Students-Teachers' Professional Development during Teaching Practice in Tanzania: Experience from the Host Institutions

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the opportunities and challenges experienced by student-teachers during their Teaching Practice (TP) in various host institutions in Tanzania. A mixed research approach with cross-sectional survey was employed in this study. The study was carried out in Dar es Salaam, Mbeya and Morogoro regions in Tanzania. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interview. The study involved 245 participants, whereby 230 were the student-teachers, 10 heads of secondary schools, 3 primary school head teachers and 2 principals from teachers' training colleges. The findings indicate that student-teachers received positive mentorship from host institutions through orientation on different matters before getting the direct classroom exposure. It was also found that student-teachers had a collaborative working relationship with the host institutions. Findings indicate further that student-teachers were involved in both administrative and academic activities. However, there were some challenges that faced them such as limited teaching and learning facilities, limited exposure to the use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) as a pedagogical tool, and the overall limited infrastructural support for their stay in various host institutions. It was also found that in some institutions, student–teachers were not trusted to handle the administrative activities. It is recommended in this study that there is a need for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and educational stakeholders to collaborate with schools for the creation of a conducive learning environment for student-teachers.

Keywords: teaching practice, teachers' preparation, student-teachers, classroom assessment

1. Introduction

Education is considered as the main gateway towards community modernisation, multi-sectoral development and competitive economy (Brown & Lauder, 2006), Thus, preparing a teacher who can groom the future generation that can improve the nations; economies and well-being has been a focus of many countries. See for example, Kafyulilo (2014), Mondal and Roy (2013), Namamba and Rao (2017) and Mgaiwa (2018). Researchers in teachers' professional development have stressed that the effectiveness of the teacher depends on the level of academic qualifications and pedagogical skills acquired (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008; Mosha, 2004; Rogan, 2004). Teachers' pedagogical skills are mostly acquired during teachers' preparation programmes which involve Teaching Practice (TP) placement in the host institutions (Namamba & Rao, 2017). Indeed, teaching practice is among the opportunities for student-teachers to experience real teaching expertise in the development of teaching profession (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). According to Tuli and File (2009), teaching practice allows student-teachers to discover their abilities and creativity that can help them in their future teaching profession.

TP is an independent core course for student-teachers. It is based on real exposure to practice the theoretical knowledge that they acquire in the classroom at the university (Tillema, Smith & Leshem, 2011). TP is an integral part of preparing the student-teachers for actual teaching through effective pragmatic training after their undergraduate studies. Jekayinfa (2000) considers TP as one of the components used for the assessment of student-teachers while nurturing and assisting them to acquire more knowledge, skills, and values of the teaching profession. It is generally the experience to enable the student-teachers engage themselves and develop proper skills required for their success in the teaching profession (Gujjar, 2009). Thus, teachers' preparatory programmes are a cyclic affair that includes the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge and skills

(Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

Practicum experience is one of the core and central elements of Teacher Education Programmes (TEPs) geared to enable student-teachers to learn about teaching skills, strategies, and classroom practices (Komba & Kira, 2013; Ndibalema & Kambona, 2018; Perry, 2004; Quick & Sieborger, 2005). Previous studies, however, tend to focus on classroom practices related to teachers' instructional approaches and their associated challenges. As such, the practical part that student-teachers get in TP remains unpublished. This denies the universities and colleges the opportunities to get immediate feedback on their products and how to improve the preparation of teachers. This study intended to investigate the student-teachers' experience and professional development during TP in Tanzania. The key research question was: What kind of practical exposure and experience do student-teachers get in the host institutions for their fieldwork activities during their TP in Tanzania? This study concentrated on Tanzania Mainland and it did not involve all cities and regions although student-teachers were also allocated in those remaining cities and regions.

2. Rationales of TP to HEIs' Student-teachers

Teaching practice aims at enabling prospective teachers to connect theoretical knowledge and practical field experiences (Maphosa, Shumba, & Shumba, 2007). While theoretical part is offered to the student-teachers on campuses, TP is carried out during practical skills development that has to be undertaken in schools and colleges. In the preparation process of the student-teachers to become professionals, most universities and colleges of education merge the theoretical and practical courses to develop teachers who can adhere to the teaching professional ethics and moral standing (Hargraves, 2006). Lekule (2017) urges the universities that prepare teachers to collaborate with host institutions in mentoring, modelling, and polishing the prospective teachers.

