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## An Assessment of the Administration of Teaching Practice in a Teacher Training Institution of Zimbabwe

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### **Abstract:**

*This study sought to assess the administration of teaching practice in a primary education teacher training institution in Zimbabwe. The chosen population consisted of lecturers, school mentors and student teachers. Convenience sampling was used to select primary schools in Gwanda town. These were four in total. From these, purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools, teachers who were student-teacher mentors and student teachers who were in teaching practice. There were twelve teachers in total, and there were twelve student teachers. Purposive sampling was also applied to select lecturers who manned the chosen institution's teaching practice department. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the heads of schools and lecturers, while focus group discussion guides were used to gather data from teachers and student teachers, respectively. As one of the core findings, it unveiled that some students went for teaching practice inadequately prepared to meet associated demands. Furthermore, some mentors seemed burdened by constantly supervising the student teachers while at the same time executing other school duties done by other teachers who were not mentors. Based on these, the study recommends intensification of the assessment of the readiness of student teachers to engage in the teaching practice exercise before the institution releases them to schools. In addition, teachers who are assigned the role of student-teacher mentorship should be relieved of other school duties as this might enhance their commitment to student-teacher development.*

**Keywords:** Teaching practice, administration, institution of higher learning, student teacher, student teacher mentor

### **1. Introduction**

Like elsewhere in the world, in Zimbabwe, teaching practice is one of the core courses in the teacher education curriculum, which is internally and externally examined (Ngara et al., 2013). Bourdillon, cited in Ngara et al. (2013), further elaborates that teaching practice goes beyond mere knowledge of the teaching procedure to the development of other professional competencies that relate to interpersonal, pedagogical, intercultural and psychological aspects. Hughes, Baume, Silva-Fletcher and Amrane-Cooper (2023) observe that, right from the time they are enrolled on the teacher training programme, students are empowered with varied skills that are considered relevant for teaching practice through lectures, observation of qualified teachers teaching, micro - and peer teaching. Afterwards, training institutions are deployed to carefully select schools for the actual teaching practice exercise for a period of a year of primary education and one term for secondary education. In those schools, students are attached to competent, qualified teachers who act as mentors for the whole period of attachment. This is usually the responsibility of the head and deputy head of a school.

Teaching practice is a central component of a pre-service teacher training programme that is rooted in the desire to mould and produce skilled and knowledgeable teachers (Aglazor, (2017.) It is within the teaching practice period that student teachers are exposed to an opportunity to translate learned skills, principles and theory into reality (Jenset & Klette, 2022). This implies that teaching practice is a time for aspiring teachers to comprehend the role and operation of the business of teaching and learning. The idea is to help teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and to gauge the extent to which teacher-training institutions deliver quality education. Students are given the latitude to work with learners in practical classroom contexts in the process of developing professional competencies. The real-life experiences enable novice teachers to assume pertinent responsibilities for teaching. In the same perspective, the university supervisor, who constitutes the third point in the triad, has to be acquainted with the knowledge of the teaching profession, teacher training programme and expected performance standards in the field. These are experts who are mandated to assess and evaluate the teaching practice performance of student teachers (Zulu, 2015).

The success of teaching practice is dependent on the collaborative relationship among school teachers, university supervisors and student teachers (Aglazor & Obi, 2016). The central function of this team is to guide teacher trainees towards the successful completion of teaching practice. In this regard, it is paramount for the team to understand clearly the expectations of teaching practice (Rogayan & Reusia, 2021). To gain this understanding, the team needs to communicate positively and interact effectively, which are the necessary requirements for clarity of purpose and performance outcomes. Student teachers need to be guided, mentored and supported collaboratively to develop into robust and celebrated professionals. It is also arguably believed that the field experience of teachers marks the culminating activity in the development trajectory of aspiring teachers. In this sense, programme managers should make great efforts to place student teachers at schools and associated subjects that relate to their areas of interest (Aglazor, 2017). In practice, teacher-training institutions are trusted to have developed established standards that school mentors must meet to properly host student teachers. This is important because school mentors form an integral part of the teacher professional development programme. They assume the role of field mentors due to their experience in classroom practices. At times, mentor teachers are supposed to hold enough knowledge about the school and the education system to assist teachers during practicum. This assistance includes areas of instructional design, assessment, classroom management and the whole spectrum of issues surrounding teaching and the teacher (Aglazor & Obi, 2016).

