

From Theory to Classroom: Teaching Practice Experiences of History Student-Teachers at the University of Ibadan

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ABSTRACT

History, a chronological record of significant events which occurred in the past as relating to a particular people, country, period or person. History is the study of people, actions, decisions, interactions and behaviours. The goal of this study is to provide information that explains the experiences of History student-teachers on teaching practice programme and how those experiences can be further improved. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage. The findings from the analysis of the data provide valuable insights into the experiences of History student-teachers during their teaching practice programme. The student-teachers reported positive experiences in certain aspects of their practice, such as effectively using instructional materials and diligently writing new notes for every lesson. Furthermore, the challenges faced by History student-teachers during the programme were identified. It is therefore recommended that adequate teaching resources need to be provided. History student-teachers need to have easy access to a wide range of instructional materials. This will support their effective use of instructional materials and enhance the quality of their practice.

Key Words: History, Experiences, Teaching Practice Programme, History student-teachers, Teaching materials.

INTRODUCTION

History is the study of past human experiences, including technological, scientific economic, social and political developments. Studying History helps humans to understand and handle complex questions and problems by examining how the past has shaped and continues to shape global, national, and local relationships between societies and people. Through History, we can learn how past societies, systems, ideologies, governments, cultures and technologies were built, how they operated, and how they have changed. The rich History of the world helps us to paint a detailed picture of where we stand today but this cannot be achieved without experts teaching it. History aims at helping students to understand the present existing social, political, religious and economic conditions of the people. Without the knowledge of History, one cannot have the background of religion, customs institutions and administration (Kayode-Olawoyin, 2017)

History was removed from Nigerian school curriculum for 12 years before it was restored, this removal brought about some challenges in the teaching and learning of History. A very popular challenge of teaching History is the low rate of teachers who are teaching the subject. Many schools usually run out of professional Historians to teach History, this is why there is a need to train and produce more experienced History teachers, it is pathetic to note that some of the teachers who teach History are usually not well grounded in the knowledge of History or are not well experienced. Hence, it was against this background that this research sought to examine the experiences of History student-teachers during the teaching practice programme in order to check if these student-teachers have the necessary experience required to carry on the teaching and learning process of History. However, teaching History involves a lot of processes and preparations, one of this preparations includes training of the teachers and teaching practice exercise.

Teaching practice is a period of time during which a student teacher is assigned to a specific institution; primary or secondary school for a supervised teaching as one of the requirements for graduation and effective teaching experience. Davidson (2015) sees teaching practice as a period that enables student teachers to learn about the actual work of the teacher in the classroom as well as out-of-class experience.

Teaching practice provides the laboratory where a student practice what he/she had learnt concerning effective teaching. Teaching practice is an important factor in preparing students for future teaching assignments. According to National Teacher Institution, teaching practice manual (2013), the general objectives of teaching practice are to enable the student teachers; gain general experience, both academic professional, social and physical related to teaching profession; acquire a wealth of practical experience from all staff they are likely to be in contact with through active participation in the school assigned responsibilities; bring the student-teachers into direct contact with such significant issues as the functions and responsibilities of various categories of school, staff academic and non-academic; develop competence in proper lesson preparation delivery and assessment.

Teaching practice is known to expose student-teachers to the actual practice of teaching. It is during this period that student-teachers are given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Kiggundu and Nayimuli 2010). In view of this, Perry (2016) argues that teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student-teachers as they commence their teaching practice. Thus, this provides student-teachers with the chance to express their personal educational philosophies, theories and understandings. In other words, this creates an opportunity for student-teachers to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in the profession of teaching and learning with an understanding of their personal educational philosophies and theories. This research explains the experiences gathered by History student-teachers and how such experiences contribute to the quality of knowledge they have to become teachers.

Teaching practice has been defined by Ndagi (2014) as the teaching which those training for teaching or any education work are engaged in a specified period under a supervisor or supervisor guiding, directing and assessing trainee teacher. In some cases, the student- teachers must master the subject matter before going to classroom and starts to teach. It is a very important scheme which has been in existence since the introduction of education course in teacher training certificates (T. T. C.), Nigeria Certificate in Education (N. C. E.), these programmes make teaching practice compulsory and no candidate is awarded certificate in Education without teaching practice. Teaching practices is the most important element in the professional training of teachers across the world. The importance of teaching practice in teacher education programme cannot be overemphasized. It is the crucial periods of the translating theory into practice. The student -teachers have been facing a lot of difficulties which they have dealt with for effective teaching and learning to take place. This study therefore investigates experiences of the History student- teachers during teaching practice and finally suggest ways for which teaching practice exercise can be improved.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (1984), which provides a conceptual foundation for understanding History student-teachers' experiences during their teaching practice. Kolb's ELT emphasizes learning as a continuous process where knowledge is constructed through experience. The theory is particularly relevant in teacher education, as it explains how student-teachers develop their pedagogical skills through direct engagement in real classroom settings.

