

Implications of Academic Staff Participation in Teaching Practice on the Quality of Bachelor of Education Program in Selected Public Universities in Kenya

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Received: July 29, 2018

Accepted: August 14, 2018

Published: January 31, 2018

doi:10.5296/jet.v6i1.14107

URL:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jet.v6i1.14107>

Abstract

One of the major determinants of quality education in the Bachelor of Education program is the Teaching Practice component. Globally teaching practice is a mandatory undertaking, at both universities and tertiary teacher training colleges. Various universities adopt different modes of teaching practice especially with regards to its supervision. The exercise of teaching practice supervision is often faced by a number of challenges, for example, inadequate staffing which means that teacher trainees may not be adequately supervised. As such, this study aimed at establishing the implications of academic staff participation in teaching practice on the quality of B.Ed program. Hence, this study sought to answer the research question: how does academic staff participation in teaching practice influence the quality of Bachelor of Education program in public universities in Kenya? The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The scope of the study was the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. The target population of the study comprised 12,342 respondents, where 30 percent of them (433) were sampled. Moi University was used for piloting, after which instruments were modified to ensure highest validity and reliability. The research instruments used in the study comprised questionnaires, interview guide and document analysis schedule. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS. The study findings were presented by the use of

frequency tables. The study established that, other than the normal teaching load, academic staff were also tasked with the duty of supervising students while in teaching practice. The study established that on average each lecturer was to supervise at least 20-25 supervision over a two weeks period. In fact, some supervisors devised their own mechanisms of handling a large number of students in teaching practice, for instance, some of them would assemble students in a common hall, mostly away from their stations of practice. Such mechanisms can only be inappropriate as far as quality of assessment is concerned. The challenges surrounding participation of Bachelor of Education academic staff in teaching practice, such as a large number of students, remoteness of some stations as well as inadequate facilitation of academic staff makes it difficult for them to ensure quality experience is gained by students in teaching practice, and as such, this study concludes that teaching practice has not modeled B.Ed. students as expected by CUE. The study recommends Commission for University Education to come up with standard guidelines, which defines the kind of teaching practice Bachelor of Education students should be subjected into, the qualification of academic staff expected to conduct the preparation and assessment as well as the nature of the schools where students can undertake the teaching practice. In so doing, they will compel all the universities offering the degree to ensure quality standards are adhered to at all times. The study further recommends the university management to incorporate the model of mentor supervisors and regulate their recruitment, incentives and reporting in order to reduce the burden of B.Ed Academic Staff participation in teaching practice.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Academic Staff, Quality of the B.Ed. Program

1. Introduction

Quality of education has been emphasized in many international and national forums; for instance, the World Education Forum (WEF) held in Dakar in 2000 culminated into 6 goals of ensuring Education For All (EFA), of which the goal number 6 was about improving the quality of education. In achieving this goal, the forum recognized the need for countries to set up the number of learners assigned to one instructor, taking into consideration the uniqueness of each learning course. Despite these commitments, the ambitious expectations were not achieved by the year 2000 and remain elusive even in the year 2018. Moreover, the SDGs goal number 4 is about Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, which again emphasizes on quality of education from primary to tertiary levels. SDGs came up as a result of the failure of the majority of the countries, especially the developing ones, to achieve the MDGs by the year 2015. The SDG goal number 4 recognizes the need to train learners and instructors adequately in order to gradually improve the quality training. Additionally, USAID Education Strategy underscores the need for quality education to enable Africa to realize its development agenda (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

The bill of rights in Kenya clearly states that education is a fundamental human right, which is also in line with the country's vision 2030, that seeks to make “a newly industrialized, middle-income country, providing a high-quality life for all its citizens, by the year 2030”. Kenya can only achieve this by providing quality teacher training in colleges and universities. The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 on Education Training and Research recommended

reforms in the education sector through the Sector Wide Approach to Planning (SWAP).