TP equips the student-teachers with all the necessary knowledge and skills that are essential for their effective teaching. Among other necessary knowledge and skills for them are: how to manage the classrooms, school administration, and other extra-curricular activities. It is during TP, when student-teachers are expected to learn from the subject teachers and colleagues, and other experienced teachers who act as mentors in their host institutions. This is the underlying reason as to why HEIs have been preparing professional teachers by integrating practical orientation in additional to theoretical knowledge they receive in their universities and colleges (Brouwer, 1989). Additional practical knowledge to pedagogical content does not only make a student-teacher get prepared for the future teaching profession but also it makes him/her fully equipped individual by defining actions of the teaching profession (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

This being the case, enhancing teaching practice is a key determinant for the prospective quality of student-teachers who are generally prepared to integrate knowledge and skills acquired in their teaching profession. Ndibalema and Kambona (2018) in their study in Tanzania revealed a significant contribution of TP to student-teachers' professional knowledge and skills although with some associated challenges such as limited mentorship and orientation, limited skills to handle students with special needs, and limited pedagogical approaches. It can, thus, be conceived that the nature and support provided by host institutions predict the outcome of the student-teachers' competences. The study by Komba, Ernest and Kira (2013) in Tanzania, however, observed that student-teachers were not properly supervised and they received limited guidance and advice regarding the areas to improve in the practical aspects during their stay in their host institutions. Smith and LevAri (2005) recommend that if teachers are to be well prepared, then, there is a need to consider the five most important functions for TP. These include: first, development of student-teachers' behaviours and practices in the teaching. Second, orienting them to thorough understanding of the context of the school they will be engaged with. Third, recognising students' learning needs. Fourth, ensuring that the practical training of which the students are exposed to, plays a key role in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Lastly, there is a need to develop their professional and personal competencies. What kind of professional experiences do students-teachers get from the host institutions during TP in Tanzania? This question was central to be answered in this study.

3. Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, the path of becoming professional teachers involves both theoretical training and practical aspects for student-teachers. In the process of coaching and grooming them, different stages and experts are involved. In the classroom teachings, student-teachers are taught on the content and pedagogical knowledge to enable them to become qualified and professional teachers and offer a service in the community they serve (Neaves, 1987). There are two models of teaching and learning that are relevant for training student-teachers in HEIs. These are Biggs's Presage-Process-Product Model of 1996, the Vygotsky-Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding of 1978. Ideally, Biggs' 3P model was developed to express the interactions between lecturers and

students based on the opinions of the expectations that would regard both the teaching and learning process as a coaching and mentoring relationship (Kamarudin, Darmi & Saad, 2020).

The model contains three stages in the time at which learning-related factors are placed. The first stage is the presage stage, which occurs before learning takes place; during the learning process and finally, the product or outcome of the learning itself. The mentees represent the student-teachers while the TP host teachers and administrative staff members represent the mentors. Thus, the presage stage describes the prior knowledge, abilities, and skills of the student-teachers to learn new knowledge and skills during the TP. These prior knowledge and skills are important to help the student-teachers learn better the practical professional skills when in the TP institutions. It is so, because, effective learning is usually influenced by prior experiences (Diaz, 2017; Ramsden, 2003). In this case, what and how the student-teachers learn during the classroom lessons is vital in determining their effective professional learning when in the TP field.

The second stage is the process that takes place during the learning experience in the TP host institutions. This stage represents the ways through which mentors interact, scaffold, and nurture the professional development processes in the student-teachers. This includes learning the overall characteristics of the host institutions, teachers and administrators by which they handle the tasks, behave, provide guidance and support to the student-teachers and scaffold the use of teaching and learning facilities such as ICT equipment, decision making, how to hold the duties and all other activities related to the contexts of the TP in their host institutions. Thus, the process stage contains: coaching, mentoring, supporting, assisting, and facilitating activities provided by the TP host institutions, teachers and administrators to student-teachers. These are very important in the provision of a good opportunity for effective reflection of student-teachers' professionalism during the TP period.

The third and final stage is the product stage that describes the behavioural changes demonstrated by the student-teachers from their learning based on TP experience. This includes both the cognitive expertise that shapes their professional command and the behavioural ethics and codes of conduct learned from the TP institutions. In short, 3Ps model describes a collaborative teaching and learning relationship for promoting learning by practices and thus it is more likely to be relevant in the context of TP where learning tends to be more practical than being theoretical.

Vygotsky also describes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as the distance between what the student can achieve individually and what he/she is capable of accomplishing with more expert assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). A ZPD plays a significant contribution to the field of education, since teaching and learning occur when there is a help that is offered at points in the ZPD, at which the performance is required (Kamarudin *et al.*, 2020). According to Mercer and Fisher (1993), the primary goal of scaffolding in teaching is to be the transfer of the tasks that is the responsibility of the students. Scaffolding is considered to be the link that occurs through the collaboration between the teacher and learner in constructing the knowledge and skills. The logic of scaffolding hinges on the ability of students to complete the learning tasks in their own after they have mastered the specific aspect with the help of their teachers, experts, or professionals (Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, teaching and learning consist of the assistance of the teachers to the learners and at the same time appreciating the practical performance of the learners.

4. Methodological Issues

4.1 Research Approach and Design

This study employed a mixed research approach with a cross-section survey. Creswell (2003) argues that a mixed research method approach involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study. Moreover, Mckim (2017) states that using a qualitative and quantitative approach provides balanced perspectives on the research problem and reduces the possibility of biases and weaknesses that may arise due to the use of a single approach. However, balancing between the two approaches has been the most challenging for the mixed research approach. It is also time consuming especially when one has many research objectives. It was thus, important to have limited objectives and to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative data were presented.