For History student-teachers, experiential learning is vital as it helps them bridge theoretical knowledge with classroom realities. Teaching History requires more than content mastery; it demands skills in lesson planning, storytelling, historical analysis, student engagement, and critical thinking facilitation. Through Kolb's learning cycle: Student-teachers gain firsthand experience in handling historical discussions, integrating sources, and using pedagogical strategies like inquiry-based learning. Reflection enables them to evaluate how well students understand historical narratives and adapt their teaching techniques accordingly. Connecting experience with historical pedagogy theories (e.g., constructivist approaches to History education) helps them improve their instructional methods. Experimentation encourages continuous improvement, leading to the development of effective History teachers who can engage students in meaningful historical thinking.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the learning journey of History student-teachers during their teaching practice. By progressing through the four stages of experiential learning, they refine their pedagogical skills, enhance their ability to engage students in historical inquiry, and

develop confidence as future educators. This framework informs the study's research questions by guiding the exploration of how student-teachers experience, reflect on, and improve their teaching practice.

Statement of the problem

Teacher education is thriving and growing very fast in Nigeria, the teaching practice programme which is the practical aspect of the teacher education is to equip the student-teacher with practical experiences. The programme is done under the guidance of principal or school head, cooperating teachers and University supervisors that facilitate and monitor the growth of the student-teacher. However, the real purpose of the programme is not usually achieved as the expected experiences are not gathered. This is due to some factors that include the lack of consistency in the method use for supervision, the short duration for programme, lack of commitment of student-teachers and lack of cooperation from the cooperating teachers which in turn diminish the quality of the experiences gathered. The objectives of this study are to examine the experiences of History student-teachers during the teaching practice programme, to understand the impacts of teaching practice programme on History student-teachers, to understand the challenges faced by History student-teachers during teaching practice programme and to identify other factors that can contribute to improved experiences of History student-teachers during the teaching practice programme.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the experiences of History student-teachers on teaching practice programme?
2. What are the impacts of teaching practice exercise on History student-teachers?
3. What are the challenges faced by History student-teachers during teaching practice programme?
4. How can the experiences of student-teachers be improved?

METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population comprises of all Education and History undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan. Purposive sampling method was used to select all History Education students of the University of Ibadan, this respondents were Historians on teaching practice who were on their second teaching practice. Hence, the sample size was 40. The instrument is was structured questionnaire adapted by the researcher titled "Teaching experiences of History student-teachers during the Teaching Practice Programme in the University of Ibadan". This instrument consists of five sections; Section A, B, C, D and E. To determine validity, experts in History education and teacher training reviewed the questionnaire, evaluating the clarity, relevance, and representativeness of the items. Their feedback resulted in modifications to ensure the instrument adequately reflected the core dimensions of teaching practice. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, the overall reliability coefficient was 0.85, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the experiences of History student-teachers on teaching practice programme?

Table 1: Percentage distribution of experiences of History student-teachers on teaching practice programme

S/N	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I make good use of instructional materials during the exercise	12 (29.3%)	29 (70.7%)		
2.	I write new notes for every lesson during the exercise	34	6	1	

		(82.9%)	(14.6%)	(2.4%)	
3.	I have access to the right teaching materials during the exercise		27 (65.9%)	4 (9.8%)	10 (24.3%)
4.	I maintain healthy relationships with my students during the lesson	14 (34.1%)	25 (61.0%)	2 (4.9%)	
5.	My cooperating teacher cooperates with me during my exercise	14 (34.1%)	25 (61.0%)	2 (4.9%)	
6.	I attend staff meetings and assembly regular	13 (31.7%)	28 (68.3%)		
7.	I participate in the School's Co-curricular activities e.g Sports, career talks and debates	18 (43.9%)	20 (48.8%)	1 (2.4%)	2 (4.9%)
8.	The school's closing time is convenient for me	13 (31.7%)	22 (53.7%)	6 (14.6%)	
9.	I am able to practice all I have been taught in my lectures		24 (58.5%)	6 (14.6%)	11 (26.8%)
10.	I set examination and test questions for summative evaluation	17 (41.5%)	19 (46.3%)	5 (12.2%)	
11.	The time allocated to each lesson is enough to complete my lesson		28 (68.3%)	5 (12.2%)	8 (19.5%)
12.	I give assignments after every lesson for formative evaluation		19 (46.3%)	6 (14.6%)	16 (39.0%)

