ATTITUDE OF ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT-TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE.

DR. CHIDIEBERE-ONUOHA, ULOMA
Department Of Curriculum And Teacher Education, Faculty Of Education, Abia State University, Uturu.
Phone: 08063665044, E-mail: ulodoris2013@gmail.com

NWOKOCHA, MARY K.
Department of Curriculum and Teacher Education
Abia State University, Uturu
Phone: 08035760481

and

NWOKORO, CHUKWUEMEKA E.
Department of Science Education
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

Abstract
The study investigated attitude of Abia State University student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise. Four (4) research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. A sample of 350 respondents made up of 10 principals, 140 host teachers and 200 students teachers was selected through stratified random sample techniques. Ten (10) public secondary schools in Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State and Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State were used for the study. The study was a descriptive survey. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions and z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The finding revealed that teaching practice exercise helped to develop student teachers teaching skills and techniques adequately; a lot of problems are facing student teachers attitudes towards teaching practice such as lack of necessary facilities, equipment and materials, unwillingness on the part of student
teachers to report to the practicing schools. The study further revealed strategies to improve student teachers' attitudes towards teaching practice as follows: student teachers should be well prepared before posting to practicing schools; establishment of micro-taught laboratory; financial support by the universities to student teachers. The study recommended among others that micro-teaching laboratory should be established and used in schools for grooming student-teacher before posting to practicing schools, teaching practice training period should be lengthened for three months in each exercise to enable student-teachers acquire the necessary professional teaching skills and techniques. In addition, teaching practice orientation should be organized for student-teachers before sending them to practicing school for more guidance.

Introduction

Teaching is one of the most important professions in any society. It is a vital element that influences the competence of other professions. Teaching is an interactive process involving four aspects namely teacher, student, learning process and learning situation (Aggrawal, 2006). It is an interaction between a teacher and a student under the teacher's responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the student's behaviour. It is the guidance of pupils or students through planned activities so that they may acquire the desirable learning outcomes. A teacher is a person who had undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate level capable of imparting knowledge, skill and attitudes to the learner (Ikediwgu, 2005). Nwogbo and Okeke (2010) perceived a teacher as not only a transmitter of knowledge but also an agent of nature, a bearer of sacred truth and a mentor who helps to prepare a child to be ready for changes and challenges of the society and develops positive attitudes towards his/her surrounding.

Teaching practice is a significant component in any teacher preparation process. It is a period for practical laying of hands on classroom teaching experience. It is a form of industrial attachment during which the student teacher gathers experience that qualifies him/her to take a job in the teaching profession. It is aimed at putting into practice knowledge, skills, and values the student teacher has acquired into real school-life situation. The essence and purpose according to Amadi (2011:13) include “to increase the skills of student teacher in managing classes which will facilitate teaching and learning”.

Okujaugu and Osah-Ogulu (2002:56) asserted that the purpose of teaching practice is to gain practical school-based and confidence-building field experience. They further opined that the field experiences will help the student teacher to:

- perfect his/her professional skills;
- improve his/her instructional performance;
- bring out his/her creative ability at problem solving;
- imbibe harmonious collegial relational skills in the role of a
professional teacher in his/her special subject; and
- test the validity of his/her self-concept and initial career decision to enter teaching as an occupation.

The objectives of teaching practice as enumerated by Akbar (2002:32) are as follows to:-
- provide the prospective teachers with an opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher pupil relationship;
- provide an opportunity for evaluating the student potential as a teacher and suitability for teaching profession;
- develop personal relationship with others, administrators, teachers, parents and students;
- provide the future teacher with practical experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control;
- provide with an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop a deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication for learning;
- develop skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching;
- develop desirable professional interests, attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession.
- enable student teachers to acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and display appropriate behaviour;
- provide student teachers with an opportunity to have teaching evaluated and gain from the benefits of constructive criticism.
- provide an opportunity for self evaluation and discover own strengths and weaknesses;
- develop skills in future teachers related to teaching like fluent speaking, meaningful reading using blackboard and other teaching materials;
- provide an opportunity to liaise with school environment, its functioning and with community and its resources;
- provide for the exchange of ideas and methods between practicing school and teacher training institution, by teacher training institution staff and students, perceiving new ideas, materials and equipments in use in practicing schools and introducing new ideas, materials and equipments into the school.