4.2 The Study Area

This study was carried out in Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, and Morogoro regions in Tanzania. These regions were selected because they were among the regions that had many students for the TP. Dar es Salaam was also selected as the study area because it contains many education institutions including primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. Morogoro and Mbeya regions depicted urban and rural characteristics of various host institutions capturing different opinions of student-teachers allocated in different institutions.

4.3 Population, Sampling, and Sample Size

This study employed purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select 66 TP host institutions, 10 heads of secondary schools and 2 principals of colleges and 3 head teachers from primary schools. Simple random technique was used to get 230 student–teachers who were working in various host institutions. A total population of 245 was drawn from private and public education institutions in three regions as mentioned earlier. Specifically, a sample included 230 student-teachers in primary schools, secondary schools and teachers' colleges, 3 head teachers from primary schools, 10 head of secondary schools and 2 principal of teachers' colleges. As stated by Taherdoos (2018), simple random techniques can be used to sample participants/respondents with similar characteristics. Babie (2004) also states that a sample size of at least 100 is appropriate for analysis and reporting purposes. Similarly, Creswell (2012) argues that the larger the sample the more accurate is the results.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

4.4.1 Semi-Structured Questionnaires

This study employed the semi-structured questionnaires in data collection. Semi-structured questionnaires are said to be relevant when one wants to collect huge both quantitative and qualitative data within a short time (Hargreaves and Seale, 1981). Thus, it was possible to collect quantitative and qualitative data from various host institutions by using Likert scales and open-ended questionnaires. Questionnaires, however, have the weakness of yielding a low return rate especially when they are mailed. To overcome this problem, they were administered in person, and thus the return rate was higher as 230 (95%) of the distributed 242 questionnaires were corrected.

4.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The study also employed semi-structured interviews to capture the perceptions of the head of host institutions regarding their experience of student-teachers during their stay in their host institutions. A face-to-face interview was conducted with 14 heads of institutions from the selected institutions and regions. The aim was to understand the extent to which each head of the host institution perceived the professional conduct of student-teachers during their teaching practice. Interviews, are however, time consuming and sometimes the interviewees tend to go astray and it is not a good method for the sensitive issues. I was important; therefore, to moderate the questions to ensure that the interviews were on the track and the issue under investigation was not sensitive.

4.5 Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

Data analysis was carried out by transcribing them first and coding the information from the questionnaires and interviews. It was important to identify the similarities and assemble them using tables. During data presentation, data from semi-structured questionnaires were presented first by using the tables and supported by voices from the semi-structured questionnaires and interviews based on their relevance to the issue at hand. The study maintained anonymity by not using any personal identifiers or names to ensure that the host institutions and participants were free to give their frank views and opinions. Early familiarity with the participants was done to clarify the purpose of the study before the actual data collection as recommended by Shenton (2004). This was done to improve credibility. Semi-structured questionnaires were labelled using the Roman numbers and schools were labelled using the counting numbers.

5. Findings

5.1 Student-Teachers Distribution in their TP Host Institutions

This study sought to assess how the student-teachers were distributed in different TP host institutions. The findings indicated that student-teachers were allocated based on their nature and diversity of their teaching subjects such as Natural Sciences, Arts and Business subjects and they were allocated in primary, secondary, and teachers' colleges (TCs) in both public and private educational institutions. The findings indicated that the fresher from school students were the leading (80%) in the TP followed by those who had experience of teaching at the secondary schools for about 79 percent (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic Information of the Respondents (N=230)

Variables	District/participant characteristics	N	%
Regions of study	Dar es Salaam	124	54
	Mbeya	42	18
	Morogoro	64	28
	Total	**230**	**100**
Districts of study	Temeke	50	21.8
	Kinondoni	74	32
	Ilala	1	0.4
	Moro Municipal	64	27.9
	Mbeya City	41	17.9
	Total	**230**	**100**
Teaching subjects	Art teaching subjects	142	61.7
	Science teaching subjects	83	36.1
	Business related subjects	5	2.2
	Total	**230**	**100**
Year of Study	First year	126	54.8
	Second year	104	45.2
	Total	**230**	**100**
Programme registered for	Diploma	13	5.7
	Bachelor degree	167	72.6
	Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	50	21.7
	Total	**230**	**100**
Professional experience	Fresher Student-teachers	184	80.0
	In-service student-teachers	46	20.0
	Total	**230**	**100**
The type of TP station	Primary school	7	3.0
	Secondary school	181	78.7
	Teacher College	42	18.3
	Total	**230**	**100**

Source: Field data (2018)

