Teaching Practice Self-Evaluation: Experiences at the University of Arusha- Musoma Centre, Tanzania

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Abstract:

The present study investigated on student teachers' competence in various aspects of teaching practice through self-evaluation approach. A total of 105 student-teachers filled the questionnaire; descriptive and inferential statistics established mean scores and differences. The study established that student-teachers, regardless of their demographic categorizations, are very competent in teaching, evaluation and supervision of co-curricular activities. Student-teachers are competent in guidance and counselling activities, though the competence level in this area is slightly lower than that of other dimensions of teaching practice. The study recommends strong motivation to educators by the University administration for them to continue doing their best in teacher training and calls for university lecturers to put more efforts in giving student-teachers guidance and counselling skills. Similar studies are recommended at the University of Arusha's main campus and other universities in the country.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Self Evaluation, Student-Teachers, University of Arusha, Tanzania

Introduction

Teaching practice is an important aspect of teaching profession that occupies a key role in preparing and equipping teachers in the making with practical skills which determine their level of competence in their future career (Kaleptwa & Igomu 2013, Jekayinfa, et al. According to Boadu (2014, p. 138) "teaching practice is the ground on which prospective teachers gather enough experiences to make them better and effective teachers in the future." Tuimur, Role and Makewa (2012) regard teaching practice as a culminating experience in teacher preparation that provides opportunities for beginning teachers to become socialized into the teaching profession. They also consider that performance during teaching practice sessions provides some basis for predicting the future success of the teachers, thus, becoming important contributing factor towards the quality of teacher

education and education system at large. This makes teaching practice a sensitive enterprise that needs to be undertaken seriously by those involved in it.

Studies conducted by Komba & Kira (2013) and Paulo (2014) indicate that modalities of teaching practice supervision and evaluation in Tanzania are not satisfactory to determine student teachers' levels of competence. Although Teaching Practice is an opportunity for prospective teachers to engage into practical experiences under the guidance of experienced persons commonly referred to as university supervisors, majority of teaching practice candidates in Tanzania do not benefit much from the exercise due to its poor approaches Trends indicate that, in administering the teaching practice, university lecturers move from one school to another, assessing teaching practice candidates. During teaching practice sessions, student-teachers must to be observed by their supervisors who give back information on the strengths and weaknesses of the student-teachers and the various areas that need improvement (Oppong, 2013). The length of time spent by the supervisor to each candidate depends on the number of supervisees to be covered. If the list of supervisees is too long for a given supervisor, which is the reality in most cases, it is likely that the supervisors cannot do their job exhaustively even though effectiveness of teaching practice is entirely determined by assessment procedures of the supervisors.

In Tanzania, a minimum of four supervision sessions is required for each candidate in each teaching practice session and the supervisors are expected to provide the students with performance feedback immediately after the end of each assessed session (Komba & Kira (2013). The study of Oppong (2013) asserts that the remarks of supervisors are critical in shaping trainees to turn out to be effective teachers. In harmony with this assertion, student-teachers in Tanzania regard supervisors' remarks indispensable element in their development as knowledgeable teachers. Contrary to this, majority of candidates in four regions of Tanzania namely Iringa, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, and Kilimanjaro reported that they were visited only once while 19% had been visited twice and only 9% were visited thrice (Komba & Kira, 2013). Similar problem seems to be prevalent in Nigeria where Jekayinfa et al (2012, p. 84) suggested that supervisors "must be assigned fewer students to supervise in order to enhance quality assurance. For instance, the number of student-teachers assigned to a supervisor should be to a manageable size to ensure thorough supervision." While this depends on the supervisor- supervisee ratio, student teachers' self evaluation approach could be a possible alternative approach that can reveal student-teachers' competence in various aspect of their teaching practice.

Despite its sensitiveness, evaluation of teaching practice in Tanzanian has rarely been practiced. This is indicated by a recent study of Komba and Kira (2013, p. 158) which contends that "there are hardly any studies done in the context of Tanzania to investigate the effectiveness of Teaching Practice in improving student-teachers' teaching skills." The study also suggests that" there is need for the responsible authorities to review the procedures for carrying out Teaching Practice in order to improve the quality of teachers" (p. 157). The study of Paulo (2014, p.228) discovered some weaknesses that demand serious attention and recommended that teacher education curriculum in Tanzanian Universities "should be reviewed to respond to the new demands in teachers' pedagogical

content knowledge arising out of the introduction of competence based curriculum in secondary schools." This necessitates evaluation of teaching practice to identify strengths and weaknesses for possible reformation.

