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A TURNING POINT FOR NOVICE EDUCATORS OF BS EDUCATION DURING TEACHING PRACTICE ACTIVITY BY UNIVERSITY OF NAROWAL

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice is an essential element of teacher training for perspective teacher. It allows future teachers to gain practical learning and instruction training. In this research, the researchers seek to determine how these experiences affect and how student instructors view the teaching profession. Researchers explore the experiences of student teachers in the Bachelor of Science in Education (BS Education) at University of Narowal during their 2 months teaching practice in the district Narowal. All the 43 novice educators were selected for this research and researcher collected the data by using semi-structured interviews technique with all student instructors, and themes were found and the data was analyzed through content analysis methods. Researcher found that, despite having great teaching practice experiences, novice educators encountered difficulties that affected how they saw the teaching as a profession. According to the results of the research, the participants developed a positive perception about teaching profession and their motivation to choose career as teachers increased after short term teaching practice. The study overall shows that teaching practice enhance the interest and motivation of novice educators in teaching profession.

Keywords: Novice educator; Perspective teachers; Teacher training; Teaching practice.

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of teaching is a crucial part of the process of becoming a teacher. Becoming a teacher inherently involves the vital aspect of engaging in the practice of teaching. It's through hands-on experience in the educational realm that one truly evolves into a proficient educator, solidifying the integral connection between the act of teaching and the journey towards becoming a skilled teacher (Schiering et al., 2023). It allows prospective educators to gain practical instructional and educational training. Before entering the real-world setting of instruction, a student teacher is given the chance to experience the art of teaching during teaching practice (Haataja et al., 2023). Novice educators experience a range of emotions when they begin the process of teaching, including enthusiasm, worry, anticipation, and apprehension (Varis et al., 2023). The word "teaching practice" refers to the variety of encounters that student instructors have while working in classrooms and educational institutions (Shidler, 2023). During reviewing the related literature, it reveals that there has only been an insufficient range of research on how students' observations during practicum affect their views and opinions about the field of teaching. The study examined the experiences of University of Narowal Bachelor of Science in Education (BS Education) student teachers during their teaching practice in the district narowal. A discussion in class in which students were asked to explain why they chose the teaching profession served as the impetus for the study. Most of the pupils in that class admitted to being enrolled in the course by accident (Rajakumar, 2023). While they waited for greater employment options in other sectors, the students considered it as a temporary solution (Alhassan et al., 2023). These students

participated in the Bachelor of Science in Education (BS Education) program because they had no other option, they were unable to find employment after receiving their undergraduate degree, and there was funding available for them to complete the program. Most novice educators said they had no plans to continue teaching following the completion of the course (Cao et al., 2023). Some students remained in the same mindset throughout the year, while others thought that teaching was "not such a bad thing after all". Up until the point when they had to leave for teaching practice, all of the students had kept up with the course (Gujjar et al., 2010). The novice educators were questioned about their experiences during teaching practice and whether these experiences may have changed their views of the teaching profession near the end of the practicum. Researchers argue that, While engaging in teaching practice, novice educators encountered difficulties that may have negatively impacted their capacity to get the most out of the experience (Khasawneh, 2023). Recognizing the difficulties encountered by novice educators will help teacher-training institutions become more cognizant of those difficulties, which may interfere with a beneficial professional teaching experience (Schaeper et al., 2023).

Teacher-training programs may then be revised to help novice educators achieve the desired results from their teaching practice. Researchers explore the educational experiences of novice educators and how these experiences affect their opinions of the teaching profession. The researcher lists both the good and bad experiences that student instructors had during their teaching practice and makes recommendations for how to help them get the results they want out of the experience (Shidler, 2023). A limitation of this study is that a small sample Bachelor of Science in Education (BS Education) 8th semester students from the University of Narowal was used. As a result, the study's conclusions cannot be applied to other trainee educators in different teacher preparation programs. The researcher describes and justifies the need for teaching practice in teacher preparation (Van Katwijk et al., 2023). The process at the UON is briefly reviewed, then the technique is described and the results are discussed. Finally, recommendations for ways that teaching practices could be enhanced are made in an effort to positively affect students' perceptions of and attitudes toward the field of teaching (Joseph & Manikandan, 2023).

Teaching Practice: Requirement of Novice Educators

Teacher training programs often include a crucial component known as 'teaching practice,' which involves students gaining practical experience in their chosen field (Dmitrenko et al., 2023). During this period, students work within the education industry to receive specialized training that allows them to apply the theoretical knowledge they've acquired. Many scholars and experts emphasize the crucial role of teaching practice in the training of educators (Resch & Schrittmesser, 2023). To attain the necessary qualifications for becoming a certified teacher, student teachers are mandated to complete teaching practice at a minimum of two different schools. The ways teaching practice is carried out can vary depending on the institution (Mishra, 2023). Some schools have student teachers engage in teaching practice for one day every week, some spread it out over a semester, and others have student teachers participate in intensive two- to six-week periods of teaching practice (Mandal & Mete, 2023).