The degree of success in teaching practice depends on the extent to which the supervisors of teaching practice partake in the exercise and the student teachers understand and practice the above mentioned objectives. Positive attitude
development exposes the real life classroom practice as well as ability to translate theory into practice for effective study. The essence and relevance of teaching practice has been a concern to many especially the student teachers, host teachers and even the supervisors. Imobong (2008) opined that the future of any nation depends on the quality of its teachers. This is why the Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:39) stated that “no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development”. The goal of teacher education stated in FRN (2013:29) shall be to:-

- produce highly motivated conscientious and effective classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system;
- further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adequate to their changing situation; and
- enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

In pursuance of these goals, teaching practice exercise becomes imperative. Student teachers should be made to realize that teaching practice is the key to any teacher education programme. Teaching practice provides a forum for student teacher to translate educational principles and theories into practice, thereby developing positive attitude towards the teaching profession. It is a mapped out period for student teachers to exhibit the principles and theories acquired in school into practical situation in classroom. It provides opportunities for student-teacher to implement the theoretical knowledge acquired into practical situation.

In any school setting, whether it be primary, secondary or tertiary education, the attitude of pupils/students to learning is generally regarded as one of the most critical determinants of the success and quality of any learning outcome (Ajewole, 1991). Attitude is not behaviour or action itself, it is a person's preparedness or disposition, an inclination to act, think and feel towards people, issues, events or objects (Chung and Son, 2000). Attitude is a positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, events, activities and ideas. It is an expression of favour or disfavour towards a person, place, things or events. In fact, attitude “is a mental and neutral representation of readiness, organizing through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on behaviour” (Baron, 2005:409).

Attitude just like learning manifests in behaviours of the individual, which could be directly observed. Thus to understand attitude, one had to study the behaviours that are usually aroused, sustained and directed towards the goals or predetermined objectives. Attitude has three basic components namely; the cognitive, affective and behavioural components.
Cognitive Component: This is the knowledge component. It is the belief, thought, information, idea, opinion, view and knowledge that students have about a person or attitude object. It is also called perceptual and information component because perception and information are cognitive processes (Baron, 2005). Cognitive attitude also affects what is perceived and the quality and quantity of information put out and could be used as an evaluation of various aspects of the social world.

Affective Component: This refers to the feeling, emotion a person has towards a particular thing or attitude object. Affective component of attitudes are indicated when emotions are expressed whether negatively or positively.

Behavioural Component: This is the action tendency. It explains the state of readiness associated with the attitude objects. For instance, if a student teacher holds a positive attitude towards teaching practice exercise, he/she is likely to be committed in learning the methodology of teaching, partaking in microteaching and completing his/her assignments relating to teaching practice. If he/she holds a negative attitude towards it, he/she is likely to neglect anything that relates to teaching practice.

Attitudes are classified into four groups based on their functions. These include utilitarian, knowledge, ego-defensive and value expressive.

- **Utilitarian**: People adopt attitudes that are rewarding and help them avoid punishment. Any attitude adopted in a person’s own self-interest is considered to serve a utilitarian function.

- **Knowledge**: People need to maintain an organized meaningful and stable view of the world. Knowledge helps people to organize and interpret new information.

- **Ego-Defensive**: Ego-defensive involves psychological principles where people use defense mechanisms to protect themselves from psychological harm. Ego-defensive function helps people to protect their self-esteem.

- **Value-Expressive**: This helps to express one’s central value and self-concept. Central value tends to establish one’s identity and gain social approval, thereby showing who one is and what he or she stands for. Student teachers' attitude is an important factor in teaching process. It has direct effect on the student’s behaviour and success in the classroom and his/her relationship with students in the school.

