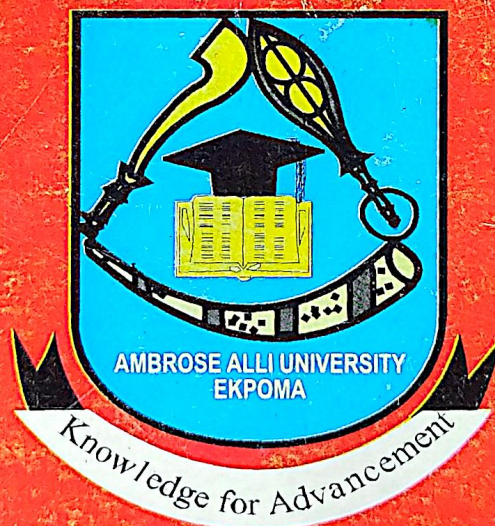


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## **Student-Teachers' Fears, immediately prior to Teaching Practice Supervision**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to identify the areas of fears encountered by the student-teachers prior to their teaching practice exercise so as to help the student-teachers to drastically reduce such fears. In order to guide this study, four research questions were asked. The instrument used to gather data, was the questionnaire that had Twenty (20) question items. The respondents were the 300 and 400 levels student-teachers in the Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University. The data collated was analyzed using the percentage. The findings were that (1) Student-teachers had great deal of fears (2) 300 level student-teachers showed greater fears than 400 level student-teachers. (3) The female student-teachers showed greater fears than their male counterparts (4) Student-teacher without previous teaching qualification. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Teaching practice should be taught as a course in a classroom setting, prior to actual teaching practice exercise.*

**Key words:** Student, teacher's fears, teaching practice and supervision.

### **Introduction**

Teaching practice is an important aspect of the professional training for teachers just as industrial attachment is to the technical trainee and clinical practice is to medical trainee. Teaching practice is defined as the teaching student teachers are engaged in for a specific period of time in actual classrooms under a supervisor's guidance, assessing and directing trainee-teachers. Teaching practice today is as important to the trainee teacher as it was in the past for several reasons which include:

1. The student-teacher needs to familiarize himself with the children of the age group they would work with on graduation.
2. The trainee-teacher need to put into practice the idea he/she had acquire from the theoretical component of his training programme in order to find out how well or otherwise they work in practical situations.
3. Teaching practice also helps the teacher trainee to be more confident and current in the teaching world. In other words, it helps the trainee teacher to flow with the tide.



4. The teachers are able to assess themselves based on the performance of the trainee-teacher.

The ultimate aim of teaching according to Morris (2003) is to be able to predict the success or failure in teaching from the performance of the trainee-teachers during teaching practice sessions.

Despite the availability of enormous literature on the assessment of teachers' performance or teacher effectiveness according to Ezewu, (1981), Stanford (1999), Cole (2001), Johnson (2003), Peter (2007), Babalola (2011) it has been asserted by Chivoski (2003), Joseph (2006), Harry (2008) that the scanty literature available on the anxiety and concern of teachers was shared between student-teacher and beginning teachers. However some of these studies, which ranged from the speculations by Deifulio (1996), Frank (2001), Fulham (2003), White (2007), empirical studies by Brown (2001), Woods (2005), Hull (2007) reported that new teachers have several complaints most of which centered on discipline whiles some other teachers, according White (2007) showed concerns as to whether they would be liked by their pupils or students; Wood (2005) administered a 35 item check list on 125 student-teachers who were at the tail-end of their teaching practice and reported that their most frequent concerns were the expectations of their supervisors, their own subject-matter adequacy, evaluation of their lesson plans, desired standard of teacher conduct, pupils' question, mode of dressing and discipline.

Since teaching practice is assessed and the grades to a large extent determine the fate of the student-teacher to become a professional teacher. Anxieties about their performance will undoubtedly be present because both teachers and students attach more importance to compulsory courses than elective. This is so because teaching practice examination is not like, the "biro and paper" type of examination rather it is an examination in which the total personality of the student is assessed while he/she demonstrates the skills of teaching.

In order to guide this study, a total of 4 research questions were asked thus:

1. Do student-teachers have some fears concerning teaching practice?
2. Is there any difference between the 300 level and 400 level student-teachers in the fears they portray about teaching practice?
3. Is there any difference between the male and female students-teachers in the fears they have over teaching practice?
4. Is there any difference between those student-teachers with previous teaching qualifications and those without previous teaching qualifications about their fears in teaching practice?

