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THE ADEQUACY OF SUPERVISION DURATION AND THE LEVEL OF HEAD TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT-TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA, **NIGERIA.** 

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# **Abstract**

The study examined the time adequacy and level of involvement of head teachers during teaching practice. The ex-post-facto design was employed for the study. The population of the study was 10,000 student-teachers. The sample for the study was 1,200 student-teachers of the faculty of education, Delta State University, Abraka. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation for research questions at 2.50 cut off point while hypotheses were tested using t-test. Findings revealed that student-teachers perceive the time allotted to the teaching practice supervision and level of head teachers' involvement to be adequate. The study also revealed that significant difference exist between year 3 and 4 student-teachers' perception when time adequacy was considered, the opposite was the case in terms of level of head teachers' involvement. It was recommended among others that beyond adequate allocation of time for the teaching practice exercise, the training universities and faculties should ensure that the time allotted is judiciously utilized by the supervisors, head teachers of the respective schools, should prioritize meaningful engagement of the student teachers in both pre and post teaching conference and considering the core skill areas the student-teacher is expected to acquire necessary practical skills, a strong synergy should exist among the TP stakeholders, etc.

Keywords: supervision, duration adequacy, student-teachers, head teacher, teaching practice

### **Introduction**

Basically, the head teacher in the school is the head of the school. He/she may be regarded as the administrator. At the primary school level, he/she is regarded as the headmaster/headmistress and at the secondary school level, he/she is regarded as the principal. In this paper, for convenience, the term head teacher was adopted. The head teacher as the school administrator is saddled with the responsibility of managing the school as well as ensuring that everything is working perfectly on a day-to-day basis and as the head of the school, the head teacher is regarded as the head of instructional supervision both at the primary and secondary school levels (Efayena, 2024). Usually, the head teacher is assisted by two assistants. The teaching practice exercise is designed to aid the student-teacher demonstrates as well as exhibit the knowledge and theoretical principles he/she has learnt, it is also a learning process in actual teaching situation. It affords the student-teacher the opportunity of being helped by an experienced teacher, in this case the head teacher who is the head of instructional supervision in the school. The teacher training institution assigns lecturers as supervisors, whose duty is to visit the student-teacher for the purposes of helping the student-teacher to further concertize teaching theories, principles and skills acquired, and assess the student-teacher's performance.

It seems that the quality of supervision offered student-teachers by the training institution supervisors and host school is not adequate as the time the supervisor spends with the student-teacher is rather insufficient (Ogonor & Badmus, 2006). This inadequacy has resulted in the production of non-competent professional teachers. Komba and Kira (2013) reported in their study that majority of student-teachers indicated that their teaching practice was ineffective and did not benefit them due to time duration, supervisor brevity and school head tendencies. Supervisors inflexible nature in guiding, advising, discussing with student-teachers on the strength and weaknesses revealed during the teaching practice also affected the quality of the exercise in general. This failure no doubt is traceable to the insufficient time the supervisors have at their disposal.

Research has shown that the time allocated to teaching practice is often inadequate, leading to a lack of opportunity for student teachers to practice their teaching skills. Studies have also revealed that the time allocated to teaching practice is often insufficient for student teachers to receive adequate feedback and support from their supervisors (Adeniji, 2020). Several challenges confront student teachers during their teaching practice, including inadequate support from head teachers and supervisors, limited time allocated to teaching practice, and inadequate resources and facilities (Alade & Olorunsola, 2022 and Achu, 2022). The passive role played by head teachers and the insufficient time during the teaching practice exercise are critical factors impending a comprehensive actualization of the goal of the teaching practice programme.