While there are many approaches to evaluate teaching practice effectiveness, self evaluation is one of potential approaches that cannot be ignored. Through self evaluation, student teachers can diagnose their areas of weakness and strength and in that way determine their level of competence and where they need to improve in various aspects of their daily routine during teaching practice sessions. Schwartz (n.d) considers self evaluation as one of the most overlooked forms of explicit evaluation that need to precede all other forms of teaching evaluation.

Problem Statement

Effectiveness of Teaching Practice in Tanzania has been rarely investigated. While teaching practice evaluation cannot necessarily be limited to university lecturers, a lot can be revealed by student teachers themselves through self-evaluation approach. Because evaluation of teaching practice has been limited to university lecturers who normally move from one school to another to assess student competence in various aspects of teaching practice, little effort has been done to involve student-teachers in self evaluation practices. This study, therefore, investigates on student teachers' competence in various aspects of teaching practice through their self-evaluation approach.

It is guided by a holistic approach that demands student teachers' involvement in various aspects of teaching practice rather than just classroom activities. This view is supported by a range of researchers. Scott and Freeman-Mirror (2000), for instance, hold that pre-service program is essential to provide an orientation towards teaching. For a teacher to be installed into the teaching profession, he or she must go through pre-service teacher training program which involves various aspects of teaching practice as a culminating stage. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2007) recognizes various areas that determine student achievement under the guidance of teachers. These include classroom teaching, evaluation, involvement in co-curricular activities, and guidance and counseling. The present study attempted to answer the following five research questions in regard to teaching practice competence:

What is the level of student teachers' competence in Teaching, Evaluation, Co-curricular Activities and Guidance and Counselling?

Is there significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers categorized according to year of study, program of study and teaching subject?

Is there significant difference in Evaluation by Student-Teachers categorized according to Teaching Subject?

Is there significant difference in Co-Curricular Activities involvement by Student-Teachers categorized according to gender?

Is there significant difference in Guidance and Counselling activities by Student Teachers categorized according to gender and year of Study?

Research Methodology

This study employed evaluation research design whereby student teachers gave their self evaluation of their competence in various aspects of teaching practice. The population of the study was 170 university students who are currently taking teacher education at the University of Arusha-Musoma Center. Purposive sampling was employed to select second and third year students who had gone through teaching practice sessions by the time of data collection. This included 76 Bachelor of Education students, 17 Bachelor of Business Administration with Education students and 12 Diploma in Education students.

Questionnaire was the only research instrument by which data was collected from respondents. Questionnaire items were validated by the researcher through critically looking into the research questions and corresponding questionnaire items. Acceptable reliability was established through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in data analysis. Descriptive statistics determined mean scores of student teachers' competence in various aspects in the first research question. ANOVA and t-test analyzed research questions 2 to 5 to determine difference.

Results and Discussion

This section was guided by five research questions, four of which called for hypotheses testing. To answer these questions, the mean scores of student-teachers' response to different items were interpreted in four response zones: 3.50-4.00 = Strong Agreement, 2.50-3.49 = Agreement, 1.50-2.49 = Disagreement and 1.00-1.49 = Strong Disagreement.
What is the level of student teachers' competence in Teaching, Evaluation, Co-curricular Activities and Guidance and Counselling?

Table 1 indicates mean scores of student-teachers in different dimensions of teaching practice. The mean scores are arranged in a descending order below:

Teaching	3.58
Evaluation	3.57
Co-Curricular Activities	3.52
Guidance and Counselling	3.35

With exception of Guidance and Counselling aspect of teaching practice, competence of student-teachers in all categories fell within the "Strong Agreement" zone (3.50-4.00). Table 1 also indicates that the general response of teachers ranged between "Agreement" and "Strong Agreement" zones. It is therefore inferred that student teachers are highly

competent in teaching, evaluation and supervision of co-curricular activities. This implies that university educators train their student-teachers effectively in aforementioned aspects of teacher preparation.

On the other hand, student –teachers' response on guidance and counselling fell within the "Agreement" zone (2.50-3.49). Generally, their responses ranged between "Disagreement" (1.50-2.49) and "Agreement" (2.50-3.49) zones. This implies that some students were incompetent in guidance and counselling activities while others were competent.

Is there significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers categorized according to year of study, program of study and teaching subject?

This research question called for testing of the following null hypothesis using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):

There is no significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers categorized according to year of study, program of study and teaching subject.

Table 2 indicates slight difference of mean score for third year (3.62) and second year (3.55) student-teachers. Both mean scores however are within the "Strong Agreement" zone. The Sig. of .121 in Table 3, which is greater than the critical value (0.05), leads us to accept the null hypothesis and therefore infer that there is no significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers categorized according to year of study.