The instrument was made up of 20 questions which students-teachers are capable of asking themselves as manifestation of their concern about an approaching teaching practice exercise. To each of the questions the subjects were required to indicate whether it applied to them highly, moderately or does not apply at all. By this, none of the questions was forced on the respondents even where it did not apply to them, but where it



applied to them the extent of the application was indicated as feelings can be in terms of degrees.

### **Procedure**

A week before commencement of the teaching practice session of the Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University for the session 2012/2013, the measurement of student-teachers' fears before supervised teaching practice checklist was administered on the subjects and they responded to the items within a period of 15 minutes all working at the same time in a large hall. At the end they were told that their responses were going to be collated and the information used to help student-teachers in the future.

Scoring was done in terms of frequency counts according to the three categories of responses such as apply highly, apply moderately and does not apply. Therefore the total responses for the three categories amounted to 12, 400 (620 x 20 items). Thereafter the data were ordered according to each of the research questions in percentages and the significance of the difference between the percentages was determined by means of Nonographs (Post hoc) which are known to offer simple but accurate techniques for inspecting differences between percentages (Cohen, 1976, Shoemaker 2001, Philips 2005).

### **Results**

The results as can be seen below explains each of the four research questions.

- a) The extent of the fears of the subjects.

Table 1: shows extent of the fears of the student-teachers categorized into apply highly, apply moderately, and does not apply.



**Table 1: Percentage of the frequency of fears of student-teachers**

| Questions  | Apply Highly (%) | Apply Moderately (%) |               | Total (%)     |
|--|------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Who is going to observe my teaching?                                 | 620 (100)        | -                    | -             | 620           |
| Is the supervisor going to be a man or woman?                        | 140 (23.2)       | 300 (49.4)           | 180 (27.3)    | 620           |
| Am I going to be accepted by the students as their teacher?          | 190 (37.7)       | 370 (51.7)           | 60 (9.6)      | 620           |
| Am I going to be accepted by the principal as knowledgeable teacher? | 270 (46.3)       | 350 (53.7)           | -             | 620           |
| Am I going to be accepted by the other teachers in the school?       | 145 (24.3)       | 260 (40.5)           | 200 (35.2)    | 620           |
| How shall I dress?   | 500 (72.1)       | 120 (27.9)           | -             | 620           |
| Is the subject -teacher going to dictate to me?                      | 200 (31.0)       | 310 (50.0)           | 110 (19.0)    | 620           |
| How frequently shall I be seen?                                      | 450 (58.4)       | 170 (41.6)           | -             | 620           |
| What will the supervisor be looking for?                             | 480 (70.8)       | 140 (29.2)           | -             | 620           |
| How shall I be graded?   | 620 (100)        | -                    | -             | 620           |
| How shall I behave before the supervisor?                            | 530 (88.1)       | 90 (11.9)            | -             | 620           |
| Will he/she be friendly?   | 370 (63.8)       | 250 (36.2)           | -             | 620           |
| Will I be criticized in the presence of the students?                | 470 (59.1)       | 150 (40.9)           | -             | 620           |
| How shall I behave before the students?                              | 550 (76.9)       | 270 (23.1)           | -             | 620           |
| How shall I behave before the other teachers in the school?          | 100 (26.8)       | 270 (40.0)           | 150 (29.2)    | 620           |
| How shall I behave before the principal?                             | 243 (36.8)       | 277 (37.2)           | 100 (26.0)    | 620           |
| Should the students be punished?                                     | 510 (86.0)       | 110 (14.0)           | -             | 620           |
| Do I infact know enough what I shall teach?                          | 122 (19.3)       | 150 (27.5)           | 348 (53.2)    | 620           |
| Are my preparations adequate?  | 390 (61.7)       | 230 (38.3)           | -             | 620           |
| Can I try out new ideas?   | 130 (27.3)       | 280 (40.1)           | 210 (32.6)    | 620           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>7030.3</b>    | <b>4012.5</b>        | <b>1357.2</b> | <b>12,400</b> |



Resulting table 1 show that student-teachers have great deal of fears about their teaching practice exercise, some of the concerns deserve some comments.