Table 4.1 presents the percentage distribution of experiences reported by History student- teachers during their teaching practice programme. The table includes questions related to various aspects of their teaching practice, and the responses are categorized into four levels: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). 29.3% of the student-teachers strongly agree and 70.7% agree that they make effective use of instructional materials during their teaching exercise. 82.9%) strongly agree that they write new notes for every lesson, while a small percentage (14.6%) agree, and only 2.4% disagree. 65.9% of the student-teachers indicate that they have access to the right teaching materials during their exercise. On the other hand, 9.8% agree, and 24.3% strongly disagree. On maintaining healthy relationships with students. 34.1% of the student-teachers strongly agree, 61% agree, and 4.9% disagree. Regarding cooperation with the cooperating teacher, 34.1% of the student-teachers strongly agree, 61% agree, and 4.9% disagree. 31.7% of the student-teachers report attending staff meetings and assembly regularly, while 68.3% agree. 43.9% of the student-teachers participate in the school's co-curricular activities, such as sports, career talks, and debates. 48.8% agree, 2.4% disagree, and 4.9% strongly disagree.

In terms of the convenience of the school's closing time, 31.7% of the student-teachers strongly agree, 53.7% agree, and 14.6% disagree. 58.5% of the student-teachers can practice what they have been taught in their lectures. 14.6% agree, and 26.8% strongly disagree. 41.5% of the student-teachers set examination and test questions for summative evaluation. 46.3% agree, and 12.2% disagree. On the allocated time for each lesson,

68.3% of the student-teachers strongly agree that it is enough to complete their lessons. 12.2% disagree, and 19.5% strongly disagree. 46.3% of the student-teachers give assignments after every lesson for formative evaluation, 14.6% agree, and 39.0% strongly disagree.

Research question 2: What are the impacts of teaching practice exercise on History student-teachers?

Table 2: Percentage distribution of impacts of teaching practice exercise on History student-teachers

S/N	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The sitting arrangement of the class helps me relate well with my students		21 (51.2%)	9 (22.0%)	11 (26.8%)
2.	I teach better in a small class	19 (46.3%)	11 (26.8%)	9 (22.0%)	2 (4.9%)
3.	I teach better in a large class	11 (26.8%)	13 (31.7%)	7 (17.1%)	10 (24.3%)
4.	Being familiar with my students help my classroom management	23 (56.1%)	16 (39.0%)	2 (4.9%)	

Table 2 presents the percentage distribution of the impacts of the teaching practice exercise on History student-teachers. The table includes questions related to various aspects of the teaching practice experience, and the responses are categorized into four levels: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). 51.2% of the student-teachers strongly agree that the sitting arrangement of the class helps them relate well with their students. Additionally, 22.0% agree, while 26.8% disagree. 46.3% of the student-teachers strongly agree that they teach better in a small class. Additionally, 26.8% agree, 22.0% disagree, and 4.9% strongly disagree. 26.8% of the student-teachers strongly agree that they teach better in a large class. Additionally, 31.7% agree, 17.1% disagree, and 24.3% strongly disagree. On the impact of being familiar with students on classroom management. 56.1% of the student-teachers strongly agree that being familiar with their students helps with classroom management, while 39.0% agree, and 4.9% disagree.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by History student-teachers during teaching practice programme?

Table 3: Percentage distribution of challenges faced by History student-teachers during teaching practice programme

S/N	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My allocated school is too far from my residence		19 (46.3%)	9 (22.0)	13 (31.7%)
2.	The environment of the school is inconducive for learning history		7 (17.1%)	21 (51.2%)	13 (31.7%)
3.	My students do not have prior knowledge of History	16 (39.0%)	15 (36.6%)	10 (24.3%)	
4.	My allocated supervisor did not supervise me well		4 (9.8%)	19 (46.3%)	18 (43.9%)

Table 3 displays the percentage distribution of challenges faced by History student-teachers during their teaching practice programme. The table includes questions related to various challenges encountered during the programme, and the responses are categorized into four levels: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). 46.3% of the student-teachers strongly agree that their allocated school is too far from their residence. Additionally, 22.0% agree, while 31.7% disagree. 17.1% of the student-teachers strongly agree that the environment of the school is not conducive for learning History. Additionally, 51.2% agree, and 31.7% strongly disagree. 39.0% of the student-teachers strongly agree that their students do not have prior knowledge of History. Additionally, 36.6% agree, and 24.3% disagree. On the supervision provided by the allocated supervisor. 9.8% of the student-teachers strongly agree that their allocated supervisor did not supervise them well. Additionally, 46.3% agree, and 43.9% strongly disagree.

