

Influence of Teaching Practice on Student Teachers' Educational and Occupational Development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.**Abanyam, Victoria Atah (Ph.D)**

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Corresponding Author: vikkyviktur@gmail.com; abanyamvictoria@unical.edu.ng**Abstract**

This research study investigated the influence of teaching practice on student teachers' educational and occupational development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research hypotheses were formulated to direct the study in line with the purpose of the study. The study adopted survey research design. The study population consisted of all 312 student teachers from the Department of Curriculum and Teaching who served in public secondary schools within Calabar Metropolis during their teaching practice exercise (2023/2024). The study sample comprised 123 student-teacher respondents drawn from the 24 public secondary schools across Calabar Municipal and Calabar South Local Government Areas. A multi-stage sampling approach involving proportionate and accidental sampling techniques was employed to obtain a representative sample from the study population. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire titled "Teaching Practice Influence Assessment Questionnaire (TPIAQ)". The face and content validity were carried out by expert in Department of Curriculum and Teaching and Measurement and Evaluation Department, both in University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was equally established with coefficient ranging from .85-.91 using the Cronbach Alpha reliability approach. The researcher administered the researcher administered the instrument personally to the respondents. For data analysis, simple linear regression was used. The findings indicated a significant relationship among teaching practice experience, student teachers' educational development, and their occupational development while serving in public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that teaching practice programs in Calabar Metropolis be strengthened by the Ministry of Education to provide more structured classroom exposure, adequate supervision, and professional mentoring to enhance student teachers' educational growth and future career readiness.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Student Teachers, Educational, Occupational Development, Calabar Metropoli

Introduction

Teaching practice (TP) is a student's pedagogical practice within a specific timeframe, under the professional guidance of an experienced educator, aimed at improving the student's competencies. Teaching practice can also be referred to as experiential learning under the guidance of a professional in the field of study (Adzongo et al., 2016). Teaching practice is an exercise that enables student-teachers to demonstrate and improve their pedagogical abilities within a similar school setting within a specified period of time (Oyekan, 2018). Student-teachers undergo teaching practice experience, field experience, internship, or practice training as part of their education (Adzongo et al., 2016). It is also common for teaching practice to be mandatory for all student-teachers and for teaching certificates or diplomas to be awarded. It was the initial experience of a student-teacher taking part in actions concerning teaching real-life, practical situations before the emergence of microteaching. This is the chance to teach at a collaborating institution within a more traditional institution, so that the student-teacher can experience the school's educational activities by observing and actively participating in the processes that take place there. Although teaching practice is a mandatory aspect of teacher training, it can be daunting or rather intimidating for aspiring teachers.

It is a mandatory step that an education student should undertake before becoming a teacher. It can also be explained as the use of theoretical knowledge (Adzongo et al., 2016). Adzongo et al. (2016) summarise the teaching practice objectives as follows (a) instilling in the student-teachers the basic skills of teaching and ethics that support teaching-learning process (b) giving the student-teachers an opportunity to internalise the real life experiences of the classroom setting (c) exposing the student-teachers to the dynamic social life system of the school to the interaction with the learners and staff members (d) use physical facilities and participating co-curricular activities (e) discover their strengths and weaknesses in the presentation of lessons and think on possible ways to improve their ability to teach f) inculcating the ability to use instructional materials to explain and illustrate basic concepts and process for greater understanding (g) developing healthy relationships towards the learners, community and members of the teaching profession (h) enhancing the supervisory capacity of the cooperating teachers (i) facilitating exchange of innovative educational ideas between the students-teachers training institutions and the cooperating schools (j) providing an avenue for the student-teachers and their supervisors to translate theory into practical and (k) exposing the weakness in teacher training programmes to the educators for prompt correction and improvement.

The objectives listed aim to enhance the effectiveness of student-teacher learning. Afe (2018) defines effective teaching, also referred to as teaching effectiveness, as a teaching method characterised by intellectual, social, and emotional stability, love for children, enthusiasm for the teaching profession, and the ability to foster admirable attributes in learners. According to Vogt (2014), it can be defined as the ability of education to accommodate students with different skills, align instruction goals, and assess students' effective learning styles. According to Evans (2016), practical teaching is the level of attainment of instructional objectives. It is a net gain in intellectual capacity and competencies, as measured by students' achievements.