As can be seen all the students showed high concerns as to who was going to observe their teaching. This suggested that it was not all the members of the staff of a faculty that student-teachers actually wanted to look at their teaching. It is also important to note that all the subjects showed high concerns about their grading and subsequently about their grades. In fact this is the index of either a good teacher or otherwise at the end of the teaching practice exercise. The issues of punishment, preparation, conduct before the supervisor and the students they teach and what the supervisors would be looking for were equally of great worry to the student-teachers.

It is also important to note that all the subjects showed concerns for certain aspects of the teaching practice. For instance, 27.3% of the sample did not show fear about whether their supervisor was going to be either a man or a woman. Similarly, 53.2% and 32.6% respectively of the samples did not show any worry about whether they knew enough of what they were going to teach or as to whether they can try out new ideas. In terms of degree however, the subjects who showed high fears were more than those who showed moderate fears indicating therefore that the anxiety level of undergraduate student-teachers is high enough to deserve some attention.

#### **The Fears of 300 Level and 400 Level Students:**

The 400 level undergraduate student-teachers had at the time of the study passed through one teaching practice exercise in their 300 level. Consequently they were not at the same level of experience with the present 300 level undergraduates who were to go to teach for the first time. It was thought that a previous experience within the same course might reduce anxieties. Table 2 presents the results of this comparison.

**Table 2: Percentage presentation of the fears of 300 and 400 level student-teacher**

| Year of course | No. of student-teacher | Category of Response |                      |                    | TOTAL (%)    |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
|                |                        | Apply highly (%)     | Apply moderately (%) | Does not Apply (%) |              |
| 300 level      | 350                    | 3678 (66.5)          | 2200 (35.9)          | 632 (33.9)         | 6510         |
| 400 level      | 270                    | 1600 (33.5)          | 3775 (64.1)          | 515 (66.1)         | 5890         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>620</b>             | <b>5278</b>          | <b>5975</b>          | <b>1147</b>        | <b>12400</b> |



According to Table 2 above which shows us that students in the 300 level group showed higher fears than those in the 400 level group as indicated above (66.5% vs 33.5%), while students in the 400 level group showed moderate fears than those in the 300 level group (64.1% vs 35.9%). Similarly in third category (Does not apply) showed that students in the 300 level group than to the 400 level group (31.9% vs 66.1%).

For the differences between each pair of percentages to be significant, the use of Monograph requires a critical value of 0.09. It was observed that the difference between 66.5% and 33.5 is 33; between 35.9% and 64.1% is 28.2, while between 31.9% and 66.1% is 34.2. Since these values are much higher than the critical value of 0.09 at the 0.05 probability level, the conclusion reached was there was a significant difference between the 300 level and 400 level students about the fears they had during teaching practice than the 400 level students. This could be as a result of the past teaching practice 400 level students had in their 300 level.

**Table 3: The fears of male versus females student teachers.**

| Sex of respondents | No. of student | Category of Response |                      |                    | TOTAL (%)      |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
|                    |                | Apply highly (%)     | Apply moderately (%) | Does not Apply (%) |                |
| Males              | 310            | 1300 (31.3)          | 3573 (64.0)          | 447 (64.4)         | 40.6           |
| Females            | 310            | 3999 (68.7)          | 2381 (36.0)          | 700 (63.6)         | 59.4           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>620</b>     | <b>5299</b>          | <b>5954</b>          | <b>1147</b>        | <b>12, 400</b> |

Table 3 clearly show that the female students showed very high fears than their male counterparts as seen by the percentages (68.7 vs 31.3), while more males showed moderate fears than the females (64.0 vs 36.0). Likewise the checklist questions showed more of the female students than the male students (36.4 vs 63.6).

To find out the significant differences between each pair a Nomograph with critical value of 0.23 at a probability level of 0.05 was required.

Each pair was observed and the difference recorded as such: The first two sets recorded 0.35 while the last set recorded 0.26, since these values are higher than the critical value of 0.23, the conclusion reach was therefore that there was a significant differences in the fears between male and female student teachers prior to their teaching practice.