According to study respondents, a third of the time (3 to 6 weeks) in the standard UON can be devoted to teaching practice. This training period should be split up into at least two if not three, school experience sessions. It should be noted that the goal of teaching practice, in any format, is to more thoroughly integrate novice educators into the field of teaching. Thus, it is expected of the prospective teacher to carry out all of the duties of a teacher. The respondents find these duties to be both thrilling and difficult, pointing out that; on the other hand, aspiring educators should enjoy the thrill of being a part of an actual classroom environment, developing relationships with students, and preparing and scheduling lessons. However, novice teachers can be concerned about their capacity to handle novel circumstances, manage and control students, or build a rapport with the mentorship or supervisor. Such conflicting emotions have the power to make or ruin novice educators.

Teaching Practice at the University of Narowal (UON)

The Department of Education at UON offers a teacher-education program called the BS Education. The curriculum is available in morning and evening sessions over a four-year period. Students must complete

at least 12 weeks of teaching practice (TP) during this time in order to complete the practical training program necessary for the certification. Teaching practice (TP) is done at District Narowal Government schools that have signed by head of Department of Education. TP for BS education students at UON is scheduled for the 8th semester (last Semester) from August to October. During the time of this TP, students continued attending lectures at UON. Before assigning student teachers to various schools, the head of Department of Education visited with a number of school principals. The goal of the conversation was to build durable connections with the school administrative teams (SATs) from various schools in the District Narowal. By visiting the schools, talking with the administrators and educators, and describing UON's goals for establishing a collaborative connection with them, the HOD chose appropriate schools for TP. The teacher in charge subsequently reached an agreement with the school's management team, stipulating that:

- The students might participate in teacher practice in their educational institutions;
- Some professors would serve as mentoring to the students when they are under their supervision during their teaching experience; and
- The SMTs would improve instruction by enabling students to become "wholly engaged" novice educators, who would be required to participate in every facet of the school.
- The previous statement suggested that student teachers will have the chance to take part in all school-related activities.

In addition to being teachers-in-training, students needed to be given the chance to be employed practically and use their newly developed ability to teach and conceptual understanding. Among the tasks that students had to be introduced to be filling out class registers as well as checking student notebooks, going to meetings with teachers, and lending a hand with extracurricular activities. In charge department of education and UON academics conducted at least two formal class visits and evaluations of novice educators. During educational excursions to schools, in charge department of education and UON academics provided novice educators with both written and oral advice. This advice contained both commendations for areas where they excelled and highlighting shortcomings that required improvement. The feedback also offered practical suggestions to aid in their development as educators. These suggestions included guidance on addressing anxiety, utilizing non-verbal communication techniques to enhance their teaching and learning methods, and implementing a range of strategies to enhance their overall teaching skills. The goal of these conversations was to provide novice educators with required skills and knowledge to develop into more confident and competent teachers; identify the areas that required improvement and guarantee they were prepared for the future occupation. An instructor, or a school-based instructor, was also obligated to assess the novice educators' realistic instructional and educational activities, according to guidelines given by the UON mentors, and track the kids' academic performance, behavior, and mental state at school.

PROBLEM OF THE RESEARCH

The primary objective of the research was to investigate the impact of teaching practice experiences on the perceptions of prospective educators about the concept of joining the teaching profession. The study sought to explore the nature and character of the several situations and experiences encountered during the mentioned period, with the goal of understanding how these aspects of lived experiences influence the perception or attitude of student-teachers towards the teaching profession. In summary, the study aimed to illustrate, through a detailed account of the lived experience of becoming an educator, the process and outcomes of the transformative experience, specifically; how the experience during the practice period shapes future perspectives, inclinations, and commitment of a person entering the educational field. By exploring the complex interactions and the many facets of the profession that define perceptions, the present study will provide critical insights into the dynamics of teacher preparation and clarify its significance to the field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted in several public schools throughout the Narowal area using a qualitative research methodology. Hence, the students intended to pursue evening classes, meaning that the school needed to be in close proximity to the University of Narowal. In light of this, undertaking such a research was feasible given the relatively small number of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science education program and by narrowing down the geographical scope to schools within the Narowal district. Consequently, the entire population of BS student teachers enrolled at the University of Narowal (UON) for the Spring 2023 semester, which quantity to 42 individuals, was encompassed within the study's sample. This strategic selection ensured a comprehensive representation of the BS student teacher population within the specific context, facilitating in-depth research and analysis tailored to the unique characteristics of the program and the region. Since nearly 85% of the student instructors were from the Narowal village district, they were able to communicate in their native tongue. Following a 2-month teaching practice session, data were gathered, mostly through semi-structured interviews with all 42 student teachers enrolled in the University of Narowal (UON) BS education program. The purpose of the investigation was explained to the participants. The novice educators were briefed on the focus of the inquiry. In order to learn more about the challenges and good elements that student instructors faced while practicing their teaching, the researchers in this study conducted interviews. With their intelligent and probing questions, the interviewers helped to foster fruitful conversations. The data collected from these semi-structured interviews was thoroughly examined to find recurring themes that were closely connected to the main research questions. Furthermore, the body of existing literature was useful in identifying the final categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Themes and sub-themes.