In relation to the supervision of teachers while in teaching practice, Ngara et al. (2013) explain that each college has its own assessment instrument. However, training institutions are generally guided by the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) at the University of Zimbabwe as criteria for the assessment of Practical Teaching as far as commenting and scoring are concerned. Supervising student teachers is the task of teacher training institutions and the host school. One of the primary responsibilities of trained teachers in the supervision of student teachers is to give guidance on immediate challenges faced by the mentee (Dlengzele, 2020). According to the findings gained from numerous investigations, teacher mentors have a considerable influence on the development of student teachers' orientation, disposition, conceptions and classroom practice (Nkhata, Chituta, Banda, Choobe & Jumble, 2020). Students value a supportive, interactive classroom environment, especially with respect to the process of learning to teach (Ödalen, Brommesson, Erlingsson, Schaffer & Fogelgren, 2019). Student teacher mentors have two main responsibilities in the training of classroom practitioners. The first function is career-related. In this way, mentors assist their mentees in learning the ropes of the trade and prepare them for advancement (Guile, 2019). The second function is the psycho-social function, in which the mentor helps the student-teacher develop trust, intimacy and interpersonal bonds, promoting personal growth in the individual. Failure by the mentor to perform effectively on any one of these functions would render the entire process of mentoring irrelevant (Boud & Brew, 2017).

Ideally, supervisors should visit and meet to discuss issues with student teachers at least three times during the period of field experience. This allows supervisors to make informed decisions regarding the performance and progress of student teachers in the profession. The initial meeting is preferably held at the beginning of the teaching practice. At this meeting, the interaction should centre mainly on setting expectations and addressing any questions and doubts the student may be harbouring about teaching practice (Aglazor & Obi, 2016). The next and second meeting needs to be evaluative in nature. This is where supervisors observe student teachers and provide feedback. The context also provides an opportunity for the parties to set ongoing goals and attend to new concerns that would have developed from the teaching practice experiences. The last and final meeting should be a conclusive evaluation interaction, which determines a final judgement on the field experience exiting grade.

There are obstacles that seek to impede a seamless provision of teaching practice experience. Koros (2016) conducted a study on challenges that student teachers encounter during teaching practice in South Africa and established that most mentors are not well-informed about their responsibilities during teaching practice. They take up their supervisory responsibility as a mere university assignment. The study revealed that mentors also lack training to adequately assist student teachers during teaching practice. Consequently, most student teachers experience some challenges while in teaching practice, such as failure to match theory with practice (Koros, 2016). In response to this gap, some teacher education institutions have developed a propensity to integrate a variety of models as a strategy to mitigate the disparity between theory and practicum (Nkhata et al., 2020). It has to be stated that the choice of a teaching practice model hinges on a number of factors, such as resource availability, teaching practice goals and targeted time frames. However, regardless of which model is adopted, the ultimate desire is to create student teachers who are proficient in teaching (Dlengzele, 2020).

Collantes (2021) observes that some student teachers struggle to be effective during teaching practice because they tend to be more concerned about procedures and routine tasks. This hinders them from developing their pedagogical reasoning (Soslau & Rath, 2017). Such individuals harbour the desire to please their supervisors so that they are evaluated positively. The inability of student teachers to blossom to full maturity may also result from a lack of collaboration among schools, colleges and universities (Robinson, 2016). According to Prastomo and Listyani (2016), collaboration is critical because it can support change and create conditions that might help student teachers' personal transformation. Collantes (2021) further adds that collaboration can foster the connection between theory and practice. However, in implementing the desired partnerships among teaching practice enacting stakeholders, there is a need to avoid role confusion, which has a strong bearing on the success of the teaching practice programme (Soslau & Rath, 2017; Zulu, 2015). According to Orland-Barak and Wang (2021), it is common for schools and universities to be unclear about their roles in regard to the teaching practice programme, and this emanates from unavailable policies on the same. The confusion particularly relates to issues of definitions and expectations surrounding matters of classroom deployment, support, supervision and general control over student teachers' lives in the field (Lutovac & Flores, 2021).