5.2 Student-Teachers' Experiences at the Host Institutions

Student-teachers were subjected to different questions that sought to explore issues related to their orientations on teaching responsibilities focusing on the ways of preparing lessons, guidance from the host institutions as well as participation in the decision-making when they were in the teaching institutions. These questions were related to orientation, collaborative lesson preparation, administrative duties, student-teachers involvement in decision-making and involvement of student-teachers in other activities as follows:

5.2.1 Student-Teachers' Orientations

Data revealed that most of the student-teachers had received orientation on different matters regarding their stay in their teaching host institutions. For example, the data indicate that over 80 per cent of all the respondents agreed that they had received orientations from the host institutions and only 12 (5.3%) and 6 (2.6%) of all the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they had not receive orientation before the actual engagement in teaching duties (Table 2). During the interview, one student – teacher from secondary (12) said:

As a group, heads of schools welcomed and officially introduced us to all employees before we were given the subjects to teach and duties to perform. Permanent subject teachers were very supportive once we asked for any assistance. We were oriented on school timetable, how we should behave and on some rules and regulations governing the schools including the students' by-laws.

Moreover, during the interview, another student –teacher from college (1) said:

The first day in this collage was a vibrant day to most of us. I do remember, we were welcomed by the principal and introduced in the staff meeting. The collage had a very good strategy of orienting all of us to collage organogram and various departmental activities. I can recall how we were introduced to the college, student-teachers organization and in our respective classes.

It can be noted that, TP host institutions are aware of the importance of staff – orientations and familiarization for the sake of improving work performance and productivity. Similarly, orientations promotes collegiality and good working relationships. It is mandatory in human resource management to conduct induction course among new staff to increase supervisor and employees relationships and create harmonious relationships in working environment.

5.2.2 Collaborative Lessons Preparations

The findings indicated that most of the student-teachers agreed to have good collaboration with teachers in their host institutions for various teaching and learning activities as shown below in Table 2. For instance, 87 (38%) agreed and 84 (36.7%) strongly agreed that they were collaborating with host institutions in lesson preparations while only 25 (10.9%) of the respondents denied to have been receiving collaboration in this aspect. Moreover, when student-teachers were asked whether they were receiving guidance from the host teachers, over 80 per cent of all the respondents agreed that they were guided by the host teachers on different aspects of their teaching practices. Besides, over 80 per cent of the respondents indicated that the heads of host institutions were guiding them during the lesson preparations. Moreover, respondents agreed that their lesson were noted, scheme of work and other activities were reviewed by the head of the host institution.

During the interview, one student - teacher from primary school (2) said;

> Whenever, I found any challenge during lesson preparation, I have to discuss and sort the challenge with the permanent subject teacher who was taught this subject before. Most of teachers were ready to guide and available.

However, during the interview, one of the student-teacher from secondary school (14) complained that was not supported by the host teacher and there were no teacher's guide and text books to the students and said:

> I am so much stressed as I teach the subject which the permanent subject teacher is not supportive. This is fourth week of TP but I have there is no teacher's guide books, no text books. All these teaching and learning materials are kept under custody of the permanent subject teacher who is not available for four weeks now.

As it can be seen from the above findings, it is noted in this study that collaboration between student-teachers and the host institutions, and practical sessions of micro-teaching within universities and colleges are vital for nurturing the values in teaching as an important link to their theoretical knowledge. Students who not receive such conducive and welcoming collaboration in TP host institutions are more likely not to connect the theoretical and practical sides of their pieces of training.

5.2.3 Administrative Duties

It was the aim of this study to explore what kind of other activities that were assigned to the student-teachers apart from teaching. The findings indicated that besides the academic teaching, student-teachers were being assigned with some administrative duties to perform. To be more specific, student-teachers had the opportunity to exercise power on the assigned duties and make some decisions in school meetings. In addition, most student-teachers 117 (50.9%) and 89 (38.7%) indicated that they strongly agreed and agreed that they were being involved in administrative duties in various host institutions respectively (Table 2). Regarding qualitative information, student-teachers had different views. During the semi-structured interview, one of the student-teachers from secondary school (21) said:

> I was assigned the duties of the head of school for a week as a part of my TP studies. In this school, every student-teacher had an opportunity to handle various school administrative duties like head of school, teacher on duties, academic masters and class teachers.

On other hand, one of the head teachers from primary school (3) said:

> In our school, every student-teacher has opportunity to practice and exercise administrative duties as professional teachers. In every week, this school has head teacher, assistance head teacher, academic staff and other members of school management team (SMT) who are student-teachers.

The above findings indicate that despite of academic role assigned to student-teachers, administrative duties are also core for effective school management. It also seems that student-teachers had opportunities to be involved in SMT an experience that can help the student-teachers in their future leadership career.