| Theme | Subtheme | Key Findings |
|--|--|--|
| Mentorship | Lack of Belief in Abilities | Mentors express a lack of trust in the abilities of student teachers. - Teaching opportunities are contingent on the mentor's presence. - Some mentors limit students' roles due to perceived lack of capability. |
| School Environment | Sense of Alienation | Some student teachers feel a sense of alienation and lack of belonging. - Formal introduction by staff establishes roles but may contribute to feelings of separation. - Positive experiences with warm reception and support from staff. |
| Professionalism among Educators | Exploitation and Lack of Professionalism | Student teachers perceive exploitation, assigned menial tasks, and lack of professionalism among educators. - Some teachers demean student teachers and display unprofessional behavior. - Student teachers feel like personal assistants rather than valued contributors. - Lack of dedication and misuse of authority tarnish the teaching profession. |
| Exclusion from Meetings and Activities | Lack of Inclusion in Staff Activities | Student teachers express the desire to actively participate in staff meetings. - Feelings of insignificance due to separation during staff briefings. - Exclusion from sports activities contributes to a sense of exclusion. |
| Learner Behavior | Disruptive Behavior | Unruly learner behavior, including lack of discipline, cell phone use, and disrespect. - Challenges in maintaining control over the class. - Contrast with positive behavior reported in another school. |
| Implementation of Outcomes-based Education | Challenges in Applying OBE | Respondents face challenges in applying Outcomes-based Education (OBE) due to various factors. - Short lesson times, large class sizes, unruly pupils, and time constraints impact effective OBE implementation. |

Key themes Table: 1 emerged during data analysis, with the subsequent section delving into an in-depth exploration of each identified theme. In contrast to the findings of the study, where respondents highlighted a notable disparity between the theoretical principles of education and the actual practices they observed in schools, the participants in this research displayed a different perspective. They expressed a strong sense of preparedness and competence in bridging the gap between educational theory and practical implementation. These individuals confidently asserted that they were not only well-prepared but also adept at translating the theoretical knowledge they acquired in university settings into tangible, real-world teaching scenarios. The most pronounced contrast is when the students strongly agreed that they could apply the theories in education which they had learned during the training to the teaching positions they take. The evident difference in the participants' opinion demonstrates the efficacy of the educational program in ensuring that student teachers receive the necessary competency and knowledge to bridge the gap between theory and practice in education. The participants unequivocally agreed that BS education Program prepares them well for the teaching experience. They were convinced that the BS education Program provided them with all it takes to foster success as a teacher and a teaching professional. Some of the students highlighted that they were taught fundamental concepts in education such as the code of conduct, ethics and professional behavior, and the duties and responsibilities of educators.

Moreover, not only has the BS education Program taught them the theoretical aspects, but it also instilled them into behavior that a professional should adhere to. Additionally, they were able to rate their fellow educators' professionalism at school. It is evident from the testimony that the BS education program had a significantly positive influence on the respondents' teaching practices by ensuring that they were prepared thoroughly and were more confident in their line of profession. Additionally, most of the participants have shown a striking interest in their teaching practices due to their experience in putting their theoretical knowledge into practice. This implies that most of them had a high level of familiarity with the subject, making it exceptional to teach.

They also understood the importance of using positive reinforcement and creating a supportive learning environment. Since these principles are directly connected with the concepts studied in the Education Theory 4 class, it is safe to assume that the academic background they received was quite effective. To put it differently, the respondents were confident that the knowledge gained was hands-on and applicable, and they could indeed form a motivational and well-performing classroom. This response indicated that the pedagogical education had a promising influence and they were pleased to work and create a strong sense of influence. From the observation of a student teacher, the importance of praise and rewards on learner enthusiasm is underlined: "I learned that when [learners] were praised, and I rewarded them, it seemed the learners became enthusiastic and that they engaged in activities". This observation is crucial as it demonstrates the importance of motivating learners through rewards and reinforcements for their action in the learning process.

Another important issue that should be emphasized concerning the interview is that most respondents highlighted the practical application of knowledge received within Specific Subject didactics and Professional Studies. In this scenario, they effectively applied their learning to ensure proper planning, preparation, and presentation. They also managed to create convenient and structured timetables to achieve the best possible results and facilitate the process. Overall, the emphasis on the direct applicability and usefulness of the received pedagogical training can be easily explained by its nature and composition. Indeed, if it is delivered properly, trainees receive much-needed skills and tools that can be used to ensure proper and engaging instruction, and the results of the interview support this idea. However, and it is very important for the context of the current study, it should be noted that participants reported severe problems and difficulties despite the extensive training they received. In particular, it was connected with the behavior and motivation of learners. Thus, the interview showed that struggling through their teaching

was “not so easy.” Indeed, learners did not want to cooperate; many of them failed to complete their homework and made much noise. Furthermore, they did not show much involvement in the learning process.