Dawit and Ikali (2018) reported in their study that the teaching practice programme is practiced in a short time span with difficulties in materializing the proposed budget (goal), thus vitiating its quality. Bechuke, et al (2013) reported among other things that mentors (supervisors and head teachers) are not sufficiently involved in the exercise. They also noted that among other things, that experimental practice teaching requires a more prolong stay in a school so that the student-teacher can put into practice the methods learned. Based on the findings of their study,

Ojo and Afolabi (2022) recommended that university assessor's (teaching practice supervisors) should give more time attention to pre - service trainees. This indicates that the time allotted to the teaching practice programme is inadequate across board. Observation has shown that there is need to rethink the teaching practice supervision process especially in relation to time, the supervisor, as well as the role of head teacher.

As noted earlier, the active involvement of the head teacher as a key stakeholder in the teaching practice exercise has not been given adequate attention. According to Akinyemi and Oyedeji (2022), studies have shown that student teachers perceive head teachers' involvement in teaching practice as essential for their professional growth and development. However, their research findings revealed that head teachers' involvement is often limited to administrative tasks, rather than providing pedagogical support to student teachers. A lot depends on the head teacher for the teaching practice programme as they are the ones that have a close access as well as ample time with the student-teacher. Since the core objective of the teaching practice exercise is to concretize the core principles, methods, skills and values of teaching into the student-teacher, rather than mere assessment for grading, the collaboration between the training institution and the practice institution becomes imperative. The head teacher must extend even more of his core functions of ensuring teachers' compliance, providing leadership, ensuring quality and standards and motivating teachers to assist the student-teacher under the purview of his or her headship (Bush & Glover, 2014). Ndambakuwa and Mlambo (2017) observed that principals (head teachers) are understood to be critical actors in improving teaching and learning conditions in schools. Umenwe (2022) opined that one of the most critical responsibilities of the school head is to be instructional leader, this responsibility covers most of his time, and as such must take it seriously.

According to Agiazor (2017), the teaching practice exercise is the culminating point where the relationship among three major players: universities supervisors, head teacher and aspiring teacher interface to determine the quality of experience the aspiring teacher will take away from the exercise. It is pertinent to note that the head teacher can assign the student-teacher to an experience teacher with reference to subject specialty and experience. Howbeit the delegation, the head teacher must oversee the entire process as he takes responsibility for the success or failure. The level of commitment exhibited by head teachers towards student teachers during their teaching practice plays a significant role in the professional development and success of these novice educators. Agbor & Okonkwo (2020) study found that most head teachers are lacking in term of quality support for student-teachers.. A critical aspect influencing the commitment of head teachers is their perception of the role student teachers play in contributing to the school environment. Eze (2021) found that head teachers who recognized the potential impact of student teachers on their schools were more likely to exhibit strong commitment by providing mentorship and support. This commitment includes facilitating an environment conducive to learning, offering constructive feedback, and encouraging collaboration with experienced teachers (Okeke & Ihuoma, 2020). Furthermore, head teachers' own professional development and training influence their commitment levels.

Abubakar & Abubakar (2021) noted that head teachers who participated in leadership and management training programs were more adept at supporting student teachers, as they understood the

intricacies of educational mentoring. This understanding allowed them to create a supportive atmosphere where student teachers could thrive. Despite the positive contributions of committed head teachers, there are challenges that hinder effective student teaching practice in Nigeria. Many student teachers often report feeling isolated and under-supported during their teaching practice (Ogunyemi & Adesoji, 2019). Lack of regular check-ins by head teachers, limited resources, and insufficient communication contribute to these feelings of isolation. Moreover, studies by Olaniyan (2022) indicate that the socio-economic status of the schools, including funding and resources available, can affect the level of commitment shown by head teachers. In schools with limited resources, head teachers may struggle to allocate time and support to student teachers adequately.

The adequacy of allocated time for teaching practice supervisors is crucial for the effective supervision and evaluation of student teachers during their practice. Research indicates that time assigned for teaching practice supervisors is not enough to meet the needs of student teachers adequately. According to Nnaji et al. (2021), supervisors usually face multiple challenges that lead to a misalignment between their intended supervisory strategies and actual engagement with student teachers. Many supervisors are overburdened with administrative duties, which detract from their ability to allocate adequate time for successful mentoring and supervision (Ojo & Afolabi, 2020). Okwuosa (2022) conducted a study that indicate that the average allocation of a supervisor's time per student teacher in many cases falls short of what is expected for worthwhile engagement. Student teachers reported inadequate observations and feedback sessions, which are crucial for their professional advancement (Adeyemi, 2019). The lack of adequate time for supervisors to conduct regular assessments and feedback has significant impact on the development of teaching skills among student teachers.