Many studies have been carried out on the area of teaching practice. Imobong (2008) conducted a study on the student-teachers and host teachers attitudes towards teaching practice in Akwa-Ibom and found out that student-teachers and host teachers have good relationship because student teachers were obedient and respectful to the school authority, and were always ready to take instruction. The study also revealed that the student-teachers were regular in school, diligent to duty, resourceful, decent in dressing and possessed the teaching ability. Tanega (2000)
carried out a study on the relationship between the student teachers and host teachers in Anambra State and found out that there was no significant difference between the host teachers and student teachers because there was a good relationship between them and other individuals. The study revealed that the student teachers developed positive attitudes towards the teaching practice exercise.

Perry (2004) conducted a study on the problems facing teaching practice in secondary schools in Enugu and found that there were a lot of problems facing teaching practice. Such problems include inadequate preparation of student-teachers for teaching practice, lack of necessary equipments, facilities and materials for preparation of the student teachers to report to their school locations; poor learning environment in the practicing schools such as class, congestion, poor ventilation, poor facilities and equipments, lack of accommodation for the student-teachers especially those posted very far from the University, rejection of student-teachers by some schools, short period for teaching practice exercise, lack of transportation fare on the part of the students teachers and inaccessibility of some school location to student-teachers and supervisors.

Perry (2004) equally suggested the strategies to improve attitudes of student-teachers to teaching practice as follows: student-teachers should be well prepared before posting to schools, micro-teaching laboratory should be put in place and used to groom the student-teachers, student-teachers should be sent to schools considering the accessibility and nearness to the University. Perry also suggested that teaching practice handbook should be provided to student-teachers, student-teachers should be briefed by the supervisors before going to their school locations, and that financial support should be provided for the student-teachers by the University.

Adekola and Shoaga (2008) investigated the attitude of students on teaching practice towards teaching profession and found that majority of the student-teachers are just using teaching as a stepping stone to other lucrative professions. Gender has significant difference on the attitude of students. In a study carried out by Adetayo (2008) on quality of teaching practice exercise organized by tertiary institutions as perceived by lecturers revealed that majority of the lecturers perceived the quality of teaching practice exercise to be low, the study further revealed that lecturers do not differ significantly on their perception of the quality of teaching practice exercise by lecturers' gender.

In Nigerian training institutions, the trainers usually see to the development and improvement of positive attitude of student teachers' towards teaching processes. Despite their efforts, student-teachers' attitudes have not been encouraging. It therefore becomes necessary to carry out this study in order to ascertain the attitude of Abia State University student-teachers towards teaching practice. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitude of Abia State University student-teachers towards teaching practice. The experience of Abia State University students. Specifically, the study sought to:-
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- determine the attitude of the student-teachers towards teaching practice;
- identify the problems facing teaching practice exercise as perceived by student-teachers;
- identify the strategies to improve the attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice;
- ascertain the attitude of student-teachers as observed by the host teachers and principals of the practicing schools.

Research Questions
The following research questions were posed to guide the study
1. What are the attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice?
2. What are the problems facing teaching practice exercise as perceived by student-teachers?
3. What are the strategies to improve the attitudes of student-teachers towards teaching practice?
4. What are the attitudes of student-teachers observed by the host teachers and principals of practicing schools?

Hypotheses
Two hypotheses guided the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.
Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female student-teachers' perception on the problems facing teaching practice.
Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean attitude rating of host teachers and principals on the observed attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice.

Research Method
Survey design was employed for the study. The study was carried out in Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State and Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State using student-teachers from Abia State University, Uturu for 2013/2014 session. The population comprised all the 2013/2014 practicing student-teachers in Faculty of Education, Abia State University Uturu, all the teachers and principals of the practicing schools in Isuikwuato and Okigwe Local Government Areas. A sample of 350 respondents made up of 10 principals, 140 host teachers and 200 student teachers (80 males and 120 females) was selected through stratified random sampling techniques. Four research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. Ten (10) practicing schools in Isuikwuato and Okigwe Local Government Areas were used for the study.

