

Perception Of Mathematics Education Students Of Universities On The Difficulties Involved In Teaching Practice Exercise In Secondary Schools In Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State

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ABSTRACT

The study considered the Perception of Mathematics Education Student of Universities on the difficulties involved in teaching practice exercise in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue state. To achieve the objectives of the study, a survey design was employed for the study. A sample size of 75 final year students of Mathematics Education were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire was used as the main instruments for data collection during the research. The instrument was dully validated and mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The results from the study indicated that, student-teachers encountered environmental and instructional challenges. Environmental challenges faced by these students include inadequate teaching and learning Mathematics resources and difficulty in transport to the schools. It was recommended that; appropriate arrangement should be made with schools that will be used for the teaching practice exercise, so as to enable the committee on teaching practice know exactly how many students are to be posted to schools and also the subject area where there is dire need. This will help the committee to post students to schools appropriately, so as to avoid the problem of student teachers in schools, 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 and to easy their welfare and Government should provide adequate instructional materials and resources to public schools, so as to enhance teaching in schools and make laws for private schools to take part to enhance teaching and learning process of secondary schools in the study area. This will also give student teachers opportunity to practice the use of instructional materials during pre-service training.

KEYWORDS: Perception, Mathematics Education, Difficulties, Teaching Practice, Gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the only cornerstone for any nation and for some time a big industry in Nigeria. Teachers therefore have a role to play in the development of a nation especially in building up leaders and intellectuals of tomorrow who will sustain the nation's development. Although, Nigeria has succeeded in several ways to prepare teachers with various teaching qualifications along with opportunities for further training. This has not been reflected in the academic performance of students in primary and secondary school. Therefore, Teaching Practice plays a significant role in formation of perception of pre-service teachers, regarding their roles and responsibilities as professional teachers. Primarily, teaching practice invites the student-teachers to exercise all the skills learned in a real classroom situation (Qazi, *et. al.*, 2008). Teaching practice is the time that trainee teachers will go to work with experienced teachers.

Teaching practice exercise enables the Mathematics education students' teachers to get acquainted with the practical knowledge of teaching and learning process including lesson plan preparation, presentation, class management, communication skills, evaluation and the required personality of professional teachers. Nwanekezi (2011) remarked that teaching practice is the name of the preparation of student-teacher for teaching by practical training. Teaching practice also provides a multi-source feedback to the teacher trainees regarding their activities in the cooperating schools. The schools principals are to orient, observe and evaluate them. They also obtain academic feedback from experienced specialists, supervisors, cooperating teachers and other student teachers in the same school (Al-magableh, 2010). The training of teachers now becomes largely the responsibility

of department of Mathematics education in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi-Benue state. Students go on six weeks teaching practice and come back with varied experiences. It is important to note that problems experienced in teaching practice may influence the professional qualifications of the student teachers. In other words, students experience problems in their teaching practice life. Hence, the need is to identify these problems and suggest possible solutions to them. It is an integral part of the teacher education program which is geared towards preparation of new entrants into the teaching profession. Though past researches indicates that teachers have different behaviors towards male and female students and it is due to teacher's perceptions and attitude toward their students' gender role which leads to the existence of societal stereotyping. "Despite indications that teacher's perception of gender role is one of the most influential factor concerning teachers different behaviors' and educational discrepancies. Relatively, few Israel studies have addressed this issue of gender and teacher-student classroom interaction" Ben Tasvi-Mayer (2017).

These few problems were further outlined by Patchen and Crawford (2011) who identified challenges that might influence a teacher's instructional decisions. The factors that were considered possible challenges for teachers were curriculum standards and accountability, student diversity and special education, professional development, multiple duties and roles, discipline and classroom managements. Teachers considered each of the identified factors as challenges. "Teachers are unaware and deny that they hold or perpetuate biased perceptions of males and females. "Unless teachers are made aware of the gender-role socialization and the biased messages they are unintentionally imparting to students every day". It is compulsory for every student-teacher in the Mathematics Education Department in the study area to undergo the teaching practice exercise as prerequisite to be qualified as a teacher. However, in order to pinpoint some of the problems as they affect student teachers during teaching practice, it is necessary to conduct a thorough investigation on other menace involving teaching practice.

Furthermore, most mathematics education student-teachers complained the unserious attitude of the secondary school students towards the exercise often result to them not gaining the necessary skills, confidence and knowledge to cope with classroom situations (Adekunle 2017). Lastly, Student-teachers often complain of their welfare

especially transportation and accommodation which often affects the teaching practice's process. It is for the purpose of identifying some of these problems that this research was undertaken.