The inadequacies in time allocation have direct implication for the readiness of student teachers to join the profession. A study by Akinyemi and Ogunyemi (2020) discovered that when supervisors cannot spend sufficient time with student teachers, it affects the quality of feedback they receive, leading to a diminished comprehension of teaching methodologies and classroom management skills. This lack of structured learning experiences can result in lasting cycles of inadequate teacher preparation. Also, the emotional support that student teachers require during their practice is often not met due to limited supervisor presence. As noted by Umenwa (2022), emotional connection and constant feedback are quintessential in mentoring relationships, influencing student teachers' confidence and motivation. The adequacy of time allocated by facilities and teaching practice supervisors is a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of teacher training programs in Nigeria. Improved time management strategies and a greater focus on scheduling could enhance the quality of supervision and, ultimately, the efficacy of future educators.

# **Statement of the Problem**

Teaching practice aims at affording the student-teacher the opportunity to experiment acquired theoretical knowledge, principles and skills under the guidance of a supervisor from the training institution. The supervisor is to guide and assist the student-teacher through the broad core areas skills the student-teacher is expected to show how much of the theoretical knowledge, principles and skills he/she is able to bring to the fore in practical teaching terms. The broad and complex nature of the

core areas of skills the student-teacher is expected to make reasonable improvement demands that both the student-teacher and supervisor should have sufficient time of engagement in order to achieve predetermined goal and objectives of the teaching practice programme. However, the time available to both the studentteacher and supervisor to engage in meaningful supervision is rather grossly inadequate. The school head who invariably is the head of instructional supervision, and by implication, the one who ought to be responsible for guiding and assisting the studentteacher deployed to his/her school seems either to shy away from it or does not even know that he's to guide and assist the studentteacher on instructional matters. For most head teachers, the student-teacher is only in the school for the purposes of grading and nothing more. The seemingly inadequate time expended during the teaching practice exercise and the attitude of the head teacher seems to impede the actualization of the goals and objectives of the teaching practice programme. It is to this end that this study investigated the perception of student-teachers on the role of time and school head teachers in the overall success or the otherwise of the teaching practice programme.

#### **Research Questions**

To clearly articulate the direction of the study, the following research questions were raised.

- 1. Is the time allotted for the teaching practice sufficient?
- 2. What is the role of the head teacher during teaching practice in the secondary school?
- 3. What is the difference between year three (3) and year four (4) student-teachers' perception on the quality of time spent during the supervisor's visit?
- 4. What is the difference between year three (3) and year four (4) student-teachers' perception on the level of involvement of the head teacher during teaching practice exercise?

#### Hypotheses

The below hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study.

- 1. Significant difference does not exist between year three (3) and year four (4) student-teachers' perception when time was considered during teaching practice exercise.
- 2. Significant difference does not exist between year three (3) and year four (4) student-teachers' perception when the involvement of the head teacher during teaching practice exercise is considered.

# Methodology

The ex-post-facto design of the descriptive survey method was employed for the study. The population of the study was 10, 000 year 3 and 4 students of the faculty of education, Delta State University, Abraka who have at least experience teaching practice once, from which a sample of 1,200 respondents were selected using the purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using a self developed questionnaire based on the core skills assessment areas in the Delta State University Faculty of Education Teaching Practice Assessment Form. The questionnaire was tagged ' Student-teachers' Perception of the Adequacy of Time and Head Teacher Involvement during Teaching Practice Questionnaire (SPRATHTITPQ)'. The instrument was subdivided into sections A & B, section A elicited information on demographic variables while B focused on items on the teaching practice assessment form. Four point rating scales of Strongly Agree (SA 4), Agree (A 3), Disagree (D 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD 1) was used by respondents in rating their opinions unbiasedly. Face and content validity were used in validating the instrument which was further subject to a reliability test using 30 respondents excluded from the main study. Test re-test reliability test was adopted and the scores were computed using Cronbach's Alpha Statistics which yielded .84 coefficients indicating a high reliability index. Data obtained were analyzed with descriptive statistics of mean ratings and