The instrument for the study is questionnaire titled – Attitude of Student Teachers and Host Teachers Towards Teaching Practice Questionnaire (ASTHTTPQ). The questionnaire comprised two sections A and B. Section A was used to obtain the personal data of the respondents, while section B was designed to
generate information on student-teachers and host teachers attitude towards teaching practice. Section B is made up of four (4) clusters of twenty-seven (27) items. The first three (3) clusters are for the student teachers and the last cluster for the host teachers. The items were structured based on four point Likert scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The instrument was validated by an expert in measurement and evaluation and two experts in psychology. The experts authenticated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established as 0.93 using test-retest method. 350 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. They were completed and returned for data analysis. A criterion mean score of 2.5 was calculated to judge the mean responses of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses.

**Results**

The results of the study were presented in the tables according to the research questions and hypotheses raised.

**Research Question One**

What are the attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice?

**Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on Attitudes of Male and Female Student Teachers on Teaching Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/</th>
<th>Student Teacher’s Attitude Towards Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Male Student Teachers</th>
<th>Female Student Teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teaching practice is a good experience and should be allowed to continue to extend to one year</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I am always ready with my lesson notes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I teach all my lessons with instructional materials</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I like to teach my lessons at the teaching period</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I have mutual understanding with my students, host teachers and school authority.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pooled Mean</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

104
Table 1 revealed that all the male student teachers agreed with items 1-5 with mean scores of 2.84, 2.78, 2.92, 3.17 and 3.06 respectively which were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5, while female student teachers also agreed with items 1-5 with mean scores of 2.88, 2.74, 2.95, 3.00 and 3.15 respectively which were also greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The pooled mean of male and female student teachers were 2.95 and 2.94 respectively. Based on the pooled mean scores of male and female students, the study revealed that student teachers develop positive attitude towards teaching practice.

**Research Question Two**
What are the problems facing teaching practice exercise as perceived by student-teachers?

**Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Student Teachers on Problems Facing Teaching Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Problems Facing Teaching Practice Exercise</th>
<th>Male Student Teachers</th>
<th>Female Student Teachers</th>
<th>Mean N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Inadequate preparation of student teachers for teaching practice</td>
<td>80 2.85 1.0 2</td>
<td>120 2.80 0.95 2.82</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lack of necessary equipments and facilities for preparation of student teachers before sending them out for teaching practice</td>
<td>80 3.00 0.9 4</td>
<td>120 2.81 1.00 2.91</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Unwillingness of the student teachers to report to their posted school location</td>
<td>80 2.70 0.8 5</td>
<td>120 2.78 0.91 2.74</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lack of accommodation for student teachers especially those posted very far from the university</td>
<td>80 3.00 1.1 8</td>
<td>120 3.08 0.98 3.04</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Inadequate number of practicing schools and rejection of student teachers by some schools</td>
<td>80 2.92 0.9 3</td>
<td>120 2.94 0.87 2.93</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Poor learning environment in the practicing schools.</td>
<td>80 3.18 1.0 6</td>
<td>120 3.17 1.12 3.18</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Inacessibility of school location by student teachers and supervisors</td>
<td>80 2.92 0.9 3</td>
<td>120 2.95 0.80 2.03</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Insufficient fund on the part of student teachers</td>
<td>80 3.31 0.9 0</td>
<td>120 3.17 1.12 3.25</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pooled Mean

2.99

2.96
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Table 2 revealed that all male student teachers agreed with the items 6-13 as problems facing teaching practice with mean scores of 2.85, 3.00, 2.70, 3.00, 2.92, 3.18, 2.92 and 3.31 respectively which were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5, while female students agreed also with the items 6-13 as problems facing teaching practice with mean scores of 2.80, 2.81, 2.78, 3.08, 2.94, 3.17, 2.95 and 3.17 respectively which were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The pooled mean of male and female teachers were 2.99 and 2.96 respectively.