5.2.4 Student-Teachers Involvement in Decision-Making

The findings indicated that 140 (60.1%) student-teachers had an opportunity to be involved in the meetings for

decision-making and 75 (32.6%) of the student-teachers did not have such an opportunity (Table 3). It was good to note that student-teachers' opportunity of getting involved in decision-making activities provided with them with practical skills required for administrative tasks which can be used when they are still in colleges or later on in their teaching profession and when they get an opportunity to work in education institutional leaders. During the interview, one of the student-teachers located in one of the teachers' training colleges (2) said:

> It was my first time to be involved as a member of decision making board in the case regarding the students who dodged during the night and were to be suspended from the college as per college by-laws. As tutor on duty, I was asked to take actions for preliminary proceedings for those students based on college's laws and by-laws as practising principal of the week.

As it can be seen from the above findings, it indicates that heads of host institutions despite their administrative duties; they were putting more emphasis on academic excellence and professional development of student-teachers. In this light, it is easy to comment that HLIs should forge a meaningful collaboration with host institutions by motivating the heads of the host institutions for such a commendable job.

Table 2. Student-Teachers' Experiences in Teaching at the Host Institutions (N =230)

Statements	Responses	N	%
I was given orientation before starting to teach	Strongly disagree	12	5.3
	Disagree	6	2.6
	Not sure	8	3.5
	Agree	100	43.8
	Strongly agree	104	45.6
Collectively prepared a lesson with host teachers	Strongly disagree	25	10.9
	Disagree	29	12.7
	Not sure	5	2.2
	Agree	87	38.0
	Strongly agree	84	36.7
Host teacher guided me in learning	Strongly disagree	15	6.5
	Disagree	21	9.1
	Not sure	4	1.7
	Agree	97	42.3
	Strongly agree	93	40.4
Lesson preparation was reviewed by host teachers	Strongly disagree	18	7.9
	Disagree	16	7.1
	Not sure	9	3.9
	Agree	84	36.8
	Strongly agree	101	44.3
Assigned some administrative duties to do	Strongly disagree	11	4.8
	Disagree	7	3.0
	Not sure	6	2.6
	Agree	89	38.7
	Strongly agree	117	50.9
Lessons plans and scheme were reviewed by the host teachers	Strongly disagree	12	5.3
	Disagree	10	4.5
	Not sure	11	4.8
	Agree	70	30.8
	Strongly agree	124	54.6

Source: Field data (2018)

6.2.5 Involvement of Student-Teachers in Other Activities

It was the aim to investigate the other activities in which student-teachers were involved in. The findings indicated high involvement of student-teachers in different activities in the host institutions. For example, 217 (94.4%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed to have been involved in setting assessment tools for their students in schools while 216 (93.9%) respondents declared to have been involved in marking examination tasks. (Table 3). The tools that were set by student-teachers included but were not limited to quizzes, tests, and examinations. Data also revealed that student-teachers were exposed to different techniques of setting tools for

students' assessment and evaluation. Similarly, student-teachers were also noted to have been involved not only in setting tools of assessment but also in marking examinations. As in can be observed from the above findings, in most of the host institutions the student-teachers were exposed to practical assessment and evaluation an additional experience gained from the TP field that can help them in their future teaching profession.

5.2.6 Professional Guidance and Counselling

With regard to the findings on professional guidance and counselling, student-teachers were asked whether they had time to meet their students outside the classroom for supervision and consultation. The findings indicated that majority of the student-teachers 196 (85.2%) had an opportunity to meet with their students outside their classrooms (Table 3). Similarly, some respondents (36.1%) had the opportunity to meet with students' parents and guardians in schools. This indicated that they had the opportunity of assisting students in different aspects of improving their learning like extracurricular activities which is an essential part of teaching and learning. Regardless of this low representation, student-teachers had the potential opportunity to meet with their parents to discuss different matters related to students' learning improvements.

Table 3. Involvement of Student-Teachers in Different Activities in the Host Institutions (N=230)

Activities	Responses	N	%
Involved in setting of students' assessment tools	Strongly disagree	3	1.3
	Disagree	6	2.6
	Not sure	2	0.9
	Agree	86	37.7
	Strongly agree	131	57.5
Involved in marking of examination and grading	Strongly disagree	3	1.3
	Disagree	5	2.2
	Not sure	4	1.8
	Agree	79	34.6
	Strongly agree	137	60.1
Met with students for guidance	Strongly disagree	9	4.0
	Disagree	14	6.2
	Not sure	8	3.5
	Agree	98	43.2
	Strongly agree	98	43.2
Met with students' parents	Strongly disagree	51	22.6
	Disagree	71	31.4
	Not sure	21	9.3
	Agree	53	23.5
	Strongly agree	30	13.3
Involved in staff meetings for decision making	Strongly disagree	35	15.4
	Disagree	30	13.2
	Not sure	23	10.1
	Agree	81	35.5
	Strongly agree	59	25.9

Source: Field data (2018)

5.3 Motivating Factors for Student-teachers in the Host Institutions

Apart from the useful information on teaching practice activities and student-teachers' exposure to different tasks, this study assessed the motivating factors for student-teachers to conduct their teaching practices in the same host institution for two years consecutively. It was found that majority of the respondents about more than 71.7 per cent indicated that positive relationship with other staff members was among the factors that motivated them to select the place for TP. This was followed by the residence being close to host institutions for about 56.5 per cent (Table 4). Although these were the factors that received high attention from student-teachers, some other factors were mentioned but recorded in less than 10% of the total responses. On the other hand, during the interview with one student-teacher in secondary school (22) he said:

I have been conducting TP in this station for two years consecutively. The management of this school is very collaborative and supportive. The head of school has been supportive in both academic and material support.