### 1.1. Statement of the Study

In the Zimbabwean context, a number of strategies are employed to ensure the success of teaching practice. Some of these include peer teaching, micro-teaching and regular visits to nearby schools for observations before they are finally deployed to schools for the actual teaching practice exercise. In addition, efforts are made to ensure that they are deployed to schools that have a good reputation in academic output while being placed in geographical contexts that are convenient to students (Ngara et al., 2013). Despite this, it was discovered with great concern that in the area of study, the performance of student teachers on teaching practice significantly differed from one individual to another despite receiving training from the same institution under the same conditions. This was a stressful experience as low performers had, on a number of occasions, attempted to drop out of the entire teacher education course or at least defer the teaching practice component until they felt they were ready. In some instances, some students were observed to be inconsistent in their performance. This means they would score very high and very low marks on varied assessment exercises conducted by the same or different assessors. Such a scenario prompted the researchers to assess the administration of teaching practice in the area of study with a view to suggesting effective strategies for best practice.

### 1.2. Research Objectives

- To identify factors that are considered crucial for the success of teaching practice.
- To examine the influence of support systems adopted by schools to meet the needs of student teachers in teaching practice.
- To establish challenges faced by various related supervisors in the administration of teaching practice.

### 1.3. Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within the framework of connectivism (Siemens, 2005). This theoretical lens thrives on the idea that individuals learn and grow when they form connections. They can connect in many ways, such as through connecting with each other, the content of teaching, resources, methods, assigned roles, and even obligations in their lives (Anderson, 2016). There should be meaningful interaction between and among interested stakeholders in curriculum implementation to ensure that desired educational outcomes are realised. Siemens (2005) suggests that the theory of connectivism, especially its relation to computer technology integration in school, has revolutionised the process of learning (Koh, Chai, Benjamin & Hong, 2015). It has shifted the locus of learning from the acquisition of knowledge by an individual to the development of competencies through connections and collaborations. Networks of individuals and groups need to be established to facilitate the effective transfer of information to enhance goal achievement through collective participation. This theory transforms the way in which people perceive and alters the status of knowledge as it is shared and communicated.

The theory of connectivism provides an opportunity for students to make choices about their own learning derived from discussions (Mattar, 2017). The choices emanate from the different viewpoints which are brought to bear as people ponder ideas for decision-making and problem-solving. Connectivism acknowledges that teaching and learning have ceased to be individualistic but occur through participation in communities of practice, work-based activities and personal networks. The success of connectivism relies on traits such as diversity of views, autonomy in self-organisation, interactivity and readiness for interaction (Anderson, 2016). This quality enables the students to remain current in the field, owing to the connections they would have formed. Anderson and Drone (2011) refer to this stance as assuming a constructivist model of learning. The students are placed at the centre, connecting and constructing knowledge in the context that includes external networks and their histories, values and traditions (Mattar, 2027). In the education landscape, learning should reflect social interaction, dialogue and inquiry. It is, therefore, pertinent that the various stakeholders involved in the teaching practice component of teacher training, such as colleges, universities, schools and students, should collaborate to enhance the administration of this important practice.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. In view of this, Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020) describe qualitative research as the study of the nature of phenomena", including their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear or the perspectives from which they can be perceived. This perspective views qualitative research as based on narrative and perceptual data in the form of words. The focus is on the qualitative presentation of phenomena, including the way in which it is presented. In relation to this, an exploratory case study design facilitated gaining an in-depth insight into the factors that, in one way or another, affect the administration of teaching practice in the identified area of study. Mohajan (2018) notes that this design is useful in studies that require the subjective opinions of persons involved. In this study, this design helped to access both the outward and inward expressions of participants derived from their experiences in the administration of teaching practice.

The chosen population consisted of lecturers, school mentors and student teachers. All these were from Gwanda primary schools. Convenience sampling was used to select primary schools in Gwanda town. These were four in total. From these, purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools, teachers who were student-teacher mentors and student teachers who were in teaching practice. There were twelve teachers in total, and there were twelve student teachers. This meant that three teachers and three student teachers were selected at each of the four primary schools. Purposive sampling was also applied to select one lecturer who coordinated activities at the chosen institution's teaching practice department. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the heads of schools and the teaching practice coordinator at the training institution. Focus group discussion schedules were used to gather data from teachers

and student teachers, respectively. Heads of schools were coded as HS 1-4, teaching practice coordinator TPC, school mentors as FGSM, and student teachers as FGST. This was analysed thematically. According to Dawadi (2020), thematic analysis involves data transcription, coding, developing themes, and data analysis and interpretation.

