts and the reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha and a coefficient value of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected was analysed using simple percentage, mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. Independent t -test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study revealed that Home-Economics Student-teachers are faced with numerous personal-related challenges during their teaching practices. It was also revealed that student teachers also experience school-based challenges. There was a significance difference in the challenges experienced between 300 level students and 400 level students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others The teaching practice committee should organize effective and adequate orientation for student-teachers before going for the teaching practice exercise and adequate instructional materials and resources be provided to public schools, so as to enhance teaching in schools. This will also give student teachers opportunity to practice the use of instructional materials during pre-service training.

Keywords: *Perceived, Challenges, Student-teacher, Teaching Practice, Home Economics*

Introduction

Home Economics is an aspect of Vocational Education, a skill-oriented subject that can offer learners acquisition of skills for enhancing their capability for self-employment. Home Economics draws its knowledge from the sciences, humanities and arts. It uses human and material resources for positive effect on homes and families. The objective of teaching Home Economics is to help individuals live a purposeful and satisfying life through wise use and management of their human and available material resources (Millicent, 2015). As a field of study, it offers numerous occupational opportunities for self-reliance. The knowledge of Home Economics helps to strengthen the understanding of interconnectedness of dependence, independence and inter-dependence, within families and society. These Home Economics learning experiences enable students to develop competencies, making connection between their daily lives and their future world. Home Economics is taught at the junior secondary school level of the Nigerian education system under the Universal Basic Education program, as a pre-vocational integrated subject, which comprises Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textile, and Home

Management. At the senior secondary level, Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textile, and Home Management are taught as separate subjects.

To teach Home Economics as a subject in secondary school for acquisition of skill requires trained personnel who are competent and resourceful. The training includes both in theory and in practice. Home-Economics skills can only be learnt under the guidance of skilled tutors. According to Mohammed (2019), teachers use material resources to inculcate necessary skills to learners. Agbo (2016) and Nwabudike (2017) reported that no effective teaching and learning can take place without materials, equipment and tools related to the skills to be learnt. Acquiring of skills in Home-Economics by students involve responses that can be learned, potentially refined with practice giving the right condition.

Teaching is an exciting and rewarding activity, but it is a demanding experience too. Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge, skills and values to others in a structured and organized way. It involves facilitating learning, understanding and applying new concepts and ideals and helping students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers are said to play important role in shaping the future of individuals as well as of entire generations. Teachers are agents of change in the society as they are central to the delivery of quality education. Quality teachers are the greatest determinant of student achievement.

Teaching Practice is a vital requirement for becoming a certified teacher. Through practice teaching experiences are provided to student-teacher in the actual teaching and learning environment. Teaching practice exposes student- teachers to the actual practice of teaching. It is an experiential learning or hands on learning, meaning learning by doing. Student- teachers also know the value of teaching practice and they perceive it as an important aspect of their preparation for the teaching profession since it provides for the real interface between student and membership in the profession. Ranjan, in (Annan-Brew &, Arhin,2022). According to Afolabi (2016), teaching practice exercise help aspiring instructors become familiar with the realities of the teaching and learning process. Omokheni (2015) referred to teaching practice as any educational work that aspiring teachers engage in for a set amount of time prior to graduation while being guided, directed, and evaluated by a supervisor. As part of a teacher education program, teaching practice requires student-teachers to put their newly gained theories of instruction into practice while actually experiencing a typical classroom setting. Ogonor (2016) viewed teaching practice as times when instructors help students put the theories and ideas of education they have learned in the classroom into practice while they instruct. The National Policy on Education (2014) highlighted the purpose of teacher education to include producing highly efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system. For teachers to teach competently and efficiently, they must be adequately exposed to both the academic (theoretical) and practical aspects of teaching. The teaching practice exercise is a compulsory course for students both at the penultimate and final levels of the Bachelor of Education program. The teaching practice exercise takes twelve (12) weeks for university students broken down into six (6) weeks each at 300level and 400level respectively. In colleges of education, this exercise lasts for a whole semester. This program is a cooperative venture involving both the student-teachers and supervisors (usually academic staff). Urevbu (2015) noted that the knowledge and skills acquired are demonstrated before examiners who give feedbacks so as to improve their practice before they are finally evaluated. Teaching practice exercise creates anxiety, anticipation and apprehension in the student-teachers as they commence their teaching practice. According to Perry (2015), teaching practice is

exciting but comes with lots of challenges despite its relevance. What seems not clear Could Home Economics students be experiencing these challenges despite the orientation given to the students? To provide empirical evidence to these problems, therefore the study determined the challenges encountered by Home Economics student-teachers during teaching practice.