The school do provide enough reference books, institution lesson plans and teaching and learning aids. On top of that, they provide breakfast, lunch and accommodation. Teachers in this school are cooperative and supportive.

It seems reasonable to note that most student-teachers perceived positive relationships with other staff as an important factor for them to conduct their TP properly. Consequently, rethinking of improving cooperation with students may increase student-teachers' interaction with their students which may foster effective teaching and learning. Moreover, if all factors will be improved may keep on motivating prospective teachers to have a better place for them to practise teaching before they start working as professional teachers.

Table 4. Motivating Factors among Student-Teachers in Selecting Host–Institutions (N =230)

Motivating Factors	N	Scores (%)
Positive relationship with other staff members	165	71.7
Residence being close to host institutions	130	56.5
Availability of teaching resources	105	45.7
Good mentorship from the host staff members	90	39.1
Effective cooperation from their students	45	19.6

Source: Field Data (2018)

5.4 Lessons from Host Institutions

This study intended to explore what kind of experiences was drawn from the hosting institutions by the student-teachers? The findings indicated that although student-teachers reported having so many positive aspects (opportunities) to facilitate their teaching process during their TP, some other factors were considered as challenges towards their effective performance of TP in various host institutions. Data in this TP satisfaction facet were presented in hierarchical order based on the frequency of their occurrence (Table 6).

Table 6. Main Challenges among the Student-Teachers in the Host Institutions (N =230)

Main Challenge	N	Scores (%)
Shortage of offices for a comfortable stay	144	62.6
Large class size (> 60 pupils)	133	57.8
Limited teaching facilities	128	55.7
Financial constraints	99	43.0
Staying far from the host institution	71	30.9
Limited exposure to ICT as pedagogical tool	53	23.0

Source: Field data (2018)

Regarding limited ICT use in teaching, some of the heads of schools declared that it was not only student-teachers who faced challenges in using ICT as a pedagogical tool, but also the host teachers in most of the schools. One of the head of secondary school (3) stated:

As a school, we wish we could have frequent training on the use of ICT as a teaching tool. However, it has been uncertain because we have limited training for teachers. Even when the government provides such opportunities, it is either for those who teach ICT in schools or the vacancies are normally limited to a few teachers to attend. To me, this cannot adequately suffice the school needs for students' learning through technology.

In addition, it was found that large class sizes denied the opportunity for some interactive methods for teaching and effective classroom activities supervision. Similarly, a shortage of teaching facilities such as books due to a large number of students was likely to deny an opportunity for students to have practical experience from student-teachers in most of the taught topics. Delay in the processing of student-teachers' financial support (for those who receive loans from Higher Education Students' Loans Board) was among the factors which student-teachers claimed that they affected their concentration during their teaching practice (43%) (Table 6). Limited exposure to ICT as a pedagogical tool (23%) and staying far from the TP institutions (30.9%) were also among the main challenges for conducting TP in some host institutions.

The study findings reveal that lack or limited use of ICT in teaching is likely to affect the student-teachers who are expected to use ICT in teaching upon their completion of studies and start working as professional teachers.

It may affect their attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching with the view that it only belongs to those who teach ICT in schools.

5.5 Perceptions of Heads of Host Institutions towards Student-Teachers and TP

This study also explored what were the perceptions of heads of the host institutions towards student-teachers and TP. Data obtained during the semi-structured interview from the heads of host institutions revealed mixed perceptions regarding teaching practice and subsequent efforts for its improvements. One of the headmasters from secondary school (3) on TP improvement suggested that:

> In our institution, we receive many student-teachers for TP from different higher learning institutions. Sometimes, it becomes difficult for our school to allocate academic duties to all of them especially those who teach social science subjects. I would suggest that schools and universities work collaboratively so that the duration for TP should be different for each higher institution or university to allow easy accommodation of student-teachers.

Similarly, another head-teacher from primary school (1) while commenting on the shortage of teaching and learning materials, he said:

> Our school receives student-teachers for TP every year, but the main challenge is related to the shortage of the teaching facilities. The government has expanded students' enrolment in schools which has, on the other side, resulted in limited human and physical resources to support interactive learning. I can, therefore, suggest that the location of student-teachers should consider the availability of teaching and learning resources for effective interaction and professional development.

Moreover, another headmaster from secondary school (7) during the interview regarding the problem of unequal distribution of teachers said:

> In most urban schools, there is not such big shortage of teachers. It would, therefore, be useful if most of the student-teachers were allocated to rural areas where the shortage of teachers is acute and poses a critical challenge to the teaching and learning process. In some urban settings, private organised teaching and learning are available.