The feedback above highlights the challenging learning-teaching environment and the need for educators to always be flexible and use multiple approaches to tackle these issues. It also emphasizes the fact that successful teaching is about more than just being prepared but about differing one’s approach depending on the behavior and needs of each student.

Furthermore, a language barrier proved to be another major obstacle. One of the respondents stated, “Learners were not able to speak in English and I was unable to speak in Sotho” . The language barrier impacted the student teachers’ performance during the teaching practice and their conception of the teaching career at large. Failure to communicate in a common language creates several barriers to the exchange of knowledge and understanding between a teacher and a student, which makes it almost impossible for both parties to create meaningful experiences. In the long run, the language barrier not only impacted the teaching practice directly but left long-term repercussions on the student teacher’s perception of the teaching career, giving them an idea about the future evaluation of the chosen career considering the existing problems with the language barrier in the South African education system.

Timing of the Teaching Practice

According to majority of the respondents, teaching practice commenced very late in the academic calendar. At that time, most of the educator had covered a lot of the curriculum and were spending most of the time on the same through revisions in preparation for the end of year examination. For student teachers, it was worse because they had to juggle two extreme responsibilities of being in the University of Narowal, UON, full time and going to the school and prepare and assess their learner’s work at the same time. This was very inconveniencing and called for a rare careful timetabling and time keeping. The intervening causes threatened the completion of the requirements and doubling the few hours to be in class and ensure effective lesson delivery.

The difficulty of fulfilling this multitude of obligations made life unbearable, as it affected the student teachers’ academic and professional lives. The delicate balance to which the pairs had to operate underscored the determination and dedication required to succeed in this field. Overcoming all those obstacles and managing to maintain a smile after such a grueling and hectic day and week was testimony of the student teachers’ dedication to their training and the improvement of their future students.

Relationship between Mentors and Student Teachers

Each student teacher was carefully assigned to an experienced and competent classroom instructor. In this case, the mentor was a prime example of adaptation that played a variety of roles in the students’ educational “pathway”. In addition, this person was a guide who showed the right direction and illuminated the right path of effective teaching. In the role of a supervisor, the mentor made sure that the student accurately observed all standards and pedagogical principles. As a counselor, the mentor provided psychological support and often listened to students’ complaints or recommendations on ongoing experiments in the field of education. Furthermore, the mentor as an overseer watched the students’ autonomous work and identified any areas that require further improvement. In addition, as a coach, the mentor instigated the development of the necessary skills and competencies. An excellent teacher himself, the mentor set an example to follow, displaying all the positive and negative characteristics of teaching. This person also gave unquestioning support and criticism, while providing valuable information for the further development of the student teacher in the field of education.

Based on the feedback, the student teachers most frequently described the mentors as supportive and approachable. In fact, the mentors’ readiness to help and provide advice was singled out as the most important characteristic of their mentorship. Furthermore, the advice that the mentors gave was reported to be valuable by the student teachers, who also appreciated the mentors’ willingness to share their own

expertise and experience. The feedback thus indicates that mentors play a significant role in the development of educators who are just starting out. Their support, advice, and generosity in knowledge sharing create an environment where student teachers can grow and flourish. Therefore, the overall impression is that mentorship is an essential part of preparation for a teaching career for aspiring educators.

Feedback from the student teachers indicated that the mentors were always supportive and accessible. The novice educators indicated that the mentors relied on their availability for help and advice. The novices further reported that the most instrumental help was the mentors' counseling, and this is attributed to the fact that the mentors were generous with their experience in caring to share. This information signals that the mentor is an essential person in the development of the student teachers. Therefore, their support, their counsel, and the openness with which they share with the student teachers pronounced a chance for maturation and learning for the student teachers.

The overall impression strongly enforces the effective role played by mentorship in preparation for future educators and ensuring they are well prepared to succeed in their teaching career. From the feedback obtained from the student teachers, the following recurrent reasons were being consistently appreciated by the mentors: their tenders and gentle approach to the assigned responsibilities. Specifically, they were always available to provide the students with the necessary support required of them. Moreover, the mentors specifically emphasized the importance of the advice from the experienced teachers, who were always willing to share their knowledge or come with their experience. Based on this feedback, therefore, it is evident that mentors play a critical role in the development of future educators. It is a professional encounter characterized by support, insights, and positive mentoring through the generosity of sharing their knowledge. Therefore, mentors do create an enabling environment to facilitate their growth and learning.

"I am greatly indebted to my mentor, to whom my growth on all fronts has been made possible through her unparalleled devotion. He selflessly gave out her time and expertise to help me take conscious steps and sell my experiences, which I built on throughout the placements. His arm has continued to be the source of inspiration that has bridged the gap between classroom learning and workplace realities. He largely contributed to my comfort zone in applying the class theories, especially in lesson planning."