The following research questions were asked to guide the study;

- What is the perception of mathematics education students on the difficulties involved in carrying out teaching practices exercise in Local Government Area?
- What is the perception of male and female mathematics education students on the difficulties involves in teaching practices exercise in Local Government Area?

II. METHODOLOGY

The design for this study applied a survey research design. Specifically, the cross-sectional survey. Cross-sectional survey is done where a researcher uses different categories of people. The study was carried out in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. Makurdi Local Government Area is domiciled in Benue state, North central geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The population of the study were all mathematics education students' teachers in Universities undergoing teaching practice in secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. A sample size of seventy five (75) students sampled from two tertiary institutions in Makurdi Local Government. Thirty-five (35) were from Benue state University Makurdi and forty (40) were from Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi respectively. A questionnaire titled Perception of Mathematics Education Student of Universities on the Difficulties involved in teaching practice Exercise in Secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue. The instrument was validated by three expert. One test and measure experts and two mathematical educators. The data from the pilot test was analyzed using Corumbah alpha coefficient and the value of 0.723 was obtained; indicating that, the instrument for the study is reliable.

III. RESULT

The data collected from the questionnaire given to the student-teachers in order to ascertain Perception of Mathematics Education Student of Universities on the Difficulties involved in teaching practice Exercise in Secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue is given below.

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of the response of perception of mathematics education students on the difficulties involved in carrying out teaching practices exercise in Local Government Area

S/No	Item	Mean	Standard deviation
1	The period of teaching practice was too long	2.133	1.119
2	I had difficulty in preparing lesson note	2.480	.935
3	I had difficulty in presenting my lesson in a logical sequence/according to my lesson plan	2.666	.990
4	I had difficulty teaching principle and concepts of mathematics	2.426	1.092
5	I had difficulty teaching the practical application of the principles and concepts in mathematics	2.866	.890
6	The period allocated for mathematics were inadequate for me to teach my lesson	3.386	.883
7	I had difficulty preparing instructional materials	2.527	1.184
8	I had difficulty in individualizing instruction, i.e. providing activities to meet the needs of slow, average and fast learners	3.106	.831
9	I had difficulty maintaining the interest of learners throughout the lesson	2.760	.997
10	I had difficulty in my questioning strategy	2.173	1.057
11	I had difficulty providing varied learning task	2.360	1.048
12	I had difficulty in getting transportation to my school of practice	3.213	.858
13	Lack of cooperation from students	2.760	.942
14	Inadequate teaching and learning facilities in the school such as laboratory, ICT centre	3.440	.825
15	Challenge in teaching subject different from my field	3.660	.629
16	Teaching practice clashing with university calendar/lectures	2.933	1.189
17	Working load	2.600	.97260

From table 1, the mean of items 1, 2, 4, 10, 11 are less than 2.5 while that of items 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 are above 2.5 this means that the students do not agree with the following; the period of teaching practice is too long, the had difficulty in preparing lesson note; I had difficulty teaching the principle and concept of mathematics I had difficulty in questioning strategy and I had difficulty providing varied learning tasks. They however agree with the following; I had difficulty in presenting my lesson in logical sequence/according to my lesson plan, I had difficulty teaching the practical application of the principles and concepts in mathematics, the period allocated for

mathematics were inadequate for me to teach my lesson, I had difficulty preparing instructional materials, I had difficulty in individualizing instruction, i.e. providing activities to meet the needs of slow, average and fast learners, I had difficulty maintaining the interest of learners throughout the lesson, I had difficulty in getting transportation to my school of practice, lack of cooperation from student, inadequate teaching and learning facilities in the school such as laboratory, ICT central, challenge in teaching subject different from my field , teaching practice clashing with University calendar/lectures and working load.

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of the response of perception of male and female mathematics education students on the difficulties involves in teaching practices exercise in Local Government Area.