Literature Review

It is evident from research that teaching practice is quite challenging for students-teachers. (Okobia, Ogumogun & Osagie,2013, Ebrahim, Eyadat, and Alshammari ,2017, Mahmood and Iqbal 2018). According to Yildiz, Gecikli, & Yesilyurt, 2016) the expectations of student-teachers and classroom realities are different, hence Student-teachers sometimes found it difficult to relate subject content to everyday classroom practice and real-life situations.

Annie- Brew and Arhin 2022 in a study, explored perceived challenges faced by student-teachers during the off-campus teaching practice. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was all the student-teachers (300, 350, and 400 levels) from College of Education (Regular), University (Regular), University (Sandwich), and other modes of education. However, 135 student-teachers were randomly and conveniently sampled for data collection. The instrument used for the study was an adapted questionnaire. The instrument was validated from an expert perspective. Data to answer research questions were analysed using the means and standard deviations. The study found that student-teachers do not have personal challenges during their teaching practices. The study found that student-teachers do not have supervisory challenges during their teaching practices. The study also revealed that student-teachers do not face major challenges from their practicing schools during their teaching practices. It is recommended that Colleges of Education, Teacher Continuous Professional Development of the Universities, as well as Ghana Education Service should organize periodic workshops for student-teachers and in-service teachers on the selection of appropriate TLMs for various lessons.

Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) in a study investigated the challenges faced by prospective teachers during teaching practice. The study adopted a mixed method. The sample of the study comprised 34 prospective teachers enrolled in the final semester of B.Ed. (Hons.) programme at the University of the Punjab and the University of Gujrat. The prospective teachers were trained in using student-centered pedagogies in teaching practice. The findings revealed that there was a noticeable transformation in the use of teaching methods other than the lecture method in their classroom. The major challenges included dealing with poor physical infrastructure, scarce and underused academic resources, inflexibility in classroom arrangement, the non-professional attitude of school administration, and trying out innovation without challenging the prevailing school norms. Although, the findings are prudent for our study caution should be taken since the sample size is deemed not appropriate for generalisation. Overall, these studies were found prudent to facilitate the discussion of our study's findings Ebrahim, Eyadat, and Alshammari (2017) conducted a study with the primary purpose as investigate challenges in teaching practice from preservice teachers' perspectives. A questionnaire with two domains was developed as follows: school and management; and design and implementation of lessons were used. A random sample of 128 senior students who attended the student training program was chosen as the unit of analysis. Results of the study indicated that challenges related to school and management were high primarily in the following two areas: a large number of students in the classroom followed by school

principals not interested in accepting pre-service teachers in their schools. Regarding the design and implementation of lessons, challenges were high in the following three areas: teaching competence requirements were not clear during teaching practice followed by the fact pre-service teachers do not know laws or regulations related to teaching practice, and finally inadequacy of the training period related to design and implementation of lessons.

According to Msangya, Mkoma, and Yihuan, (2016), education is the key to development; however, it is impossible to think about the quality of education without having academically qualified and professionally responsible teachers. In the study, they examine the perspectives of undergraduate student teachers toward teaching practice experience as a tool of learning to teach. A qualitative research methods approach using semi-structured questionnaires was used. The sample was made up of 351 second and third year undergraduate student-teachers in the department of education of the Faculty of Science at the Sokoine University of Agriculture. The findings indicate that the student-teachers perceived teaching practice as an important tool of learning to teach because it promoted the development of teaching experience and prepared them for the real world of work. The findings also revealed that teaching practice is sufficiently emphasized and lack of financial support and the mismatch of the teaching practice period with the local secondary school calendar were the main challenges. Considering the second finding prompt another dimension of challenges.