A policy framework by the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology (2012) further underscores the deteriorating public faith in university graduates and the proliferation of business model in the provision of higher education in Kenya. Despite the fact that the B.Ed program requires students to undertake a fully supervised rigorous teaching practice, no special arrangements have been made by the Kenyan public universities to meet the expected quality of the exercise. For instance, the same academic staff expected to attend ongoing classes are still expected to supervise students while in teaching practice. This happens regardless of the distance and the number of students being supervised. The implication is that the affected academic staff have to devise their own mechanisms to attend all their duties within the stipulated time. Some academic staff have been found to devise methods such as grouping students together in a convenient Centre, where their practice books are signed without visiting the actual stations of teaching practice. In essence, it was unclear how such arrangements and other regulation flaws, influenced the quality of B.Ed program. As such, this study was aimed at establishing the influence of academic staff participation in teaching practice on the quality of the B.Ed program among selected public universities in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

Participation of academic staff teaching practicum has some implication on the quality Bachelor of education program being offered in the Kenyan Public universities. The effects have made the practicum program to be held mandatory by all the institutions that provide the training course. The program implication is that it enables the trainees to take part in practical work in the field rather than just learning the theoretical work. Thus, it improves the skills of the practitioner and making him/her well acquainted with the field work. While in schools the practitioner is only exposed to the theoretical work and not the practical one. Therefore, the teaching practicum is a means of testing the staff capability in delivering education to the students (Burnett & Lampert, 2011). The education goals state that the teacher needs to understand that which they teach the student. Therefore, every teacher must have an understanding of the subject of the unit they are taking so that they can fully deliver and produce quality graduates. The low quality of Bachelor of Education might have come about as a result of employing academic staffs with little or no understanding of the learning expectations and goals. Thus, it leads to the deterioration of Kenyan education at the university level. The schools offering education course should not only dwell on the theoretical work, but a lot of emphases should be made on the practical work. To achieve provision of high-quality education for Kenyan students a lot of changes need to take place in the education sector from the Early Childhood Education (ECDE) to the University education system. One of the changes should be in the employment of academic staff where only the qualified persons are to be considered to avoid flooding of average teaching staffs in the field (Biggs, 2011).

Practicum is regarded as a vital part of teacher training by educators and researchers (Smith, 2010; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). The practicum not only bridges the gap between theory and practice (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003) if integrated and made in line with methodology courses but also provides the real field for the development of prospective teaching competence (Smith &

Lev-Ari, 2005). In the study by Smith and Lev-Ari (2005), 91% of the student-teacher regarded practicum helpful in preparing them for teaching. Practicum has been regarded as the quality determiner for teacher education programmes (Nancy, 2007). It is a leading tool for lesson preparation, students' achievement, and teachers retention (American Colleges for Teacher Education, 2010).

Students and academic staff get practical know-how of the profession and can confirm their suitability for the profession (Kiggundu & Nyimuli, 2009). Practicum increases student teachers vocational confidence (Caires & Almeida, 2005), self-esteem confidence in the ability to change pupils' learning positively and teaching competence of student teachers (Goh et al., 2009). Nonetheless, the importance of practicum, the quality of practicum has not yet got much ground in pre-service teacher education programmes (Hill, Ball, & Schilling, 2008). The literature underscores the integration and alignment of practicum with other components of a teacher education program (Hascher, Cocard, & Moser, 2004). The placement of student teachers should be in innovative contexts and the schools having collaboration with the education faculty (Lev-Ari, 2005). The practicum should be offered in different contexts or schools and the field experiences should be administered using cooperative techniques sending student teachers in groups rather than individually (Foot & Vermette, 2001).

The innovative practices used during teaching practice in the world, exposes that portfolio, action research and attendance of parent-teacher meetings and faculty meetings is sine quo none of a teacher education programme. These practices are used to help the student teacher to get practical and concrete knowledge of the profession, but the situation is quite different in Pakistani teacher education institutions. Portfolios are becoming the essential part of any teacher education programme developing reflective practitioners which have been adopted by the teacher-education institutions Plaiser, Hachey and Theilheimer (2011) and have been referred as the best alternative assessment method and critical learning tool for past two decades (Strijbos, Meeus, & Libotton, 2007). The portfolio is important in developing prospective teachers because it helps them in reflecting back on their successes and weaknesses, critical thinking, and their commitment to improvement and change (Rickards, & Guilbault, 2009). Portfolios help prospective teachers to make links among artifacts, learning, and self (Yancey, 2009).