standard deviation in providing answer to research questions at 2.50 benchmark while inferential statistics of t - test in testing hypotheses adopting 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

**Research Question 1**: How do student teachers perceive the adequacy of time allotted to teaching practice?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on How Student Teachers Perceive the Adequacy of Time Allotted to Teaching Practice.

S/N	TIME: During the teaching practice exercise;	X	SD	Decision
1	TP supervisor spent quality time with student teacher	3.40	0.69	Agreed
2	TP supervisor spent quality time going through student teacher lesson note making corrections	3.13	0.71	Agreed
3	Supervisor allowed student teacher adequate time to introduce lesson	3.23	0.71	Agreed
4	I had enough time to develop the lesson	3.15	0.71	Agreed
5	I had adequate time to exhibit knowledge of subject matter	3.23	0.75	Agreed
6	Time was adequate to actively involve learners	3.04	0.82	Agreed
7	Student teacher had time to effectively use instructional aids	3.14	0.72	Agreed
8	Time was enough to vary teaching methods	3.39	0.65	Agreed
9	There was sufficient time to sustain learners' interest	2.94	0.64	Agreed
10	Time was adequate to learners in interactive class	3.31	0.81	Agreed
11	Time was sufficient to check previous assignment	2.95	0.80	Agreed
12	There was time to give class work	3.02	1.00	Agreed
13	There was time to assign learners take home work	2.38	1.03	Agreed
14	Supervisor spent time to brief student teacher before going to class to teach	2.43	1.03	Disagreed
15	At the end of teaching supervisor had time to talk to student teacher on area of strengths and weaknesses	2.54	0.90	Agreed
16	The amount of time dedicated to each student teacher by supervisor was sufficient	2.48	1.00	Disagreed
17	The twice visits by supervisors during the 6 weeks exercise was adequate	3.07	0.85	Agreed
18	The 6 weeks period for the TP exercise was sufficient	2.65	1.07	Agreed
	Grand mean	2.95	0.83	Agreed

The result in table 1, shows that item 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,15,17 and 18 had mean range of 2.54 - 3.40 and a grand mean of 2.94 which was above the cut off mark of 2.50 as agreed. This implies student teachers perceived the adequacy of time allotted to teaching practice. While items 13, 14 and 16 with mean range of 2.38 - 2.48 as disagreed.

**Research Question 2**: What is the level of head teachers' involvement during teaching practice?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the level of head teach involvement during teaching practice.

S/N	TIME: During the teaching practice exercise;	X	SD	Decision
1	TP supervisor spent quality time with student teacher	3.16	0.87	High
2	TP supervisor spent quality time going through student teacher lesson note making corrections	2.96	0.79	High
3	Supervisor allowed student teacher adequate time to introduce lesson	3.29	0.71	High
4	I had enough time to develop the lesson	3.08	0.75	High
5	I had adequate time to exhibit knowledge of subject matter	3.22	0.67	High
6	Time was adequate to actively involve learners	3.25	0.76	High
7	Student teacher had time to effectively use instructional aids	2.90	0.78	High
8	Time was enough to vary teaching methods	3.33	0.76	High