As far as program of study is concerned, Table 4 indicates that Bachelor of Education students have the highest mean score (3.59) followed by Bachelor of Business Administration with Education (3.58) and finally Diploma in Education (3.50). The responses of all three groups are in the "Strong Agreement" zone and the Sig. of .512 in Table 5 is greater than the critical value. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis and contend that there is no significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers categorized according to programs of study.

As far as teaching subjects is concerned, Language Student-Teachers in Table 6 have the highest mean score of 3.59 followed by Business (3.58) and finally Social Sciences student-teachers (3.58). Mean scores in all groups fall within the "Strong Agreement" zone, and the Sig. of .906 in Table 7 is greater than the critical value leading us to accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teaching competence by student-teachers s categorised according to teaching subjects.

Is there significant difference in Evaluation by Student-Teachers categorized according to teaching Subject?

This research question called for testing of the following null hypothesis using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):

There is no significant difference in Evaluation by Student-teachers categorized according to teaching subjects.

Student-teachers of Business subjects had the highest mean score in evaluation (3.57) as compared to their Social Sciences (3.56) and Languages counterparts (3.50). Student-teachers in all categories, however, belong to "Strong Agreement" zone implying that students regardless their specialized teaching subjects strongly agreed to be competent in evaluation activities. The Sig of 0.45 in Table 9 which is lesser than the critical value,

however, suggests significant difference in mean scores. Multiple comparisons in Table 10 indicate significant difference at the level of 0.05 between teachers of languages and teachers of Business subjects, the teachers of business having the highest mean scores.

Is there significant difference in Co-Curricular Activities involvement by Student-Teachers categorized according to gender?

This research question called for testing of the following null hypothesis using t-test):
There is no significant difference in Co-Curricular Activities involvement by Student-Teachers categorized according to gender.

With the mean score of 3.54 in Table 11, male students strongly agreed to be competent in co-curricular activities. Female students' mean score of 3.46 is in "Agreement" zone. The Sig. of .207 in Table 12, however, indicates that the mean difference is not statistically significant, and therefore it is inferred that the difference of male and female student-teachers in co-curricular activities happens by chance. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in Co-curricular activities involvement by student-teachers categorized according to their genders.

Is there significant difference in Guidance and Counseling activities by Student Teachers categorized according to gender and year of Study?

This research question called for testing of the following null hypotheses using t-test):
There is no significant difference in Guidance and Counseling activities by Student Teachers categorized according to gender and year of study.

Table 13 indicates that male student-teachers have the mean score of 3.36 while female student-teachers have the mean score of 3.34. This implies that both male and female students agreed to be competent in the performance of guidance and counseling activities in the schools where they did their teaching practice. The Sig. of .699 in Table 14 is greater than the critical value and therefore rules out that there is no significant difference in performance of guidance and counseling activities by student-teachers categorized according to gender.

Third year student-teachers in Table 15 seemed to have slightly higher mean score (3.37) as compared to second year student-teachers (3.34). The Sig. of .743 in Table 16 which is greater than the critical value, however, indicates that the difference is not statistically significant. Therefore we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in guidance and counseling activities by student-teachers categorized according to years of study in their teaching practice.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study investigated on student teachers' competence in various aspects of teaching practice such as teaching, evaluation, co-curricular activities and guidance and counseling through self-evaluation approach. The study summarizes and concludes that:
University of Arusha student-teachers, regardless of their demographic categorizations, are very competent in teaching, evaluation and supervision of co-curricular activities. The study,

therefore, recommends strong motivation to educators by the University administration for them to continue doing their best in teacher training.

Student-teachers are competent in guidance and counselling activities, though the competence level is slightly lower than that of other dimensions of teaching practice. This calls for university lecturers to put more efforts in giving student-teachers guidance and counselling skills through the teaching of the courses EPSE 325 Guidance and Counselling and EPUA 18 Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling at degree and diploma levels respectively.

Similar studies are recommended at the University of Arusha's main campus and other universities in the country.

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Tables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Preparation and Actual Teaching	105	2.83	4.00	3.5811	.25653
Evaluation	105	2.80	4.00	3.5657	.32805
Co-Curricular Activities	105	2.67	4.00	3.5156	.33605
Guidance and Counselling	105	2.00	4.00	3.3543	.40595
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table 1: Description of Student-Teachers Competence in Various Aspects

	What is your year of study?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Preparation and Actual Teaching	Second Years	58	3.5461	.27558	.03619
	Third Years	47	3.6243	.22635	.03302

Table 2: Group Statistics Actual Teaching by Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
							Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)			Lower	Upper
Preperation and Actual Teaching	Equal variances assumed	3.280	.073	-1.563	103	.121	-.07817	.05000	-.17733	.02100
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.596	102.975	.114	-.07817	.04898	-.17532	.01898