Indeed, "my mentor was an excellent role model, and his teaching style was genuinely admirable. It not only spoke to me but also resonated with my colleagues. I also highly appreciate the manner in which he treated us, young educators."

As one of the student teachers said:

"My mentor has been a source of effective inspiration and support, continuously aiming to guide me with great respect and expertise. He has been a life-changer for my teaching journey; his mentorship has taken me by surprise and completely changed my perspective. I never imagined continuing my work in education, but suddenly, a burning desire to understand the rewarding world of teaching appeared."

Another Individual Confirmed as Follows

One of the areas of our work with the class teacher that has been particularly successful is our cooperation. While working with my mentor, I have managed to write effective lesson plans and maintain students' discipline, only occasionally using my class teacher's help in certain situations that I found unresolved. What is more, her following me in the classroom during my lessons is crucial for the maintenance of discipline and comfort. For the above-discussed future teachers, teaching practice was the initial real-life experience in the classroom that formed the basis of their choice to become a teacher. Although a majority of participants would agree that this experience was successful and positive, a minority would argue that the interaction with their mentors was unfair to them. Specifically, these teachers saw their assignment hosts as abusive, over-demanding in material requested, and over-assigning in terms of assignments.

A particular Individual Expressed their Thoughts as Follows

He seems to be relishing his freedom, choosing not to attend class. Instead, he simply handed over the textbook, pointing to where he had left off, and left it at that. I believe it's the teacher's duty to maintain some level of responsibility for the class, rather than offloading everything onto me. While I don't mind helping out, I firmly believe that, as a class teacher, they should be accessible to offer support and guidance, especially since I am still in the learning process.

In a similar vein, we observed consistent feedback from participants, highlighting instances of mentors displaying unprofessional behavior. These mentors were found to be involved in actions such as neglecting their responsibilities, arriving late for their duties, or assigning personal tasks to students during instructional hours. This type of unprofessional conduct stands in direct contrast to the envisioned role of mentors, as articulated by Van Katwijk et al. (2023). According to their perspectives, mentors are expected to provide continuous guidance and leadership to student teachers, offering constructive feedback on areas of improvement, recognizing strengths, and nurturing the growth of student teachers until they can effectively lead their own lessons (Gujjar et al., 2010).

Several survey participants expressed a lack of belief in their abilities by their mentors. Here are some verbatim comments from one of the respondents:

"Even though my mentor holds me in high regard and provides valuable guidance, there is a noticeable lack of trust in my abilities. This absence of trust becomes evident when she is not present at school, as she is unwilling to entrust the classroom to my care. My teaching role seems contingent on her physical presence, making it essential for her to be around for me to instruct. Initially, I welcomed her presence in my classroom, as it aided in maintaining discipline and order. However, over time, it became apparent that she didn't believe in my capacity to independently manage the class. It's disheartening to find that my mentor lacks confidence in my teaching capabilities, despite the training and preparation I've received. Ideally, mentors should have faith in our abilities, recognizing that we have undergone adequate training and are fully capable of handling our classes autonomously. Regrettably, my teaching opportunities have been limited, primarily because my mentor appears to have reservations about my ability to effectively replace her in the classroom"

This situation prompts us to ponder how student teachers can develop the necessary skills and confidence to step into the teaching profession without the opportunity to gain practical experience. Such a lack of hands-on training may undermine their professional development and could potentially dampen their enthusiasm and readiness to enter the world of actual teaching. The process of integrating student teachers into the school environment was observed across three different schools, and it was found that a standardized induction procedure was lacking during their initial days at these institutions. According to feedback received, these student teachers did not receive formal introductions to the existing staff members. This absence of a structured initiation was summarized by one respondent who expressed, "We did not partake in any formal introductions or staff meetings. So, as a result, we were a mere existence in the school, and our presence was just seen by other educators and students without any formal recognition. Some respondents felt a sense of alienation.

"We were never introduced to the staff. This affected us psychologically because we felt like strangers. We never felt that sense of belonging".

An experience of feeling disconnected and out of place, complacency, and a depleted sense of confidence. The experience of feeling disconnected and out of place, for example, triggered anxiety and a weakened sense of self-assurance. As a result, satisfaction prevented quality teaching and had a negative impact on teaching quality and the excitement and dedication of aspirants to the teaching profession.

Thus, a feeling of inherent disconnection and not fitting in has resulted in anxiousness and a quantifiable lack of confidence. In the end, these feelings reflect back on the quality of teaching, as one's own fervor and aspiration or efforts to save an educator are lost, redirecting one's drive and devotion for this profession.

"We were greeted by the teachers and were guided to the classrooms we would be teaching in. The kids were gleefully waiting to meet us as it would be our introductory day. The message that we were being introduced to the kids was: we need to respect them. The statement set the pace for our teaching on our ensemble because it made sure that we were seen as teachers, not student teachers. The statement was instrumental in the shaping of our interactions with other teachers and the kids"

A different student instructor talked about their experience and said,

"I was truly amazed at how warm and accommodating everyone was here. It's as though I've been a part of this school community for an entire year already. Every teacher and administrator has treated me as if I were a fully-fledged, permanent member of the staff, not just a student teacher. Their collective support and encouragement have transformed my time at the school into an incredibly exciting and enriching journey, unlike anything I've ever experienced in my life."