### 3. Research Findings

The findings of the study showed that:

#### 3.1. Theme 1: Factors That Are Considered Crucial for the Success of Teaching Practice

The study revealed that there were a number of factors that the training institution, school heads, teachers who were mentors and student teachers themselves considered crucial for the success of teaching practice. The TPC stated, *"It is critical that student teachers are prepared for teaching practice and that readiness becomes a springboard for a complete commitment to the activities that constitute teaching practice experience"*. Student teachers have to be extra-ready to engage in the teaching practice exercise. This implies that, before students were deployed for the actual teaching practice in schools, the college was supposed to make arrangements with chosen nearby schools for students to conduct particular lessons of their choice in the presence of other students, lecturers and qualified teachers. HS2 confirmed that *"student teachers are sometimes subjected to work-integrated learning (WIL), which can be a precursor to planned teaching practice deployment to schools, where students are to exercise independence in acquiring and developing teaching competencies"*. The WIL will allow further discussion on lesson preparation, delivery and class management skills. This ensures that students can be advised and guided accordingly. Additionally, it was gathered that the college's teaching practice department ensured that students were deployed after having started preparing some documents like the teaching practice book. This helped to clear the confusion on how teaching practice records needed to be developed, updated, kept and presented whenever needed. On this aspect, FGSM revealed that *"some student teachers we receive at our schools for mentoring have a general appreciation of key documents for teaching practice, but there are others that will be clearly groping in the dark in as far as TP documents are concerned"*.

It also emerged that the college preferred to deploy students to schools that had good reputations, especially in terms of producing highly competent students. The TPC reiterated, *"Our desire is to deploy all our student teachers to schools that have a good reputation, but at times, the vacancies at schools and the size of our student groups prevent us from achieving our goals"*. This was supported by views from FGST that *"we aspire to be deployed to functional schools that will fully develop our professional skills rather than schools that will condemn us to flawed practitioners"*. In some instances, student placement was determined by the school's initiative or interest. HS4 concurred, *"At times, we request for student teachers to be deployed to our school, especially when we have extra duties that need additional manpower."* Similarly, HS3 added that *"we may ask for student teachers to be deployed to our school when we have needs such as having teachers going on leave or a high student-teacher ratio in some classes."* In view of this, it was discovered that some highly performing schools did not want student teachers on the basis that they disturbed their normal teaching exercise since time and commitment need to be expended to training them. Findings from FGSM revealed that *"we do not usually accept student teachers for teaching practice for examination classes because this tends to disturb the momentum of the preparations"*. Furthermore, it unveiled that the college considered placing student teachers with special needs in schools that were close to the training institution for close monitoring and supervision. Where possible, students were placed in schools near their homes to enable them to study while caring for their families. The TPC echoed the sentiments stating, *"We deploy student teachers that have special cases and needs closer to the college so that assistance can be given to them swiftly as needs arise."* HS1 was supportive of this move, which he referred to *'as social justice and making sure that education is truly made accessible for all'*. This deployment of students close to their home areas also came as a result of discovering that some students did not do well in teaching practice because they had family commitments and challenges that needed their close and constant attention.

Another factor that was considered crucial in the success of teaching practice centred on the attitude of students. Students who were committed to meeting or exceeding the required standard, inquisitive to learn, creative, ready to take up challenging assignments and professionally disciplined were regarded as better positioned to excel in teaching practice than those who did not possess such qualities. HS3 supported this view, noting, *"Experience has taught us that student teachers that are self-motivated and with a propensity to learn benefit the most from mentors during teaching practice deployment."* FGSM referred interviewers to the old adage, *"You can lead a horse to a watering point, but you cannot coerce it to drink."* The emphasis was that student teachers who are not ready to learn cannot proceed and acquire more professional skills beyond the limits of their demonstrated attitudes. On a different note, it was established that one of the principles of the college's teaching practice department was that students who were in teaching practice were required to return to college for a week-long vacation where they would be sharing their teaching practice experience. In this regard, it was posited that the information they shared was crucial in improving the college's administration of the teaching practice exercise. The TPC stated, *"We schedule a vacation programme for our students on TP, which marks the mid-term of their entire teacher training programme. The purpose is to allow them time to share their experiences, address their concerns, and motivate them towards completion."*

Another factor that emerged strongly was the quality of supervision given to students by the school authorities or the college staff. In view of this, most participants emphasised that most students who were supervised by competent lecturers while also being guided by effective mentors in schools usually performed above the required standard. On the differences in supervision effectiveness, HS3 stated, *"We have realised that students that are under the tutelage of*

*competent mentors perform quite well compared to those mentored by not-so-competent teachers.*" In addition to effective supervision, it was gathered that counselling needy student teachers also complemented sound supervision.