Factors that facilitate effective teaching and learning, including teacher, environmental/family, and school variables (Postlethwaite, 2017). Among all these factors, the most significant impact on learning outcomes is reported to be teacher variables, since the teacher is the first to implement the curriculum (Abanyam et al., 2024; Postlethwaite, 2017). One of the most critical teacher variables that promotes students' success to a great extent is teaching effectiveness. Trained student teachers at another school are more competent across a range of areas, including planning, developing lesson notes, implementing teaching methods, using instructional materials, and managing the classroom (Abanyam et al., 2025; Abanyam & Ofem, 2019; Ekpoto & Adie, 2025; Umaha et al., 2025).

Lesson planning is an important factor in enhancing the effectiveness of students and teachers in the educational setting. A lesson plan is a methodically structured plan of teaching strategies, content, and materials that an educator has created to present a lesson and achieve specific goals (Yawe, 2016). Lesson planning plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process. With proper preparation between the student and the teacher, the encounter is bound to be fruitful. Developing engaging lessons takes a lot of

time and effort. As a new teacher, he or she will be committed to the time required to pursue this quest. The carefully planned course becomes useless unless it is delivered through the interesting delivery techniques and practical classroom management strategies (Dunne & Wragg, 2009).

Lesson notes supplement the effectiveness of teaching-by-teaching practices in students. This is because a lesson note provides an overview of what the student-teacher will deliver, prompting students to take notes during or after the lesson (Abanyam et al., 2025; Yawe, 2016). The lesson note is the most detailed part of the lesson preparation. It provides a brief lesson plan that the teacher can go through in a short time. A lesson note serves as a basis for the teacher's and students' activities during a lesson. It is typically developed per course and, in some cases, spans two or more teaching periods (Adzongo et al., 2016). Most teachers in modern secondary schools seldom prepare notes for their students. There are also those teachers who argue that when a teacher knows the subject matter and which pedagogical strategies to use, there is no need to prepare lessons. Although it is vital to comprehend the material of the subject being taught, it is not enough.

A student in teaching practice will likely learn more about the importance and process of writing lesson notes for students at the secondary education level. This can be attributed to their involvement in such activities at school. Students on teaching practice usually receive their specific training in disciplinary aspects. This implies they might be better at applying their knowledge, especially since their supervisors will be judging them. This enhances their intellectual engagement in learning the practical aspects of classroom management, thereby making it easier to evaluate. The above scenario characterises most cases in the study area secondary schools. Thus, the idea of student teaching practice is critical to improving effective teaching and learning. It is in this background that the researcher has established it necessary to study the effects of the teaching practice on the educational and professional growth of student teachers in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Teaching practice in the teaching profession introduces student teachers to real-life classroom experience. It allows them to utilise the theoretical knowledge they have gained during training and to improve their teaching capabilities. By controlling and assessing them, they achieve a better understanding of pedagogical norms and enhance their classroom management. This experience will build professional confidence because people will prepare, implement, and evaluate lessons on the spot. It also encourages introspective reflection, helping children identify their strengths and weaknesses. Relating theory to practice enhances educators' ability to translate theoretical knowledge into practical teaching. This is an evolving process, which forms the core of the present study (Adeyemi, 2020).

Educational development refers to the intellectual and pedagogical growth that student teachers acquire during their practicum through organised teaching. When planning lessons, organising the teaching process, and assessing student progress, they improve their understanding of content dissemination and curriculum implementation. Their contact with learners promotes flexibility, and they tend to adapt their teaching techniques to suit various learning needs. Regular interaction with supervisors is a strong way to help them develop professionally through observation and positive feedback. Such experiences promote reflective and analytical skills that are essential in stimulating further learning and pedagogical enhancement. The educational innovations are an interesting reason to explore their role in the given research (Okoro, 2019).