Research Question Three
What are the strategies to improve the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Student teachers on Strategies to Improve Teaching Practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Strategies to Improve Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Male Student Teachers</th>
<th>Female Student Teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Student teachers should be well prepared before posting to schools</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Micro teaching laboratory should be put in place and used to groom the student teachers before actual teaching practice</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Student teachers should be sent to good schools considering the accessibility and nearness to the University</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Teaching practice handbook should be provided to student teachers.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Student teachers should be briefed or given orientation by their supervisors before going to their school location</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>University should provide each practicing student some financial support for their upkeep</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>School authorities should liaise with far school location to arrange accommodation for student teachers</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Lecturers should inform the students when they want to visit the school for supervision</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pooled Mean 3.08 3.03

106
Table 3 revealed that the male student teachers agreed with items 14-21 as strategies to improve teaching practice exercise with mean scores of 2.73, 3.34, 3.05, 3.49, 3.05, 2.86, 3.00 and 3.12 respectively which were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. Female student teachers also agreed with items 14-21 as strategies to improve teaching practice with mean scores of 2.75, 3.52, 3.04, 3.20, 2.96, 2.75, 3.13 and 2.86 respectively which were also greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The pooled mean scores of male and female student teachers were 3.08 and 3.03 respectively.

**Research Question Four**
What are the attitudes of student teachers observed by host teachers and principals of practicing schools?

**Table 4**: Mean Scores and Standard deviation on the Attitudes of Student Teachers Observed by Host Teachers and Principals of Practicing Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sn</th>
<th>Observed Attitudes of Student Teachers by Host-Teachers and Principals</th>
<th>Host Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Mean Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N, Mean, SD</td>
<td>N, Mean, SD</td>
<td>N, Mean, SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Student teachers report promptly to school location</td>
<td>140, 2.85, 1.02</td>
<td>10, 2.80, 0.95</td>
<td>2.82, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Students are punctual and regular to school</td>
<td>140, 2.75, 0.70</td>
<td>10, 2.91, 1.01</td>
<td>2.83, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Student teachers are diligent to duty and highly resourceful</td>
<td>140, 2.65, 0.83</td>
<td>10, 2.60, 1.02</td>
<td>2.62, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>There is good relationship between the student teachers and host teachers</td>
<td>140, 3.02, 1.00</td>
<td>10, 2.81, 1.00</td>
<td>2.91, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Student teachers are decent in dressing and possess the teaching ability</td>
<td>140, 2.95, 0.96</td>
<td>10, 2.88, 0.83</td>
<td>2.81, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Student teachers are obedient and respect the school authority, being ready to take instructions or correctness.</td>
<td>140, 2.71, 0.75</td>
<td>10, 2.73, 0.77</td>
<td>2.72, Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Pooled Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 showed that the host teachers agreed with items 22-27 as attitudes of student teachers observed with mean scores of 2.85, 2.75, 2.65, 3.02, 2.95 and 2.71 respectively which were greater than criterion mean of 2.5, while the principals also agreed with items 22-27 as attitudes of student teachers observed with mean scores of 2.80, 2.91, 2.60, 2.81, 2.88 and 2.73 respectively which were greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The pooled mean of host teachers and principals were 2.82
and 2.79 respectively.

**Hypothesis One**
There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers' perception on the problems facing teaching practice.

**Table 5**: z-test Analysis of Male and Female Student Teachers on Problem facing Teaching Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>z-cal value</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male student teachers</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female student teachers</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 showed that z-calculated value was 0.21 and z-critical value was 1.96. The z-calculated value of 0.21 was less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between the male and female students' perception on the problems facing teaching practice.

**Hypothesis Two**
There is no significant difference between the mean scores of host teachers and principals on the observed attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice.