Okobia, Ogumogu, and Osagie (2013) in a study investigated the challenges faced by student-teachers during a teaching practice exercise. A survey design was employed for the study. A simple random technique was used to select 200 students from levels 300 and 400 who have participated in the teaching practice exercise in the 2010/2011 session. A four Likert scale with 21 items titled "Questionnaire on Challenges during Teaching Practice Exercise (QCTP)" was used for data collection. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The data collected were analysed using the mean statistics and the t-test of independent samples. The study revealed that 15 out of the 21 items were perceived by the majority of student-teachers as major challenges faced during a teaching practice exercise. These include lack of accommodation during the teaching practice programme; lack of instructional materials and resources in schools; inadequate teaching practice orientation before the commencement of teaching practice exercise; poor interpersonal relationships between faculty supervisors and student-teachers during supervision among others.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching practice is as an academic exercise which help aspiring instructors become familiar with the realities of the teaching and learning process. It is expected to be exciting exercise, however students seem not to become familiar with the processes of teaching and learning despite the engagement in T.P exercise for at least twice before the end of their programme. Many researches have been carried out in other subject areas to determine the reasons for this gap. Some have postulated that students undergo a lot of challenges both personal, school related, lack of orientation amongst others have been reported as the reasons why students are not familiar with the realities of teaching. What seems not clear is; do home economics students also experience these challenges in their teaching practice exercise as evidenced in other subject area. It is against this background that this study determine the perceived challenges uncounted by home economics students-teachers during the teaching practice exercise.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceived challenges faced by Home Economics education student-teachers during teaching practice exercise. Specifically, the study determined:

1. the perceived personal related challenges encountered by Home Economics student-teachers during teaching practice progra
2. the perceived school-based challenges encountered by student-teachers during teaching practice program;
3. the mean difference in the perceived challenges students experience by class level

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What are the perceived personal challenges encountered by Home-Economics student-teachers during the teaching practice exercise?
What are the perceived school-based challenges encountered by Home-Economics student teachers during teaching practice exercise?
2. What is the mean difference in the perceived challenges students experience by class level.

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance There is no significant difference in the challenges students experience between 300 level and 400 level student –teachers in teaching practice exercise

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This is because the opinion of the students were viewed to determine the perceived challenges.

Area of the study: the study was carried out in University of Benin, Benin City.Edo State, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 78 Penultimate and final year students (300 and 400level) of 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 session respectively in Home-Economics education from the Department of Vocational and technical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. These class of students were chosen because they have undergone Teaching practice exercise.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was 78 students. There was no sampling technique because the student's population for both levels (300 and 400) was small, hence it was a census.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for the data collection was the questionnaire titled: "Perceived challenges encountered by Home-Economics Student-Teachers during teaching practice programme Questionnaire (PCHSTPO)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections; A and B. Section "A" obtained personal data of respondents such as age, sex, level. While section "B" contained questions requesting information on the respondents' view of the challenges the student teachers faced during teaching practice. The questionnaire consisted of 4-point rating scale response of Strongly agree (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis of the data collected was done using the descriptive statistic of mean(X) standard deviation to answer the research

questions, while the independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The decision rule based on a four point rating scale is equal to 2.50. Therefore values below 2.50 are regarded as not a challenge (NC) while values above 2.50 are regarded as a Challenge (CH).

Results

Research question 1: What are the perceived personal challenges experienced by Home-Economics student-teachers during the teaching practice exercise

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation showing the personal challenges experienced by Home-economics student-teachers during the teaching practice exercise

SN	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Time is too short for the practice	3.70	.373	CH
2	Inadequate teaching practice orientation given to students before the exercise	3.45	.498	CH
3	Rejection at schools posted to	1.11	.322	NC
4	Teaching practice is very stressful time	3.40	.495	CH
5	I find it difficult to get to school early	3.50	.495	CH
6	No accommodation given to student teachers	1.75	.373	NC
7	Inadequate instructional materials	3.27	.494	CH
8	No allowances given to students during teaching practice	3.83	.373	CH
9	Difficulty in planning lesson note	3.32	.453	CH
10	Poor relationship with subject teachers in the school	3.27	.494	CH
11	Students teachers are not allowed to participate in staff meetings	3.22	.416	CH
12	Too much workload for student teachers	3.24	.423	CH
13	Few Information communication tools available in public schools	1.46	.499	NC
14	Most teachers are not ICT compliance	3.40	.489	CH
15	Students teachers are not allowed to use ICT tools	2.86	.456	CH
16	Clash between lecture periods in school and teaching practice exercise	3.93	.259	CH
17	Student teachers don't find fulfillment in the exercise	3.21	.423	CH
18	I am unable to sustain students' interest for a long time	1.17	.322	NC
19	I find it difficult to use other teaching methods to teach	2.68	0.54	CH
20	Institution based supervisors are not always friendly.	3.39	.045	CH
	Grand Mean	2.80	.455	CH