From the above verbatim quotes, it was revealed that the capacity of some host institutions to accommodate student-teachers was limited even though these host institutions required more student-teachers. Location of large number of student-teachers in TP host institutions in cities and towns had increase the challenge of host institutions' carrying capacity while TP stations at rural areas have vacancy. It is important, therefore, to note that quality provision of education is closely related to the availability of accommodation for both students and teachers.

5.6 Student-Teachers' Views on Improving Teaching Practice

Considering the potential contribution of the teaching profession, researchers were interested in exploring ways of improving teaching practice in the subsequent years. Therefore, when student-teachers were asked about the issues which they thought were required for subsequent improvement of TP, they had a lot of information to give. Specifically, student-teachers recommended the need to improve infrastructure in host institutions in which teaching practice takes place (25.4%), to ensure sufficient teaching and learning facilities (39.8%), consideration of TP institutions that provide accommodation (22.9%), and sufficient orientation in colleges on TP (20.9%), before they embark on actual fieldwork exposure (Table 7).

Table 7. Proposed Changes to be made for Subsequent Teaching Practices

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
There should be effective cooperation with host teachers	36	9.3	17.9
TP time should be known to TP teachers	9	2.3	4.5
Provision of payment for remedial classes	19	4.9	9.5
The college should select TP centres which provide accommodation	46	11.8	22.9
There should be improvement of infrastructural setup in schools	51	13.1	25.4
Student-teachers should be involved in decision making	4	1.0	2.0
There should be advance training of lesson and scheme preparation to bring uniformity	28	7.2	13.9
Improve teaching facilities in schools	80	20.6	39.8
Schools should provide teaching allowances	17	4.4	8.5
Student-teachers should be assessed on time	12	3.1	6.0
Student-teachers' specialisations should be considered	2	0.5	1.0
Provision of portfolio preparation guidelines	3	0.8	1.5
Provision of ICT knowledge to student-teachers	13	3.3	6.5
Sufficient orientation on teaching practice	42	10.8	20.9
First year student-teachers should not be involved in TP	2	0.5	1.0
Need for more extended time and assessment for TP	5	1.3	2.5
Need to increase TP host institutions to increase accessibility	10	2.6	5.0
TP should be conducted during the first semester vacation	1	0.3	0.5
Students should be emphasized to buy their own materials such as syllabus and books for teaching	2	0.5	1.0
Selection of TP host institutions should be digitalised (online)	3	0.8	1.5

Source: Field data (2018)

It is now obvious that most of the challenges of TP either in host institutions or at the university were facing the student –teachers. Most of the views and recommendations of student-teachers regarding the best performance of next TP were based from their experience from their TP. Ranking on their recommendations may be interpreted as the most preferred suggestion to the least suggestions for improving next TP.

6. Discussion of the Findings

The findings indicated that student-teachers mostly were receiving good mentorship from the host institutions that included being oriented on how to handle different academic matters, setting assessment tools, and being involved in administrative duties. There is a consensus that teaching practice occupies a key position in any professional development programme for teachers (Nwanekezi, Okoli & Mezieobi, 2011). It provides an authentic context within which student-teachers are envisaged to observe the complexities and richness of the reality of being a teacher (Komba & Kira, 2013). It is during TP that student-teachers get opportunities to interact with learners and reflect on all that they had learned in college.

These findings are partly inconsistent with those of Komba *et al*. (2013) and Ndibalema and Kambona (2018) in Tanzania which revealed limited mentorship and ineffective supervision of student-teachers. Nevertheless, the findings concur with other previous research that includes limited teaching facilities, a large number of students in the classroom, limited interactive classroom activities, and limited pedagogical approaches among student-teachers. In terms of class size, Tandika and Kumburu (2018) in Tanzania also reported that overcrowded classrooms were the major challenges that teachers in Tanzania's schools face in providing effective classroom instruction.

It was also found that in the host institutions, student-teachers participated in different activities such as teaching, staff meetings, and supervision of extracurricular activities. These observations are in alignment with Perry (2004) who pointed out that although students gain much-specialised knowledge by attending lectures and doing assignments, the TP adds meaning to this knowledge when a student-teacher comes into contact with the real classroom situations. This is because it is during TP that knowledge is affirmed and the link to theory and practice as an added advantage to pedagogical content and general knowledge (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Just

as presented in the theoretical model, TP duration is an ideal time to engage in the process of facilitating, supporting, assisting coaching and scaffolding the student-teachers from the experienced mentors to develop the professional qualities.

Moreover, TP gives a recommendable opportunity for nurturing student-teacher professionalism and professional development. As explained through the 3Ps model, mentorship approaches have been recommended as a powerful way of developing work-related professional expertise and code of conduct (Kamarudin *et. al.* 2020; Ambrosetti, 2010). This brings in a discussion about strengthening the role of TP institutions, teachers and administrative staff members in supporting the learning of student-teachers in concurrence with the prior pedagogical and content knowledge. The findings concur with what scholarly such as Kamuhabwa, (2019) in Tanzania and O'Leary (2015) who suggest about the interrelationships between the universities or academia and the labour industries in developing the graduates' employability skills. Generally, the fresher student-teachers could not have the teaching profession experiences and expertise other than what they get from the TP places.