### 3.2. Theme 2: The Influence of Support Systems Adopted by Schools to Meet the Needs of Student Teachers on Teaching Practice

The study further established that the schools where student teachers were deployed made significant efforts to support them. For instance, upon their arrival in schools, a staff meeting was normally held where they would be introduced to all the staff members, be appraised of the school culture and assured that they could ask for professional advice from any other staff member rather than solely relying on their mentors. HS2 revealed, *"We always have a staff meeting to welcome new student teachers that are deployed to our school; this is mainly done to introduce and induct them into the school system and culture."* This was corroborated by the results from FGSM, which indicated, *"A meeting is organised to introduce student teachers to the entire school staff, including the School Development Committee (SDC)."* However, not all student teachers agreed that staff meetings were held to welcome them into their schools for teaching practice. It was shown that *in some cases, the exercise of inducting student teachers was delegated to specific departments or subject areas, and this created disparities in the induction process, even within the same school.* Further, in some schools, student teachers were provided with stationery to develop their records. This was confirmed by the FGSM, who said, *"It is school policy that student teachers are provided with working tools to give them a proper take-off point in their teaching practice journey and to also assist those without adequate financial preparation".* HS3 echoed the same sentiment, revealing, *"We give new student teachers materials for teaching, but we often require them to leave them behind, especially teaching aids when they complete their training."* Additionally, mentors had a responsibility of logically guiding them to understand the entire teaching process. This encompassed conducting demonstration lessons while the student observed and sought clarity where necessary. Thereafter, the mentors would help the students to prepare for the lessons they would teach. FGST revealed, *"Mentors organise demonstration lessons for us to model ideal teaching; they also take us through the actual practices of lesson planning, classroom management and assessment strategies."* On the contrary, however, it emerged that *"some mentors, especially those in senior positions at school, do not have time to closely mentor student teachers because either they are always on external errands or busy with administrative duties".* It was, however, common during lesson delivery for mentors to observe, note issues of concern, and then discuss them with the student for continued improvement and growth. In this regard, the TPC expressed, *"We encourage teacher mentors to use clinical supervision style, which allows both teachers and students to plan, execute and evaluate instructional activities together to ensure fairness on student evaluations."* It also emerged that student teachers were periodically exposed to staff development workshops that were aimed at improving their professional acumen. Results from FGST revealed, *"Staff development workshops were being organised to develop professional skills, but in some schools, they were not regularly done."* Another form of support that schools rendered to student teachers was counselling services. These were meant to assist them in mitigating challenges encountered in the course. SH 3 attested to this fact by revealing, *"We do a lot of counselling services for student teachers which emanate from various life areas such as school work, family matters, relationships, financial strain and other coping obstacles."* FGSM concurred that *"counselling on psycho-social issues is paramount for student teachers, as it is also the case with learners and the rest of staff members at school.* Above all, participants of the study concurred that the other basic support service that student teachers received in schools was regular supervision not only by their mentors but also by the deputy and the heads of schools. On this issue, the TPC reiterated, *"Coordinated supervision of student teachers by all partners in the training process is central, but undesired cases do occur where students are not adequately supervised."*