The mannerisms and attitudes of other educators at the school:

Participants conveyed that they felt excluded by their non-mentor colleagues, experiencing a lack of welcome and respect within the team. It was apparent that they did not perceive themselves as equals among their co-workers.

"We often find ourselves in situations where others dictate our actions, almost as if we're mere pawns in their game. It happened recently when someone tasked me with overseeing her class as she stepped out to pick up her child. I couldn't help but wish for a more respectful approach, one that acknowledged my professional standing rather than commanding me as if I were a child. I complied with the request, but the way it was conveyed left much to be desired".

A different student teacher expressed their concerns about the lack of professionalism among the educators and how they perceived student teachers being exploited. Here is what that student teacher shared:

"I sensed that other teachers viewed me as a mere convenience, often assigning tasks like transporting cups to the staff room and supervising students in the hallways, making me feel like a low-cost personal assistant. The teacher's behavior, which included shouting at me in front of students, was quite demeaning. I perceived this teacher as unprofessional due to their lack of preparation for class and consistent tardiness. Their actions had a demoralizing effect on me".

In relation to the educators' unprofessional manner, another respondent intimated that

"The educators exploited the student teachers by confining them to the computer center for typing tasks related to their own work. Additionally, certain educators assigned personal tasks to us. A majority of the teachers in this school display a lack of dedication, frequently missing their duties without valid reasons and misusing their authority. Such behavior tarnishes the reputation of the teaching profession, and if given the option, I would consider pursuing a different career path".

Involvement in other School Activities

Teaching encompasses a wide range of experiences, and student teachers are expected to actively participate in all facets of the school. In this teaching practice activity, even though the School Mentor Teachers (SMTs) had been specifically asked to facilitate the full integration of novice educators into the

role of teachers by involving them in all school activities, the novice educators encountered restrictions in their involvement in these activities. A novice educator referred to them as 'Personal assistance' within the school, a sentiment that was widely echoed by the majority of student teachers.

"We have not received invitations to staff meetings, which has left us uninformed about the proceedings. We are eager to actively participate in these meetings as we believe our input can be valuable".

In a similar vein, a different participant expressed that they were made to feel insignificant:

"Each morning, the staff gathers around the table in the staff room for their briefing, but as student teachers, we find ourselves relegated to a small table in the corner. This separation makes us feel like we aren't fully integrated with the rest of the team, despite the fact that we're all engaged in similar work. Following the briefing, we are also expected to assume our responsibilities".

In a similar vein, another novice educator shared that they too experienced exclusion from sports activities. Their attempt to address the issue with the headmaster was met with indifference as he simply shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

Student discipline in the school

Much like previous research findings that reported a decline in moral values and a lack of discipline in educational institutions, the current study's participants overwhelmingly observed a nearly complete absence of discipline in the majority of schools. Another participant commented,

"The learners' behavior was notably unruly, primarily as a result of the absence of effective disciplinary measures to address misconduct. Additionally, some students frequently used cell phones in the classroom, even during break times, which I found particularly disruptive.

Another participant mentioned,

"The learners' behavior suggests that they perceive us as their peers, leading to a lack of respect and discipline in the classroom. Their rudeness and a general absence of decorum make it quite challenging to maintain control over the class, even when the teacher is present; learners often engage in activities like playing games (Pabg) and eating during class time.

Contrastingly, when comparing these negative responses to the views of respondents from another school, they reported that learners exhibited good behavior and actively engaged in class activities:

"Learners hold us in high regard as educators, although there are a few who believe that, as student teachers, we may lack the authority to enforce discipline."

Implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE)

All respondents acknowledged that the lack of learner guidance materials in all schools, the sizable class sizes, the unruly pupils, and the time constraints made it very challenging for them to apply OBE correctly. Overall, respondents said that the lesson time allotted was relatively short at most 45 minutes. A student teacher made a comment.

"Due to time constraints, it can be challenging to organize students into groups when you truly want them to participate in group work. Additionally, there isn't much room for the teacher to roam around and monitor the students' progress while they work.

Resources to facilitate teaching and learning

Based on the feedback received regarding resources, the schools were reported to be deficient in essential tools vital for facilitating effective learning and instruction. The absence of textbooks posed a significant challenge for educators, hindering the teaching process. A caller specifically mentioned the inadequacy of textbooks in their school and highlighted the absence of a library as a notable concern. This collective

sentiment underscores the urgent need for improved resource allocation and access to educational materials to enhance the overall learning experience in these schools. Most participants revealed the necessity for in-class textbook sharing, leading to a collective discontent among students due to the perceived time demands associated with this practice. The majority expressed frustration, highlighting the disruptive nature of the required sharing and its impact on their overall learning experience. The consensus suggests that addressing this issue could contribute significantly to improving the classroom environment and fostering a more positive and conducive learning atmosphere.

