
ATTITUDE OF RIVERS STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS TOWARDS TEACHING PRACTICE

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In every profession, there are certain core requirements, which must be met before one could be admitted into it. Teaching is a profession and as such is not an exception. Therefore, it follows that those who aspire to be teachers must undergo teaching practice exercise as one of the essential requirements needed for graduation. Writing on the criteria for the organization of teacher education in Nigeria, Ohanado (1994) explains that it should be arranged under the following areas; (1) General education (2) Specialized education focusing on the subject that the teacher is supposed to teach, and (3) Teaching practice. Teaching practice is a necessary ingredient in teacher training and budding teachers must experience it as part of their preparation.

Discussing the significance of practice teaching, Okujagu and Osah-Ogulu (2002) state that “it is the component of the student teacher’s education which helps to effect the necessary blending and reconciliation of instructional practice, curriculum theory and curriculum implementation, teacher preparation and teaching service, and lesson planning and lesson delivery ... (p.6). Fashin (1996) also observes that the successful completion of practice teaching builds life-self confidence in the prospective teacher and impels the further professional advancement of the in-service student teacher who then feels a greater sense of professional self-worth. This was further emphasized by Nwadiani (1999) who opined that teaching practice programme for teacher trainees is aimed at linking acquired knowledge with practice in the field.

On the purpose of practice teaching, Okujagu and Osah-Ogulu (2002) indicated that the field experience helps the trainee teacher to perfect his professional skills, effective instructional performance, and creative problem-solving and collegial relational skill in the role of a professional teacher of his special subject. They also stress that practice teaching helps the trainee teacher to test out the validity of his self-concept and initial career decision to join teaching as an occupation.

Despite these significance and purposes, some student teachers tend to develop apathy and negative attitude towards teaching practice. According to Nwadiani (1999), of recent, supervisors of teaching practice programmes have continued to complain about poor attitude of student teachers during teaching practice exercises. He concluded by explaining that the rising cost of teaching practice has been implicated as the factor influencing their overall performance and commitment to the school children. This negative attitude toward teaching practice is worrying as it may inhibit production of efficient and effective teachers. It is as a result of this that this study attempted to examine those factors that may determine its direction and scope.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the attitude of Rivers State College of Education Students towards teaching practice. Specifically, the study will investigate the influence of such variables as sex, programme of study (NCE/BED), faculty and age on students' attitude towards teaching practice.

Research Question

1. What is the attitude of students in Rivers State College of Education towards teaching practice?

Hypotheses

The researcher formulated these hypotheses to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female students towards teaching practice.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of NCE and BED students towards teaching practice.
3. School of study does not significantly influence the attitude of students towards teaching practice.
4. Age does not significantly influence the attitude of students towards teaching practice.

Methodology

The design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. All BED and NCE students of Rivers State College of Education Port Harcourt constituted the population for this study. The sample was made up of 200 students (74 males, 126 females; 110 BED and 90 NCE students). The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique.

The "Teaching Practice Inventory" (TPI) was developed to collect data for the study. TPI is made up of two sections. Section A comprised personal data such as sex, course of study (NCE/BED), School (Science, Social Sciences, Education Languages) and age. Section B consisted of twelve items designed to measure students' attitude towards teaching practice. A pilot study was carried out to establish the reliability index of the scores obtained from TPI. Using test-retest reliability methods, the reliability index was estimated to be 0.61.

Simple percentage and chi-square statistics were employed to analyze the research question and the four hypotheses raised for this study. For the research question, the respondents' responses to the items in the questionnaire were individually analysed using frequencies and percentages. The students' responses were also analyzed using chi-square. The test was carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study were presented and discussed according to the research question and the four hypotheses formulated for the study.

Attitude of Rivers State College of Education Students towards Teaching Practice

Simple percentage analysis of this research question is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Percentage classification of students based on their attitude towards teaching practice

Attitude	No. of Students	Percentage
Positive	172	86
Negative	28	14
Total	200	100

Table 1 show that 172 students representing 86% had positive attitude towards teaching practice, while 28 other students representing 14% had negative attitude towards the exercise.

Attitude of male and female students towards teaching practice

Table 2: 2 x 2 contingency table for attitude of male and female students towards teaching practice

Attitude	Male	Female	Total
Positive	60(63.64)*	112(108.36)	172
Negative	14(10.36)	14(17.64)	28
Total	74	126	200

⁺Numbers in brackets are expected frequencies

X^2 calculated = 2.4

X^2 critical = 3.84

Table 2 shows that the calculated X^2 value of 2.4 with 1 df is less than the critical value of 3.84 needed for significance at the .05 alpha level. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that Rivers State College of Education students irrespective of their sex had the same attitude towards teaching practice.

Attitude of NCE and B.Ed Students towards Teaching Practice

Table 3: 2 x 2 contingency table for Attitude of NCE and BED students towards teaching practice.