9	There was sufficient time to sustain learners' interest	2.73	0.85	High
10	Time was adequate to learners in interactive class	2.84	0.95	High
11	Time was sufficient to check previous assignment	2.90	0.94	High
12	There was time to give class work	2.87	0.94	High
13	There was time to assign learners take home work	2.95	0.81	High
14	Supervisor spent time to brief student teacher before going to class to teach	3.05	0.99	High
15	At the end of teaching supervisor had time to talk to student teacher on area of strengths and weaknesses	2.87	0.96	High
16	The amount of time dedicated to each student teacher by supervisor was sufficient	2.89	0.72	High
17	The twice visits by supervisors during the 6 weeks exercise was adequate	3.18	0.91	High
18	The 6 weeks period for the TP exercise was sufficient	2.95	0.91	High
	Grand Mean	3.02	0.84	

Table 2, shows that items 1-18 had a mean range of 2.73 - 3.33 and a grand mean of 3.02 which was above the 2.50 cut off mark. This revealed that head teacher had level of involvement during teaching practice.

**Research Question 3**: What is the difference between year 3 and year 4 Student-teachers perception of the adequacy of time spent during teaching practice exercise?

Table 3: Mean Difference between Year 3 and year 4 Student-teachers Perception of the Adequacy of Time Spent during Teaching Practice Exercise.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Year 3 Student-teachers	387	52.86	3.97	0.90
Year 4 Student-teachers	813	53.76	4.14	

Table 3, shows that 0.90 is the mean difference between year 3 and year 4 student-teachers perception of the quality of time spent during the teaching practice exercise.

**Research Question 4**: What is the difference between year 3 and year 4 Student-teachers perception of the level of head teachers involvement during teaching practice exercise?

Table 4: Mean Difference between Year 3 and year 4 Student-teachers Perception of the level of head teacher involvement during Teaching Practice Exercise.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Year 3 Student-teachers	387	54.27	4.47	0.18
Year 4 Student-teachers	813	54.45	4.68	

Table 4, indicates that 0.18 is the mean difference between year 3 and year 4 student-teachers perceptions of the level of head teacher involvement during teaching practice exercise.

**Hypothesis 1**: Significant difference does not exist between year 3 and year 4 student-teachers perceptions when time adequacy was considered during teaching practice exercise.

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis of year 3 and year 4 student-teachers perceptions when time adequacy was considered during teaching practice exercise.

Variables		Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig.	Decision
Year 3 Student-teachers		52.86	3.97	1198	-3.573	0.00	Rejected
Year 4 Student-teachers		53.76	4.14				

Table 5 shows the t-value os -3.573 and a p-value of 0.00. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.00 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies bthat significant difference does exist between year 3 and year 4student-teachers perceptions when time adequacy was considered during teaching practice exercise.

**Hypothesis 2**: Significant difference does not exist between year 3 and year 4 student-teachers perceptions when the level of head teacher involvement was considered during teaching practice exercise.

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis of year 3 and year 4 student-teachers' perceptions when the level of head teacher involvement was considered during teaching practice exercise.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig.	Decision
Year 3 Student-teachers	387	52.27	4.46	1196	- 0.634	0.526	Accepted
Year 4 Student-teachers	813	54.45	4.68				

Table 6 shows the t- value of -0.634 and a p- value of 0.526. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.526 was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that significant difference does exist between year 3 and year 4 student-teachers' perception when the level of head teacher involvement was considered during teaching practice exercise.

#### **Discussion of Results**

Findings reveals that student teachers of the Faculty of Education Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria perceive that the time allotted the teaching practice exercise is adequate. Thus, they are of the opinion that training institution supervisors gave adequate time to checking and correcting of student-teacher' lesson notes, supervisors allowed student-teachers adequate time to introduce the lesson, develop the lesson, exhibit knowledge of subject matter, involve learners, provide and make use of teaching aids, vary teaching methods, sustain learners' interest, engage learners interactively, check previous assignment and give class work. This finding is at variance with the findings of Ojo and Afolabi, (2020) and Okwuosa (2022) who conducted a study that indicate that the average allocation of a supervisor's time per student teacher in many cases falls short of what is expected for worthwhile engagement and that many supervisors are overburdened with administrative duties, which detracts from their ability to allocate adequate time for successful mentoring of student teachers. However, on whether the supervisors had time to brief the studentteacher before going to the class to teach, allowed time time for giving assignment to learners and amount dedicated to each student teacher, this findings aligns with Ojo and Afolabi (2020), Adevemi (2019), Sotco and Ernest (2013), Adeniji (2020), and Dawit and Ikali (2018) who reported in their study that the teaching practice programme is practiced in a short time span with difficulties in materializing the proposed budget (goal), thus vitiating its quality. Also indicated is that that significant difference does exist between year 3 and year 4student-teachers perceptions when time adequacy was considered during teaching practice exercise. This difference can be deduced to the fact that year 4 student teachers previous teaching practice experience.