"The few books that are accessible are kept in a storeroom; since students are not permitted to take them home, it is difficult to assign homework to them."

When participants were required to replicate assignments, they expressed challenges accessing the copy machine. Consequently, they found themselves seeking assistance from the school's head, who often displayed reluctance in providing photocopies for student instructors.

Discussion

In general, research participants said they had benefited from the BS Education program. Everyone in the group unanimously affirmed that though university lectures equipped them with theoretical knowledge on teaching, it was the hands-on teaching experience that truly immersed them in the practical realities of instructional settings. This aligns with the assertions of academics who emphasize the indispensable value of practical application in bridging the gap between theory and the dynamic challenges faced in real-world teaching scenarios (Shidler, 2023). The advocate emphasized that education's essence lay in diverse experiences, uniquely irreplaceable outside a classroom. Yet, within the realm of teaching practice, fledgling educators seize the opportunity to seamlessly fuse educational theories with the tangible realities they witness and undergo.

To this aim, Van Katwijk et al. (2023) also emphasizes that while classes and homework impart subject knowledge, the true validation occurs in the immersive experience of teaching. Interacting with a real classroom setting adds invaluable context, elevating theoretical understanding to practical application. In essence, knowledge gains authenticity and depth through hands-on teaching practice (Gujjar et al., 2010).

The study found that mentors' impact on novice educators varied. Some mentors successfully guided novices in their roles, highlighting the diverse outcomes of the investigation within the context of mentorship for educators (Resch & Schrittmesser, 2023). While some student instructors reported positive connections with mentors, others voiced dissatisfaction. Concerns centered around mentors viewing student teachers as mere substitutes, leaving them shouldering the entire workload. This discontent highlights varied experiences within mentor-student relationships, underscoring the need for more consistent and supportive interactions in educational settings. This disheartened the student instructors as it contradicted the essence of mentorship. Despite their ongoing efforts to grasp the intricacies of the profession, student teachers were limited to observing and studying in the mentor's classroom without full autonomy in lesson execution. Furthermore, the mentors' discrepancies exacerbated the situation that the former made the student teachers feel overwhelmed with numerous responsibilities while the latter did not trust in allowing them to run their courses. This imbalance disrupted the learning process, which was designed to be reciprocal, and made the student instructors feel unappreciated and bound in their formative journey. Some instructors opposed the idea of student instructors, claiming that it would disrupt the schedule, wasting the students' time, and did not allow them to perform. It could impact the ability to finish the program by the end of the academic year. This experience made the student teachers frustrated and less confident in their abilities to teach. The complications listed above have shaped several deficiencies in these peers that may have affected their future career in education.

Additionally, many student teachers in the study highlighted that they felt that other teachers and students disrespected them since their introduction and reception at their placement schools was weak. This sets

the tone for many years to matters since the first impression is critical for the professional status established for years to come. Student teachers experienced serious problems during the teaching practice, which had a significant adverse impact on their academic performance and teaching perception.

After a comprehensive evaluation of the effect of teaching practice on the perspectives of novice educators, the research results reveal a remarkable impact on the attitudes, motivation, and dedication of the student teachers to the teaching career. In light of this, the duration of the teaching practice assumes a critical role in molding the outlook of the n professionals in shaping the teaching career.

Additionally, strict student discipline was a severe limitation as it did not allow for the practical application of classroom learning by the students. As a result, they were unable to relate their theoretical knowledge to teaching more positively. This was not the only scenario as student teachers could have been perceptually prepared for the classroom. A majority were immigrants and, therefore, experienced a form of culture shock, which might have rendered them unable to comprehend the environment they were working.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

During the teaching practice period, most of the participants had the change in their attitude to the profession, and the change was positive. I think that this change became possible due to the fact that exposure to real classroom situations provided the participants with better understanding of the challenges and rewards of the profession. Therefore, having the opportunity to have experience with the real students and being capable of understanding the intricate complexities of the classroom dynamics seemed to be an invaluable opportunity for the participants. The immersion in the teaching relatedness not only increased the extent to which the participants appreciated the complexities of the professions, but it allowed them to see the perspective of the profession better of how much people can influence the lives of other people. Consequently, this learning activity proved that the more practical component is in the learning, the more perception may be changed. Thus, this experience can be called a life-changing experience.

The impact of teaching practice on future teachers and their specific aspirations can be discerned. Precisely, the experiences of teaching practice are associated with increased dedication to the profession. In many cases, it is through actively engaging in the practice of teaching that people realize their dedication and passion for educating others. Simultaneously, however, the motivation is reinforced through the relationships that teachers form with their students. Indeed, through teaching, one would be able to see how the students develop, which would make an individual aspire to become a teacher. That is, seeing how your actions impact the transformation of others and guide their learning process can be transforming for one's perspective. It would constitute a new dimension of motivation based on the relationships that are developed in the learning environment. As a result, both the practice and the relationship components contribute to the direction of future teachers' aspirations.