Occupational development in teacher education encompasses the systematic acquisition of professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, work ethics, and career-relevant attitudes that enable sustained effectiveness and adaptability in the teaching profession. Contemporary researchers view occupational development not merely as skill acquisition but as a continuous process of professional socialization, identity formation, and workplace readiness. Teaching practice serves as a critical experiential learning component through which student teachers are immersed in real school environments, allowing them to translate theoretical knowledge into practical classroom application (Moses, 2021). During teaching practice, student teachers gain first-hand exposure to the core responsibilities, ethical standards, and institutional expectations that define professional teaching. This experiential engagement facilitates the development of essential occupational competencies, including instructional communication, collaborative teamwork with colleagues, classroom leadership, emotional resilience, and the ability to manage diverse

learner needs and classroom dynamics. Such competencies are increasingly emphasized in modern education systems that demand adaptable, reflective, and learner-centred teachers.

Furthermore, teaching practice plays a significant role in shaping professional identity and clarifying career trajectories by enabling student teachers to evaluate their interests, strengths, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Active participation in authentic learning environments also cultivates professional behaviours such as punctuality, accountability, ethical conduct, and adaptability that are highly valued by educational employers in contemporary labour markets. These occupational and professional outcomes underscore the relevance of occupational development as a key analytical lens for examining the effects of teaching practice, and they form the conceptual foundation of the present study (Moses, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, teaching practice is designed as a structured and professionally guided component of teacher education that enables student teachers to effectively translate pedagogical theory into classroom practice. In an ideal situation, student teachers undergoing teaching practice are expected to demonstrate competence in lesson planning and lesson note preparation, classroom management, student discipline, assessment and feedback, instructional delivery, and participation in co-curricular activities. Through adequate supervision, mentoring, and continuous professional support, teaching practice should enhance the academic, professional, and occupational development of student teachers, thereby improve the quality of teaching and learn in secondary schools.

In reality, the situation in public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, appears to fall short of this ideal. Teaching practice has become a subject of growing concern among education stakeholders, including government officials, school administrators, permanent teachers, and teaching practice supervisors. Reports from the field indicate persistent irregularities in the conduct and outcomes of teaching practice, particularly in areas such as lesson planning and preparation of lesson notes, classroom discipline, student attendance, instructional quality, assessment practices, grading, and the provision of constructive feedback. In some schools, student teachers exhibit limited classroom control, weak instructional strategies, and inadequate assessment skills, while in others, positive outcomes are observed, suggesting inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching practice experiences.

These observed variations point to uneven educational and professional development among student teachers, which continue to affect teaching and learning processes in public secondary schools across the Calabar Metropolis. The inconsistencies raise critical concerns about the adequacy of institutional preparation, the quality and regularity of supervision, the level of mentoring and motivation provided, and the extent of practical exposure student teachers receive during teaching practice. Despite teaching practice being a compulsory component of teacher education, it remains unclear why significant disparities persist in the competencies and professional readiness of student teachers.

The gap, therefore, lies in the limited empirical understanding of how teaching practice experiences actually influence the educational and vocational development of student teachers within the context of public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis. Existing observations have not sufficiently explained whether the discrepancies in student teacher performance stem from differences in institutional training, supervisory effectiveness, mentoring support, or practical exposure during teaching practice. Consequently, there is a need for systematic investigation to determine the extent to which teaching practice contributes to the academic growth, professional competence, and occupational readiness of student teachers.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of teaching practice on student teacher education and development in public secondary schools of Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. Specifically, the study addresses the research problem, The question now is does teaching practice experience influence the educational and vocational growth of student teachers in Calabar Metropolis?

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the study was to examine how teaching practice affects student-teachers' educational and professional development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. The study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis.
2. Examine the relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' occupational development in Calabar Metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis.
2. There is no significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' occupational development in Calabar Metropolis.

Method

This study adopted a predictive correlational research design to examine the relationship between teaching practice experience and the educational and occupational development of student teachers in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to determine the extent to which teaching practice experience, treated as the independent variable, could predict variations in student teachers' educational and occupational development, which constituted the dependent variables. By employing this design, the study was able to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables and establish the predictive role of teaching practice in shaping student teacher development outcomes.