**Table 6**: z-test Analysis of Host Teachers and Principals on the Observed Attitudes of Student Teachers Towards Teaching Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>z-cal value</th>
<th>z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host teachers</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 revealed that the z-calculated value is 0.10 and the z-critical value is 1.96. The z-calculated value of 0.10 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean attitude rating of host teachers and principals on observed attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice.

**Discussion of Findings**
The findings of this study revealed that student teachers develop positive attitude towards teaching practice exercise in Isuikwuato and Okigwe Local Government Areas. The finding is at variance with those of Adetayo (2008) and Adekola and Shoaga (2008) who observed that majority of the student-teachers
were just using teaching practice as a stepping stone to other lucrative professions and the quality of teaching practice exercise was low.

The findings of the study revealed that a lot of problems are facing attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice. These include inadequate preparation of student teachers for teaching practice, lack of necessary equipment and facilities for preparation of student teachers, unwillingness of student teachers to report to the posted school location, lack of accommodation for student teachers especially those posted very far from the university, rejection of student teachers by some schools, inaccessibility of school location and insufficient fund on the part of student-teachers. The finding agreed with the findings of Perry (2004) who observed that inadequate preparation of student teachers, lack of necessary equipment and facilities, lack of transportation fare on the part of the student teachers and many others are problems facing teaching practice exercise. Analysis of hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between mean scores of male and female student teachers on the problems facing teaching practice.

The findings of the study also revealed the strategies to improve teaching practice as follows – student teachers should be well prepared before posting to schools, micro teaching laboratory should be put in place and used to groom the student teachers before posting to schools, provision of teaching practice handbooks to student teachers, student teachers should be posted to schools, considering accessibility and nearness to University school authority should provide each practicing student some financial support for their up-keep and so on. The findings also corroborate with the findings of Perry (2004) who enumerated the strategies to improve teaching practice as proper preparation of student teachers, establishment of micro teaching laboratory, financial support by the school authority to the student teacher and provision of teaching practice handbook to the student teachers.

The findings of the study further revealed the attitudes of student teachers as observed by host teachers and principals. Host teachers develop positive attitudes towards teaching practice. They observed that student-teachers report to their school locations, they were punctual and regular to school; diligent to duty and highly resourceful, decent in dressing and possess teaching ability, obedient and respect the school authority and ready to the take corrections as well as good relationship with their host teachers. The findings agreed with findings of Tanega (2000) and Imobong (2008) who observed in their studies that student teachers and host teachers have good relationship because student teachers were obedient and respectful to the school authority and ready to take corrections. They also observed that student teachers were regular in school, diligent to duty, resourceful, decent in dressing and possess good teaching abilities. Table 6 showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of host teachers and principals on the observed attitudes of student teachers towards teaching practice.
Conclusion

The study concluded that student-teachers develop positive attitude towards teaching practice exercise. It also concluded that a lot of problems are facing student-teachers attitude towards teaching practice. These include among others inadequate preparation of student-teachers; lack of necessary equipment and facilities for preparation of student-teachers. The study also suggested some strategies to improve teaching practice exercise as establishment of micro-teaching laboratories; provision of teaching practice handbooks. Teaching practice is an essential component of effective teacher education. Developing positive attitude towards teaching practice will go a long way to improve the quality of teachers as well as teaching profession. Success of teaching practice exercise depends largely on the attitudes of student-teachers and host teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made

- Micro-teaching laboratory should be established and used in schools for grooming the student-teachers before posting to practicing schools.
- Teaching practice handbooks should be provided for student-teachers to enlighten them more on the professional teaching skill.
- Teaching practice orientation should be organized for student-teachers before sending them to practicing schools for proper guidance.
- Necessary facilities, equipment and materials required for effective teaching practice preparation should be provided in schools.
- Teaching practice training period should be lengthened for three months in each exercise to enable student-teachers to acquire the necessary teaching skills and equipment.

References


ATTITUDE OF ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT-TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE.