Research Question 4: How can the experiences of student-teachers be improved?

Table 4: Percentage distribution of experiences of student-teachers be improved

S/N	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My experience will improve if I am given a form of incentive	25 (61.0%)	13 (31.7%)	2 (4.9%)	1 (2.4%)
2.	If I am allowed to pick my school of choice, my experience will improve	20 (48.8%)	10 (24.3%)	10 (24.3%)	1 (2.4%)
3.	If the time for the teaching practice programme is extended, I am likely to gather more experiences	23 (56.1%)	14 (34.1%)	4 (9.8%)	

Table 4 presents the percentage distribution of student-teachers' opinions on how their experiences can be improved during the teaching practice programme. The table includes questions related to potential improvements, and the responses are categorized into four levels: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). 61.0% of the student-teachers strongly agree that their experience will improve if they are given a form of incentive. Additionally, 31.7% agree, 4.9% disagree, and 2.4% strongly disagree. 48.8% of the student-teachers strongly agree that their experience will improve if they are allowed to pick their school of choice. Additionally, 24.3% agree, 24.3% disagree, and 2.4% strongly disagree. 56.1% of the student-teachers strongly agree that extending the time for the teaching practice programme will likely help them gather more experiences. Additionally, 34.1% agree, and 9.8% disagree.

DISCUSSIONS

Based on the analysis of the provided data, the following resolutions were made from answering the research questions.

Many student-teachers reported positive experiences in various aspects of their teaching practice. They acknowledged the effective use of instructional materials (29.3% strongly agree, 70.7% agree) and the practice of writing new notes for every lesson (82.9% strongly agree), this corroborates the earlier position of Salisu, 2022. However, there were variations indicating that not all student-teachers had same experience in areas such as access to teaching materials and maintaining healthy relationships with students.

Additionally, the result suggests that the student-teachers' view of the exercise impacts varied, and no clear pattern or consensus emerged from the data. This negates the result of Ezechukwu et al 2021.

The findings also indicate that there were consistent perceptions among the student-teachers regarding challenges such as distance to allocated schools, lack of conducive environment for learning History, students' prior knowledge of History, and the quality of supervision provided by allocated supervisors, this result is in consonance with the results of Ajani-Adeigbe et al 2021

Furthermore, the result suggests that the student-teachers' opinions on how their experiences could be enhanced varied but did not align with a common pattern or consensus.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this study shed light on the experiences of History student-teachers during their teaching practice programme. The student-teachers reported positive experiences in, utilizing instructional materials effectively and writing new notes for every lesson. Their experiences varied in the area of accessing the right teaching materials and maintaining relationships with students. The findings of this study highlight the importance of providing adequate resources and support to enhance the teaching practice experience for student-teachers. Challenges faced by History student-teachers during the programme were identified as distance of allocated schools, unsuitable learning environments, students' lack of prior knowledge in History, and the quality of supervision provided by allocated supervisors. Recognising and addressing these challenges can contribute to improving the overall experience and effectiveness of the teaching practice programme. It is worth noting that on the impacts of the teaching practice exercise, the research suggests that the student-teachers had diverse perceptions and experiences regarding the effects of the exercise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made.

History student-teachers should have easy access to a wide range of instructional materials, this will support their effective use of instructional materials and enhance the quality of their lessons.

There should be strong supervision and mentorship, experienced and supportive supervisors are to be allocated to guide and mentor student-teachers during their teaching practice.

The supervisors are also to enhance the communication and collaboration between student-teachers to address any challenges and ensure a positive and conducive learning environment.

There should be opportunity for collaboration and networking among student-teachers and other members of staff of the allocated schools. This will provide opportunities to learn from experienced teachers, share ideas, and collaborate with their peers.

Universities need to consider student-teachers' residential locations when allotting the students to teaching practice schools, this will reduce commuting expenses and improve their overall experience.

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