The population of the study comprised all 312 student teachers in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching who participated in teaching practice in public secondary schools within Calabar Metropolis, specifically in Calabar Municipal and Calabar South Local Government Areas. From this population, a sample of 123 student teachers, both male and female, was drawn to participate in the study.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. In the first stage, the 24 public secondary schools in which student teachers were posted for teaching practice were identified and grouped according to their respective Local Government Areas. In the second stage, proportionate sampling was used to determine the number of student teachers selected from each school based on the size of student teachers posted there. In the final stage, accidental sampling was applied to select respondents who were readily available and willing to participate at the time of data collection.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Teaching Practice Influence Assessment Questionnaire (TPIAQ). The instrument was designed to measure teaching practice experience and its influence on student teachers' educational and occupational development. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91, which indicated a high level of internal consistency and confirmed the suitability of the instrument for the study. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert-type rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree to capture respondents' perceptions. Data analysis was carried out using simple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance, with appropriate degrees of freedom. This statistical technique was used to determine the predictive relationship between teaching practice experience and the two dependent variables student teachers' educational development and occupational development thereby establishing the extent to which teaching practice experience contributed to variations in these developmental outcomes.

Results

Two hypotheses were stated and tested to address the problem of this study. Each hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed, and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis (N = 123)

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	88.274	1	88.274	12.631	.000b
Residual	840.526	121	6.947		
Total	928.800	122			

The analysis in Table 1 showed that the Adjusted R^2 is 0.074. This implies that 7.4% of the variance in student teachers' educational development could be accounted for by teaching practice experience. Though the percentage contribution is small, a careful look at the table shows that $F(1, 121) = 12.631$, $p < .05$, indicating significance at the .05 level. Also, since p (.000) is less than .05, it indicates a significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis upheld.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' occupational development in Calabar Metropolis. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' occupational development in Calabar Metropolis (N = 123)

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	74.615	1	74.615	15.487*	.000b
Residual	582.109	121	4.811		
Total	656.724	122			

The analysis in Table 2 showed that the Adjusted R^2 is 0.103. This implies that 10.3% of the variance in student teachers' occupational development could be accounted for by teaching practice experience. Though the percentage contribution is small, inspection of the table showed that $F(1, 121) = 15.487$, $p < .05$, indicating a significant effect at the .05 level. Since p (.000) is less than .05, it implies that teaching practice experience is significantly related to student teachers' occupational development in Calabar Metropolis. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis upheld.

Discussions

The result of hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between teaching practice experience and student teachers' educational development in Calabar Metropolis. This significance was confirmed by the regression outcome, which indicated that the model was statistically meaningful at the .05 level. The implication is that the more exposure student teachers receive through teaching practice, the more they develop intellectually and pedagogically. This aligns with Adeyemi (2020), who asserted that teaching practice enhances instructional competence by enabling student teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom situations. Similarly, Boadu (2019) noted that practical engagement during teaching practice improves lesson planning, content mastery, and reflective thinking, thereby strengthening educational development. Thus, the findings reinforce the view that teaching practice serves as a foundational avenue for student teachers to grow academically and professionally within the school environment.

The second hypothesis found a significant correlation between teaching practice experience and the occupational development of student teachers in Calabar Metropolis. The statistical test indicated that the p-value was less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This finding implies that teaching practice plays a significant role in developing key workplace skills, including communication, classroom management, professional confidence, and collaboration. Moses (2021) asserts that the real-world responsibilities that student teachers encounter throughout teaching practice have a strong influence on occupational development, as they are exposed to the ethical, behavioural, and organisational standards of the teaching profession. Similarly, Okoro (2019) noted that supervised teaching experiences could help student teachers make sense of career expectations and develop attitudes that lead to long-term professional integration. These results confirm the hypothesis that the teaching practice is efficacious in improving educational readiness and cementing the occupational preparedness of future teachers in Calabar Metropolis.

Conclusion

This research shows that teaching practice plays an important role in the educational and professional growth of student teachers in Calabar Metropolis. Student teachers, through practical experiences, supervised dynamics and exposure to fundamental classroom dynamics, can gain pedagogical knowledge, practical teaching skills, and professional competencies necessary for their development in the teaching profession. These findings confirm that teaching practice is an important element of teacher education, playing a dual role in developing student teachers' intellectual capital and workplace readiness.

Recommendations

The findings are used to recommend as follows:

1. Teacher education institutions should reinforce the framework in teaching practice by ensuring that student teachers are well mentored, supervised, and given opportunities to engage in reflective learning to maximise educational growth.
2. To support the development of student teachers, school administrators and supervising teachers must create supportive environments in which student teachers are exposed to greater occupational responsibilities, such as record-keeping, classroom management, collaboration, and professional ethics.

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