Furthermore, limited financial capacity among student-teachers has been noted by the study to be in congruence with other studies which present poor education financing as one of the major threats to educational institutions and staff members' job performance in Tanzania such as that of Hakielimu (2013), Kalolo (2016) and URT (2014). Students' desire to have accommodation facilities in the schools or a place where they carry out their TP in a nearby area to their homes is an implication of the need to reduce the cost of their comfortable stay at particular TP institutions. In practice, TP costs for student-teachers are either covered by the Higher Education Students Loans Board (HESLB) for the beneficiary students as it is among HESLB provision schemes (HESLB Act, 2004), or non-beneficiary student-teachers incurring the costs on their own resources. The late bursaries of TP funds to student-teachers may escalate the challenge of poor accommodations, failure to cover health insurance and allowances as presented in the findings. This may harm their performance and even professional development due to limited capacity to prepare teaching and learning materials with costs implications, attendance to TP stations, etc. Kalolo (2012) and Komba (2017) have also reported in Tanzania that underfunding of higher education to be a problem affecting the provision of quality training. This, has the implied meaning that the HESLB, parents, and educational stakeholders have a role to play in issues related to access to loans for HEIs students.

On the other hand, student-teachers had various tangible recommendations regarding TP improvements for the next TP cycles. Specifically, the suggested improvements by student-teachers such as having accommodation facilities at schools and sufficient orientation on teaching practice as motivating factors concur with job performance improvement factors suggested by various studies (Edo, Otti, Okpara and Julius, 2018; Lucky & Precious 2020;Nyakundi, 2012). Orientation of student-teachers from the university and while in the PT institution is a kind of training for capacity building which adds value to their teaching performance quality.

Regarding student-teachers' collaboration with host institutions, sufficient teaching and learning facilities, and improved school infrastructure, were among the basic conditions for creating an attractive and supportive working environment. Studies have linked improved quality of education with well-furnished furniture and infrastructures in education institutions. Similarly, studies such as by Kalolo (2016), Hakielimu (2013) in Tanzania, and Carnoy, (2006) relate poor school infrastructural facilities and under-resourced school teaching and learning facilities as among the factors with adverse effects on staff motivation, quality education, and schools' performance.

On the issue of TP improvement, the heads of host institutions have shown that there is an overloading of urban schools with student-teachers such that it becomes a challenge to allocate duties, office infrastructures, and overall handling of their welfare in TP schools. These findings reflect a challenge of university-industry linkage limitations in Tanzania through field works as related to either insufficient placement opportunities in labour institutions or poor coordination of training activities to field students (Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). Additionally, uneven distribution of teachers by urban and rural locations is extensively common in Sub-Saharan African countries including Tanzania (Boniface, 2016; Mulkeen, 2010).

However, limited placement distributions to rural schools have reasons emanating from cost reduction reasons among student-teachers such as stationary services for reports preparations, internet facilities for online field reports, and communications logistics. Similarly, such factors limit the distribution of teachers to rural schools (URT, 2019). On the other hand, the movements of assessors in terms of availability of transport to and from rural areas, cost of travel, and time consumption all need added costs for the exercise. It is therefore voiced through this study that the government should take the deliberate concern to increase funding of TP component in HLIs both for student-teachers and for university institutions to finance the assessment process as well as

improve the rural schools' working conditions.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study intended to examine the kind of experience and the challenges facing the student-teachers in their TP host institutions. Based on the key study's findings, it can be concluded that most of the student-teachers receive positive attention regarding their arrival, lesson preparation, implementation, and guidance from the host institutions during their teaching practice. This means, they usually have the opportunity to collaborate by working closely with host staff members which is a good indicator for improving their practical skills in their teaching practices as they prepare to become professional teachers. However, this good practice is likely to be hampered by malpractices in both infrastructural and human resources settings in the host institutions. Particularly, teaching in a poorly resourced environment with a large number of students and limited teaching and learning resources denies the student-teachers of the opportunity to have an effective engagement of their skills and therefore making it difficult to help them develop innovative and critical thinking which might be useful for the nation.

There is a need for the universities and other teachers' colleges to create effective collaborations with TP host institutions. The duration and seasons for TP conduction should be discussed and agreed amicably between universities and host institutions in order to allocate a manageable number of student-teachers according to the carrying capacity of the host institutions. Allocating manageable number of student-teachers in each host institution may help to address the chronic challenge of accommodation and limited teaching and learning resources among student-teachers. To catch up with the current growth of science and technology, there is a need for the government to enhance the use of ICT in all educational institutions as a means of improving ICT literacy not only for teaching but also for emphasising ICT for pedagogical use.

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