S/No	Item	Sex	Mean	Standard deviation
1	The period of teaching was two long	Male	2.133	1.126
		Female	2.250	1.111
2	I had difficulty in preparing lesson note	Male	2.400	1.011
		Female	2.550	.847
3	I had difficulty in presenting my lesson in logical sequence (according to my lesson plan)	Male	2.914	.959
		Female	2.450	.981

4	I had difficulty teaching the principle and concept of mathematics	Male	2.285	1.036
		Female	2.550	1.152
5	I had difficulty teaching practical application of the principles and concepts in mathematics	Male	3.828	.871
		Female	3.375	.847
6	The periods allocated for mathematics were inadequate for me to teach my lesson	Male	3.400	.925
		Female	3.375	.847
7	I had difficulty improving instructional materials	Male	2.205	1.181
8	I had difficulty in individualizing instructions, i.e. providing activities to meet the needs of slow, average and fast learners	Female	3.142	.858
9	I had difficulty maintaining the interest of learners throughout the lesson	Male	2.800	1.085
		Female	2.725	.900
10	I had difficulty in my questioning strategy	Male	2.371	1.086
		Female	2.000	1.012
11	I had difficulty providing varied learning tasks	Male	2.228	1.002
		Female	2.475	1.018
12	I had difficulty in getting transportation to my school of practice	Male	3.171	.923
		Female	3.250	.808
13	Lack of cooperation from students	Male	2.857	1.061
		Female	2.675	7.828
14	Inadequate teaching and learning facilities in the school such as laboratory, ICT centre	Male	3.428	.884
		Female	3.450	.782
15	Challenge in teaching subject different from my field	Male	3.257	.657
		Female	3.450	.597
16	Teaching practice clashing with University calendar with lectures	Male	2.885	1.254
		Female	2.975	1.143
17	Working load	Male	2.628	.910
		Female	2.575	1.0349

From table 2 for item 1 for male and female students is 2.00 and 2.2500 respectively. This implies that both the male and the female students do not agree that the period of teaching practice was too long, while the mean for item 10 for male and female students is 2.3714 and 2.0000 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female students do not agree that they had difficulty in their questioning strategy. And also the mean for item 11 for male and female students is 2.2286 and 2.4750 respectively. This also implies that both the male and the female students do not agree they had difficulty providing varied learning tasks.

The mean for item 2 for male and female students is 2.4000 and 2.5500 respectively. This implies that, the male student do not agree that, however the female student agree that, they had difficulty in preparing lesson note while the mean for item 3 for male and female students is 2.9143 and 2.4500 respectively, this also implies the male

students agree that, however the female students do not agree that they had difficulty in presenting the lessons in logical sequence (according to the lesson plan).

The mean item 4 for male and female student is 2.2857 and 2.5500 respectively, this implies that, the male students do not agree that however the female students agreed that they had difficulty teaching the principle and concepts of mathematics while the mean for item7 for male and female students is 2.2059 and 2.8000 respectively. This implies that they had difficulty preparing instructional materials.

The mean for item 5 for male and female students is 2.8286 and 2.9000 respectively, this implies that both the male and female agree that they had difficulty teaching the practical application of the principles and concepts in the mathematics.

The mean item 6 for male and female students is 3.4000 and 3.3750 respectively, this

implies that both the male and female student agreed that the periods allocated for mathematics were inadequate for them to teach the lesson.

The mean for item 8 for male and female students is 3.1429 and 3.0750 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female students agree that they had difficulty in individualizing instructions i.e. providing activities to meet the needs of slow, average and fast learners.

The mean for item 9 for male and female students is 2.8000 and 2.7250 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female student agreed that they had difficulty maintaining the interest of learners throughout the lesson.

The mean for item 12 for male and female students is 3.1714 and 3.2500 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female students agreed that they had difficulty in getting transportation to the school of practice.

The mean for item 13 for male and female student is 2.8571 and 2.6750 respectively, this also implies that both male and female students agreed that there is lack of cooperation from students.

The mean for item 14 for male and female students is 3.4286 and 3.4500 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female students agreed that there is inadequate teaching and learning facilities in the school such as laboratory, ICT Centre.

The mean for item 15 for male and female students is 3.2571 and 3.4500 respectively, this implies that both male and female students agreed that they had challenge in teaching subject different from their field.

The mean for item 16 for male and female students is 2.8857 and 2.9750 respectively, this also implies that both the male and female students agreed that the teaching practice clashing with University Calendar lectures.

The mean for item 17 for male and female students is 2.6286 and 2.5750 respectively, this also implies that both the male and the female students agreed the working load is too much.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, analysis of the data revealed that challenges were visible which were inadequate

teaching and learning materials (TLMs) as well as difficulty getting transportation to school. The implication of these findings is the fact that these student-teachers of mathematics education would find it difficult explaining and impacting certain mathematical concepts to the students they teach as a result of the absence of the TLMs. Also, the fact that student teachers of mathematics education find it difficult getting means of transportation to their schools of practice implies that there is the likelihood of instructional time been affected which eventually would affect completion of content to be taught.

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