Attitude	NCE	BED	TOTAL
Positive	81(77.9)*	92(95.1)	173
Negative	9(12.1)	18(14.9)	27
Total	90	110	200

+ Numbers in brackets are expected frequencies.

X^2 calculated = 1.6

X^2 critical = 3.84

Table 3 indicates that the calculated X^2 value of 1.6 with 1 df is less than critical value of 3.84 needed for significance at the .05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Rivers State College of Education Students, irrespective of their programme, had the same attitude towards teaching practice.

School of Study Influence on Attitude of Students towards Teaching Practice

Table 4: Contingency table showing the attitude of students in different schools of study

Attitude	Social Science	Science	Education	Language	Total
Positive	61(54.7)	28(26.5)*	47(54.7)	35(35.1)	171
Negative	3(9.3)	3(4.5)	17(9.3)	6(5.9)	29
Total	64	31	643	41	200

*Numbers in brackets are expected frequencies.

$$X^2 \text{ calculated} = 13.08$$

$$X^2 \text{ critical} = 7.81$$

Table 4 shows that the calculated value of 13.08 with 3 df is greater than the critical value of 7.81. The null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This means that school of study is related to Rivers State college of Education students' attitude towards teaching practice.

Influence of Age on the Attitude towards Teaching Practice

Table 5: Cross-Tabulation of Age and Attitude towards Teaching Practice

Attitude	20 – 25 yrs	26 – 30 yrs	31-35yrs	36 yrs above	Total
Positive	46(53.1) ⁺	58(53.9)	33(29.9)	29(29.1)	166
Negative	18(10.9)	7(11.1)	3(6.1)	6(5.9)	34
Total	64	65	36	35	200

+ Numbers in bracket are expected frequencies.

$$X^2 \text{ Calculated} = 9.3$$

$$X^2 \text{ Critical} = 7.81$$

Tables 5 indicates that the calculated X^2 value of 9.3 with 3 df is greater than the critical X^2 value of 7.81 needed for significance at the .05 alpha level. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is retained. This means that age had significant influence on students' attitude towards teaching practice.

Discussion

The only research question which sought to find out the attitude of Rivers State College of Education students towards teaching practice, revealed that majority of the students (86%) had positive attitude towards teaching practice as against the minority (14%), which had negative attitude. This finding is natural. This is because every student studying in Rivers State College of Education is being trained as a teacher and all training given to the students is geared towards making them skillful in teaching. This could explain the positive attitude.

The results of hypothesis one indicate that sex had no significant influence on the attitude of students towards teaching practice. This may be due to the fact that every student irrespective of sex is given the same training towards becoming a teacher. Both male and female students take the same education courses aimed at equipping them with the necessary teaching skills.

The results of hypothesis two shows that programme of study had no significant influence on students' attitude towards teaching practice. That is the attitude of students who are in NCE programme did not differ from those in BED with regard to teaching practice. As stated before, both NCE and BED students are being trained as teachers and are also exposed to similar education courses.

Findings from hypothesis three reveal that school of study had significant influence on students' attitude towards teaching practice. That is, students in School of Social Sciences,

Science, Education and Languages differ in their attitude towards teaching practice. It is however surprising that those students in School of Education had more negative attitude to teaching practice. This finding agrees with the assertion of Nwadiani (1999) that of recent supervisors have shown concern over students' poor attitude during teaching practice exercise. The likely reason for the above findings may be due to the fact that some students entered the College of Education as a last resort.

Finally, the findings of hypothesis four indicate that age had significant influence on the attitude of students towards teaching practice. This finding may be due to the fact that younger students take teaching profession as a stepping stone towards other rewarding professions. It is not an over statement that some students are in the College of Education because they are unable to pass JAMB and therefore cannot study the courses of their choice. Accepting a place in Colleges of Education therefore serves as a stop gap measure.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been proffered by the researchers.

1. Government should restore the old glory of the teaching profession in order to attract talented and intelligent candidates into teaching profession.
2. The federal government should as a matter of urgency restore the yearly allowance that hitherto was given to Education students. This will encourage senior secondary school students to choose Education as a course.
3. On its part, the State Government should equip Rivers State College of Education with Micro Teaching laboratory, modern gadgets and teaching facilities. This will encourage students to develop interest and likeness in teaching practice.
4. As this College is wholly owned by the Rivers State Government, it should introduce special allowance for students on teaching practice to off-set some expenses such as transportation cost, feeding and cost of instructional materials.

Conclusion

Teaching practice is an essential ingredient in teacher education. For any teacher to be effective, he/she must undergo teaching practice exercise so as to blend theory with practice. Effective teaching practice exercise helps student teachers to build self-confidence, communicate effectively in the class, learn about their mistakes and perfect their professional skills. Therefore, developing positive attitude towards teaching practice is a right step towards becoming an effective teacher.

References

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