### 3.3. Theme 3: Challenges Faced by Varied Related Stakeholders on the Administration of Teaching Practice

The study discovered that there were several challenges that impeded proper administration of teaching practice in schools. One of these was the existence of limited training programmes on student-teacher supervision. In this regard, school heads and mentors felt that they had inadequate knowledge of supervising students attached to their schools for teaching practice because the teacher education curriculum that the students were exposed to seemed slightly different from the one that they were exposed to during their training. HS1 expressed, *"We strive to do our best in supervising students on teaching practice, but certainly, things change such that we, at times, rely on such students to appraise us on recent innovations in education."* Findings from FGSM corroborated the views of school heads, *"Some of us trained a long time ago, and it appears we have lost touch with what is now happening in teacher training; this impedes expected supervision competencies."* Despite this, there were very few programmes that were facilitated by the government and training institutions aimed at helping mentors and other qualified teachers to effectively supervise, monitor and evaluate students' performance while in teaching practice. On this issue, the TPC acknowledged, *"Lack of adequate funding from our affiliate body, the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology (MHTEST) has made it difficult to conduct regular workshops to prepare supervisors for effective practice."* It was also echoed that some student teachers were attached to inexperienced mentors; therefore, this compromised the quality of guidance and mentorship that students received. The TPC further noted, *"We desire so hard to attach our students to reputable schools with professionally proficient teachers to mentor our students, but case-specific issues at times result in students not being attached to target supervisors."* HS4 concurred, noting, *"...rare situations may result in student teachers having to assist teachers, for example, that are unwell, pregnant or experiencing some challenges that impair effective school practice."*

Another challenge faced was related to the supervisors' workload. It unveiled that these had a lot of responsibilities that were related to other school development programmes. This situation subsequently led to limited supervision

services rendered to student teachers by the school leadership. In relation to issues of high workload, the study gathered that student teachers had too many records that they had to keep up-to-date, and this affected the actual practice of teaching, as they tended to focus more on updating records than teaching. Findings from FGST echoed this sentiment, *"We are overloaded with work, and there are many primary school subjects that we have to teach, in addition to extra-curricular activities that are mandatory in our practice."* Apart from this, most participants felt that some student teachers resumed teaching practice inadequately prepared to handle the challenges associated with teaching practice. The FGSM revealed, *"Some student teachers come for TP with a lot of gaps, requiring assistance in many areas, which suggests that they will be inadequately prepared for this exercise."* In relation to this, it emerged that such students were enrolled in teachers' colleges unaware of the demands of the teaching profession, and this affected their performance in the related exercises. In view of this, Ngara et al. (2013) state that lecturers and other academic members value teaching practice as bridging the gap between theory and practice, but some student teachers experience difficulty relating course content with everyday classroom practice. They tend to treat theory and practice components as incompatible. Above all, the study found that the successful teaching practice of some students was affected by their lack of professional discipline. This was realised due to poor organisation, communication, and time management skills. HS3 observed, *"Some student teachers with mercenary attitudes make TP's life very difficult for themselves as well as mentors. They do not prepare well for lessons or are regularly absent from school, making it difficult to achieve positive evaluations in the process."*

#### 4. Conclusion

This study concluded that teaching practice is intended to provide student teachers with rich opportunities to marry theory with practice. It is designed to allow novice teachers to turn abstract concepts of study into reality. In that regard, a chain of activities and collaborating partners were put in place to facilitate their training and development. Training institutions ensured that teachers were adequately exposed to the theoretical and foundational experiences for use in actual teaching contexts. Student teachers were prepared for live classroom engagements through activities such as peer and micro-teaching. They were also allowed to visit schools to observe model teaching sessions prior to deployment to schools to obtain a smooth transition from the theoretical construction of knowledge to classroom practice. Heads of schools, teachers, and supervisors from the parent ministry collaborated to transform novice teachers into accomplished professionals. Despite teaching practice impediments which may come in the form of financial, contextual and other psycho-social issues, collaborating institutions strive to churn out competent professionals.

#### 5. Recommendations

- Teacher training institutions should consider lessening the theoretical than the practical component of a teacher education course to give students more time to practise teaching.
- Teacher training institutions must intensify their programmes to help student teachers realise and make strong links between the theory of teaching and its practical part.
- Teacher training institutions needed to use different and more approaches to assessment to be confident of the student teachers' readiness to venture into teaching practice before deploying them to the schools.
- Training institutions and the government should consider increasing training programmes or staff development workshops aimed at helping mentors, school heads, and other qualified teachers effectively supervise, monitor, and evaluate students' performance while in teaching practice.
- School management systems should consider decreasing the workload of school heads and mentors of student teachers so that they are given adequate time to supervise, monitor, and assist student teachers.
- Teacher training institutions should consider reducing the records that student teachers must keep up to date so that they can spend more time on the actual practice of teaching.
- Teacher training institutions and schools where students were deployed needed to work collaboratively to ensure early curbing of factors that could ultimately impact the students' success in teaching practice.

#### 6. Acknowledgement

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#### 7. Declaration of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest registered in this study.

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