KEYS: Challenge (CH); Not Challenge (NC)

Table 1 above shows responses on the perceived challenges experienced by student's teacher in teaching practices exercise. It shows that Sixteen (16) items had a mean value above the criterion mean of 2.50 and was accepted as challenges experienced by home economics student teachers during teaching practice exercise. While four (4) items had a mean score below 2.50 criterion mean and as such were not perceived as challenges by the students. The grand mean of 2.80 conclusively shows that students experienced lots of personal challenges during the teaching practice exercise.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived school-based challenges encountered by Home-Economics student teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing the school-based related challenges experienced by home-economics student teachers

SN	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Students teachers not formally introduced to school ol based teachers	1.66	.407	NC
2	School based library is poorly equipped	3.20	.474	CH
3	School based teachers always interject during my teaching	3.05	.433	CH
4	Supervisors do not give corrections in needed areas	1.67	.223	NC
5	Classes are always clashing	2.23	.399	NC
6	School does not have ICT laboratory	3.44	.419	CH
7	School assigned task is too demanding	2.15	.266	NC
8	No clear disciplinary measures for student teachers inadequacy	3.55	.453	CH
9	Classrooms are over crowded Non professional attitude of school administrators	3.93	.345	CH
10		3.52	.464	CH
	Grand Mean	2.91	.465	CH

KEYS: Challenge (CH); Not Challenge (NC)

Table 3 above shows the perceived school-based challenges experienced by home economics students - teachers during the teaching practice exercise. It shows that Six (6) items had a mean value above the criterion mean of 2.50 and was accepted as the perceived school-based challenges experienced by the students. While four (4) items had a mean value lower than the criterion mean of 2.50, and as such were not perceived as school based challenges. The grand mean of 2.91 conclusively shows that students experienced lots of school based challenges during the teaching practice exercise.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the challenges students experience between 300 Level and 400 Level Student –teachers in teaching practice exercise

Table 4: t-test of independent Samples on the challenges students experienced by Level

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig.
300 level Students	54	2.89	0.59	-3.404	0.001
400 level Students	24	2.54	0.53		

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 above shows a calculated t value of -3.404 and a p-value of 0.001 , testing at an alpha level of 0.05 , the p-value is less than the alpha level, so the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference in the challenges students experience between 300level and 400level students teachers in teaching practice exercise is rejected, consequently there is a significance difference in the challenges experienced between 300level students and 400level students. Since the mean of the 300level students is greater than the mean of the 400level students, it therefore means that the 300level students experience more challenges than the 400level students.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from Research question one depicted that Home Economics student-teachers faced a lot of personal challenges during their teaching practices exercise. These challenges include, inadequate teaching orientation, inadequate instructional materials, lack of ICT tools in schools, stressfulness of the exercise, no stipends given to the students among others. This finding corroborates the studies of Annan-Brew and Arhin,(2022); Okobia et.al (2015); Akpede, (2011) who revealed that students-teachers face similar challenges during teaching practice exercise.

Result on table 2 showed that student-teachers also experienced school base challenges. Some of the challenges includes, poorly equipped school library, inadequate ICT laboratory, overcrowded classrooms among others. This findings agrees with the study of Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) who found that the major challenges included dealing with poor physical infrastructure, scarce academic resources, inflexibility in classroom arrangement, the non-professional attitude of school administration.

Result shows that there was a significance difference in the challenges experienced between 300level students and 400level students. Findings reveal that 300level students experience more challenges than the 400level students. This may likely be attributed to the fact that 300 level students are undergoing teaching practice for the first time.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that home economics student-teachers face a lot of personal and school based challenges during teaching practice exercise.

Recommendations

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

1. The teaching practice committee should organize effective and adequate orientation for student-teachers before going for the teaching practice exercise since it was revealed in this study that majority of the student teachers complained that they were not given adequate teaching practice orientation. Organizing such programme will equip student teachers with the task ahead of them.
2. Adequate instructional materials and resources to public schools, so as to enhance teaching in schools. This will also give student teachers opportunity to practice the use of instructional materials during pre-service training
3. The teaching practice exercise should be properly organized to ensure that it does not clash with lecture periods. This exercise is more appropriate when universities are on holidays and the secondary schools are in session.
4. Allowance should be given to student-teachers during the teaching practice exercise so as to motivate them just like their counterpart in engineering, accounting and the likes

5. Student-teachers should be sent to schools with favourable learning environment

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