**Table 4: Student-teachers with and without previous qualification**

| Previous Qualification                        | No. of student | Category of Response |                      |                 | Total         |
|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|   |                | Apply highly (%)     | Apply moderately (%) | Apply low (low) |               |
| With previous teaching qualification (N.C.E.) | 220            | 2350 (39.7)          | 1900 (39.7)          | 710 (77.4)      | 4960 (44.1)   |
| Without previous teaching qualification       | 400            | 4464 (60.3)          | 2600 (60.3)          | 376 (22.6)      | 7440 (55.9)   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>620</b>     | <b>6814</b>          | <b>4500</b>          | <b>1086</b>     | <b>12,400</b> |

Table 4 shows that students-teachers without previous teaching qualifications showed more worry than those with previous teaching qualification. This is shown by the differences between the percentages, of each of the categories; apply highly, apply moderately and does not apply. Testing the significance of these differences it was observed that at the 0.05 level of significance a critical value of 0.02 was required for the differences of the first two categories and 0.24 for the difference in the last category. The observed Nomograph values were 0.25 for the first two categories and 0.28 for the last category. Since these values were higher than the critical values of 0.02 and 0.24 respectively, it was therefore concluded that the student-teachers without previous teaching qualifications showed more fears than their counterparts who had previous teaching qualifications.

### Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the fears of undergraduate student-teachers immediately before proceeding on supervised teaching practice with the hope that when these fears are known, it can help their teachers to better prepare them for the exercise and also help them to overcome their worries and therefore expect better performance during the teaching practice. The findings of this study showed that:

- (a) Undergraduate student-teachers showed great deal of fears about the several aspects of their teaching practice. Their concerns ranged from: who would observe their teaching, knowledge about the subject to teach what to teach?, how to dress (especially the females), how to behave before a supervisor, whether they would be criticized in the presence of their pupils, how they would be graded etc.
- (b) 300 level undergraduate student teachers who were preparing to go out for teaching practice for the first time during their course showed more fears than the 400 level students who had passed through the exercise once.



- (c) Major differences were observed in fears of male and female undergraduate student-teachers, they were statistically significant as to conclude that differences actually existed between the two sexes.
- (d) Undergraduate student teachers who had had teaching qualification(s) such as Teachers' Grade 11 Certificate and/or the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) showed less worry about their teaching practice than those without previous teaching qualification. These findings, no doubt support the earlier studies on this problem (Thompson 1963); Erickson and Ruund, 1996; Fuller, 1969, Mark 1972, Brown 2001, Woods 2005, Hull 2007). These findings have important implications for counseling student teachers before going out on teaching practice. Teaching practice supervision for a first time student-teacher is an unknown and scary venture which must compulsorily be passed to qualify student-teachers to graduate and be teachers. The "unknown" naturally can affect behaviour but when the "unknown" becomes the "know", the behaviour become's stable and predictable. This study's findings are to prepare students better. Teaching practice is a practical-based exercise which student can either pass or fail. It is crucial for the practical experience of the students, it compliments the theory aspects that has been learnt already in class. It is therefore very important to equip student-teachers with skills necessary for performance. Students also need to be taught the psychological aspect of the teaching practice which is why students liken this one is very important. The psychological aspect of teaching practice appears even more important because when it interact with skills acquired wonderful result emanate, students are better ready to face the world of teaching with confidence.

While a further study on the problem is suggested to be carried out at the National Certificate of Education (N.C.E) level of Teacher Education Programme, it is important that the effects of counseling on student teachers' fears about teaching practice should be investigated. When these are done, there will be most are likely more comprehensive information about the psychological problems of student-teachers preparing for teaching practice and some strategies for remedying them. The school manager which in this case is the vice chancellor must make sure that all hands are on deck to prepare the student-teachers for this exercise. He/She must make sure that the student-teachers have been properly briefed and monitored for a successful teaching practice contact. This will help the students, to build more confidence in their future career.

### **Recommendations**

1. The psychological aspects of teaching practice seem to be very important and must not be neglected by teachers and school authorities.
2. Teaching practice should be taught as a course in a classroom setting, this will enable the teacher to trash out areas of students' fears so as to put more confidence in the students in preparation for a teaching practice exercise.



3. Undergraduate education students should not have fears over teaching practice. Enlightenment programmes that will familiarize them with the exercise should constantly be put up.
4. Gender should not be an issue or a barrier in the teaching practice contact, whatever is making any of the sexes to have fear, (in the case the female) should be thrashed out by supervisors before proceeding for Teaching practice.
5. Teachers adequate preparation of the students at the 300 level will bridge the gap between 300 and 400 level.
6. Adequate practice in teaching practice coursework at the undergraduate level will help to bridge the gap between those with previous qualifications such as TC II and NCE and those without previous qualifications.

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