Many participants also found it challenging to manage a classroom and multiple learning styles. Even while these obstacles were thoroughly overwhelming, they lead to crucial learning experiences. For example, the struggle to manage a classroom provided educators with the opportunity to understand the nuances of maintaining order, critical thinking and inclusivity. Additionally, when presented with multiple learning styles, many educators struggled to adapt, in doing so, these participants cultivated innovative strategies that added to their versatile understanding of pedagogy. Ultimately, these challenges turned out not to be gatekeepers but transforming events that contributed to a practical, diverse understanding of what being a teacher actually entails. By confronting these challenges and overcoming them, participants not only exited the program as better educators, but as better-equipped individuals with the skills to take on the challenges of our complex educational landscape.

Conclusions

The findings reveal that novice educators consider great classroom experience and see the importance of timely translating theory into practice. Real experiences and encounters demonstrate the correctness of

their theoretical knowledge and become some kind of self-assessment, so they can understand if the choice of Brent Sorrells is suitable for them upon a real occurrence. The BS Education program was enough to prepare students for these roles in the eyes of a novice educator. Though practically everyone felt properly prepared, many students faced difficulties that seriously affected their learning performance. Recommended additional help or changes in the structure of the program are related to the more efficient way of preparing teachers.

Furthermore, the novice educator's views on the teaching profession were significantly impacted by experiences. In particular, the improper scheduling of the teaching practice in the last semester had a considerable impact. Therefore, a need for reconsideration or adjustment in the timing of practical teaching components within the educational program is suggested. The goal of teaching practice is compromised as instructors hesitate to entrust courses to inexperienced student teachers. This reluctance stems from viewing this period as critical for their students' learning, highlighting a challenge in balancing the educational benefits for both student teachers and the primary students in the classroom. Student instructors faced a demanding dual role as both university students and classroom teachers, leading to heightened stress and reduced productivity in both aspects. To mitigate this, it's recommended that the teaching program schedule be carefully planned to avoid overlapping with crucial school terms, like June and October, when teachers are actively preparing students for significant exams, ensuring a more balanced and effective learning experience for student instructors.

While some participants praised their mentors for continuous support, others felt exploited and lacked assistance. The study advocates for seminars fostering mentoring collaboration between teacher-training institutes and schools to empower mentors. Additionally, it recommends regular workshops for mentors to enhance their skills, enabling effective guidance and management of student instructors. This dual approach aims to establish a more positive and supportive mentoring environment within teacher-training programs.

Moreover, there was a lack of consistency among certain staff members in respect for and involvement of student teachers, which deprived researchers of the due sense of belonging and attraction for cooperation. There is a small demand by the index group for expanded activity at the higher education level. Besides the broad public relations work of the university, both beforehand and afterward each training course, it is recommended to create good partnerships between student teachers and students and all concerners. Hence, profiles of schools should be presented to students for helping to make a choice. The above approach is critical as it influences the level of challenges that may be presented to the student teachers and fosters uncalled exclusion. More specifically, if the schools have teachers who are not experienced and are conducive for student teachers to be perceived as competitors, they might receive a negative welcoming to work in such an environment. This assures the need for evaluating specific contributing factors prior to making a decision to settle for a career as a teacher or consider a different field of interest for the student teachers. Notable, there are factors that, although may not be realized at the time, lead to active shortages as they push teachers out of work. As such, teacher trainers, need to consider contributing factors to student teacher experiences during training.

Recommendations

Teaching practice should be distributed throughout the academic year in such a way that it corresponds to the curriculum and does not overlap with students' active preparation for exams. In turn, the lack of unnecessary fuss in the form of double stress allows future teachers to perform the work of a teacher and a university student with high quality and priority. This possibility can be ensured thanks to the educational institutions' coordination and timely scheduled time.

Mentorship is a critical aspect of nurturing future educators. It is critical to target that mentors are more of supportive and approachable people who are willingly able to pass information down to the mentees. Workshops and seminars must be frequently conducted to equip mentors with appropriate guidance and

mentoring skills. The relationship between teacher training institutions and schools should be fostered to make it conducive for the mentors.

School environments should promote a sense of belonging and integration for student teachers. Introduction of student teachers to members of the learning institution and participation in meetings will reduce their alienation. The student teachers should also actively participate in various activities in the schools to enhance their learning experience and integration into the community.

The structure of teacher education programs should be reviewed to make sure that they are sufficiently preparing student teachers for the difficulties they will encounter in the classroom. This might entail introducing practical components that give student teachers teaching experience and opportunities to reflect and grow, among other things. Moreover, such challenges can include high levels of stress due to having to balance university attendance and teach regularly.

It is crucial to improve the communication and collaboration between teacher-training institutes and schools to ensure a friendly and learning environment for student teachers. It is also necessary to establish partnerships and exchange programs to support student teachers' personal and professional development. Educational institutions that follow these recommendations will be able to create a more positive environment for student teachers, ultimately benefiting from their professional growth.

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