Findings also show that the level of head teachers' involvement in the form of support giving to student-teachers is high. This implies that the head teachers or the experienced teachers to whom the student-teachers are assigned mentor and monitor as well as assist student-teachers in the course of lesson preparation, development, content transfer, provision and usage of teaching aids, choice of appropriate teaching techniques, lesson and learners evaluation, classroom management, solicit learners' cooperation for studentteachers, and the level of general welfare offered student teachers is high. This finding is in dissonance with Alade and Olorunsola (2022) who found that some of challenges confronting student teachers during their teaching practice, including inadequate support from head teachers and supervisors, limited time allocated to teaching practice. This finding is inconsistent with Akinyemi and Oyedeji (2022) whose studies have shown that student teachers perceive head teachers' involvement in teaching practice as essential for their professional growth and development. However, their research findings revealed that head teachers' involvement is often limited to administrative tasks, rather than providing pedagogical support to student teachers.

Many student teachers often report feeling isolated and undersupported during their teaching practice (Ogunyemi & Adesoji, 2019). Lack of regular check-ins by head teachers, limited resources, and insufficient communication contribute to these feelings of isolation. Moreover, studies by Olaniyan (2022) indicate that the socio-economic status of the schools, including funding and resources available, can affect the level of commitment shown by head teachers. In schools with limited resources, head teachers may struggle to allocate time and support to student teachers adequately. It also aligns with Olaniyan (2022) and Ogunyemi and Adesoji (2019) who discovered that many student teachers often report feeling isolated and under-supported during their teaching practice resulting from lack of regular checkins by head teachers and insufficient communication contribute to these feelings of isolation. Moreover, Agbor and Okonkwo (2020) study indicate that the socio-economic status of the schools, including funding and resources available, can affect the level of commitment shown by head teachers. In schools with limited resources, head teachers may struggle to allocate time and support to student teachers adequately. It was moreover revealed that both year 3 and 4 student-teachers hold the the same level of opinion that on the level of head teachers' involvement during teaching practice; indicating significant difference does not exist in their rating of the degree to which school heads offered student-teachers support in the course of the exercise under their purview.

### **Conclusion**

The place of not just adequate time allocation but as well adequate utilization of such time is central to the achievement of the goal teaching practice programme. This is so because the teacher intraining undergoing teaching practice exercise will need sufficient time to master the demonstration of theories, principles, knowledge, skills and techniques. Also, both the supervisors and the head teachers need adequate time to mentor and monitor the student teachers. Whereas, the findings indicate that the supervisors spend adequate time and the head teachers involvement is high in the course mentoring or monitoring the student teachers, the poor quality of teachers shun out of universities faculty of education, calls for rethinking the teaching practice process and programme.

# Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the below are recommended.

1. Beyond adequate allocation for the teaching practice exercise, the training universities and faculties should

- ensure that the time allotted is judiciously utilized by the supervisors.
- The head teachers of the respective schools who host the teaching practice exercise should go beyond mere briefing or orientation of the student-teachers to meaningful engagement of the student teachers in both pre and post teaching conference.
- 3. the training institution and faculty should ensure a strong synergy among the teaching practice stakeholders.
- 4. Considering the core skill areas the student-teacher is expected to acquire necessary practical skills, a minimum of one term (semester) should be dedicated to the teaching practice programme at year 3 and 4.

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