Table 3: Independent Samples Test, Preparation and Actual Teaching by Gender

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION	76	3.5923	.24641	.02827	3.5360	3.6486	2.83	4.00
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH EDUCATION	17	3.5882	.29825	.07234	3.4349	3.7416	2.83	4.00
DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION	12	3.5000	.26591	.07676	3.3311	3.6689	3.08	3.92

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION	76	3.5923	.24641	.02827	3.5360	3.6486	2.83	4.00
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WITH EDUCATION	17	3.5882	.29825	.07234	3.4349	3.7416	2.83	4.00
DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION	12	3.5000	.26591	.07676	3.3311	3.6689	3.08	3.92
Total	105	3.5811	.25653	.02504	3.5315	3.6307	2.83	4.00

Table 4: Actual Teaching Competence by Program of Study

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.089	2	.045	.674	.512
Within Groups	6.755	102	.066		
Total	6.844	104			

Table 5: ANOVA for Competence of Teaching by Program of Study

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
LANGUAGES	45	3.5912	.24146	.03599	3.5187	3.6638	3.00	4.00
SOCIAL SCIENCES	43	3.5677	.26015	.03967	3.4876	3.6477	2.83	4.00
BUSINESS	17	3.5882	.29825	.07234	3.4349	3.7416	2.83	4.00
Total	105	3.5811	.25653	.02504	3.5315	3.6307	2.83	4.00

Table 6: Actual Teaching Competence by Teaching Subjects

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.013	2	.007	.099	.906
Within Groups	6.831	102	.067		
Total	6.844	104			

Table 7: ANOVA for Actual Teaching by Teaching Subjects

Evaluation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
LANGUAGES	45	3.5037	.33614	.05011	3.4027	3.6047	2.83	4.00
SOCIAL SCIENCES	43	3.5636	.33332	.05083	3.4610	3.6661	2.80	4.00
BUSINESS	17	3.7353	.23614	.05727	3.6139	3.8567	3.17	4.00
Total	105	3.5657	.32805	.03201	3.5022	3.6292	2.80	4.00

Table 8: Evaluation by Teaching Subjects

Evaluation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.662	2	.331	3.207	.045
Within Groups	10.530	102	.103		
Total	11.192	104			

Table 9: ANOVA for Evaluation by Teaching Subjects

Evaluation

LSD

(I) What is your teaching subject?	(J) What is your teaching subject?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LANGUAGES	SOCIAL SCIENCES	-.05986	.06852	.384	-.1958	.0760
	BUSINESS	-.23159*	.09147	.013	-.4130	-.0502
SOCIAL SCIENCES	LANGUAGES	.05986	.06852	.384	-.0760	.1958
	BUSINESS	-.17173	.09205	.065	-.3543	.0109
BUSINESS	LANGUAGES	.23159*	.09147	.013	.0502	.4130
	SOCIAL SCIENCES	.17173	.09205	.065	-.0109	.3543

*. The mean difference is significant at the
0.05 level.

Table 10: Evaluation Multiple Comparisons by Teaching Subject

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Co-Curricular Activities	MALE	66	3.5475	.34054	.04192
	FEMALE	39	3.4615	.32548	.05212

Table 11: Group Statistics for Co-Curricular Activities by gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Co-Curricular Activities	Equal variances assumed	.138	.711	1.270	103	.207	.08594	.06767	-.04828	.22015
	Equal variances not assumed			1.285	82.805	.202	.08594	.06688	-.04710	.21897

Table 12: Independent Samples Test, Co-Curricular Activities by Gender

	What is your gender?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Guidance and Counselling	MALE	66	3.3662	.42287	.05205
	FEMALE	39	3.3342	.38010	.06086

Table 13: Group Statistics for Guidance and Counselling by Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Guidance and Counseling	Equal variances assumed	.009	.926	.388	103	.699	.03197	.08233	-.13130	.19525
	Equal variances not assumed			.399	86.776	.691	.03197	.08009	-.12721	.19116

Table 14: Independent Samples Test for Guidance and Counseling by Gender

	What is your year of study?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Guidance and Counselling	Second Years	58	3.3425	.39022	.05124
	Third Years	47	3.3688	.42837	.06248

Table 15: Group Statistics for Guidance and Counselling by Year of Study

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Guidance and Counseling	Equal variances assumed	.006	.938	-.328	103	.743	-.02627	.08001	-.18496	.13242
	Equal variances not assumed			-.325	94.266	.746	-.02627	.08081	-.18670	.13417

Table 16: Independent Samples Test, Guidance and Counseling by Year of Study