Along with traditional portfolios, digital portfolios are taking more attention from teacher education institutions (Plaiser, Hachey, & Theilheimer, 2011). Currently, the portfolios are part and parcel of teaching practicum in pre-service education programs in most of the countries of the world. Action research is an application of research method to solve a local school problem (Mills, 2007). It helps the learner-teacher to make them reflective practitioners in developing teaching skills and expertise (Zambo & Zambo, 2007). According to Cimer (2011), action research develops flexibility and open-mindedness in the teachers. It develops critical thinking, practicality, and is used as a tool for professional development in teacher education programmes (Mills, 2007). According to Zambo & Zambo (2007), action researcher takes the school as a learning unit (Sales, Traver, & Garcia, 2011). With the help of action research, the teachers can collaborate with each other Dooner, Mandzuk, and Clifton

(2008) and can develop learning communities in the institutions (Busher, 2005). In different countries of the world that include America, Canada, Australia, attendance of parent-teacher meetings and faculty meetings are also required by the student teachers during practicum while teaching in the schools. Attendance of both kinds of meetings can help student teachers to improve their interpersonal communication skills and confidence. The attendance of parent-teacher meetings helps student teachers to know about the socio-economic background of the students which helps them to understand the individual differences of the students. They can communicate with different types of people from different kinds of professions and walks of life. They can also know about the different problems faced by the students at home that can help them to guide the student in a better way (Zwart, Wubbles, Bergen, & Bolhuis, 2007).

Besides enhancement in the interpersonal communication, the student teachers can understand the process of decision making by attending faculty meetings at schools. They can also observe the different problems of the schools. The student teachers can have a practical knowledge of management, academic, and problem related to finance, faculty, and society. In this way, they can develop their beliefs about the profession and about their suitability for the profession more pragmatically.

One thing that comes out very clearly in the literature is that through teaching practice is a noble exercise meant to prepare quality teachers, the manner in which it is carried greatly determines whether the expected goals are met or not. Owing to the outcry from employers and the general public in regard to half-baked graduates, it remained unclear whether teaching practice that has always been undertaken by B.Ed graduates before graduation was being done within the standards set by Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya. This reality formed the basis for this study.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design targeting 1265 full-time and 1545 part-time B.Ed. academic staffs in selected public universities, 111,903 B.Ed. students, 22 Deans, 60 chairpersons in the school/faculty of education departments, and the Chairman Commission for University Education. Academic staffs were chosen since they are the deliverers of the contents to students, B.Ed. students are the direct recipients of the contents, the university management determines the operation of the academic staffs while the Ministry of Education is involved in making and ensuring policies are implemented.

Stratified sampling was used to stratify respondents into part-time and full-time lectures, B.Ed. students, Dean Schools of Education, Departmental Chairpersons and the Chairperson of the Commission for University Education. A simple random sampling criterion was used to select the academic staffs and students who answered the study questions. The study was conducted within two universities (University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University) since they had a complete record of the students and staff within the respective departments for the 10-year period (2007 to 2016) under study, which implies that the sample frame was 12,342 respondents. Data was collected from sampled academic staffs, B.Ed. Students, chairpersons in School/Faculty of Education departments and the Chairperson of the Commission for

University Education. The study used 30 percent of the target population to select the number of part-time and full-time academic staffs teaching B.Ed. programs to participate in the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) posit that 10 to 30 percent of the target population is adequate for a sample. The study further used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula to determine the sample size for the students. Through this method, 433 respondents were the sample.

A structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents (academic staff) which had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Data gathered from academic staffs included: units assigned within the semester, the number of campuses they taught, other responsibilities in the universities and also their opinions regarding the quality of B.Ed. program. The study also used questionnaires to collect data from B.Ed. students. Data collected from students included: class attendance by academic staffs, content coverage, evaluation methods, access to library and other academic resources. The interview schedule was used to collect data from key informants. The key informants in this study were: chairpersons in the School of Education departments and the chairperson of the CUE. The data obtained from the chairpersons of departments was relating to student enrolment, the number of academic staffs and policy statement on enrolment and staffing of various B.Ed. programs. The data assisted the researcher to evaluate how staffing issues may have compromised the quality of B.Ed. programs. The interview schedule for CUE Chairman sought to collect data on students' enrolment and academic staff staffing policy for public universities in Kenya. The interview further sought to establish the quality control measures taken by the ministry to ensure the quality of B.Ed. programs are upheld. Moi University was used for piloting. The findings from the pilot study enabled the researcher to perform various modifications to the contents of the questionnaires. Due to the nature of some of the respondents involved in this study, the researcher was able to get important insights and comments that necessitated modifications to the final instrument used in data collection. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics (means, frequency distribution) and content analysis.

The researcher followed all due procedures required to carry out a study in the universities under study. Relevant permits were sought in order to legalize and legitimize the study. Consent was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which provided the permit to collect data from the universities and the MOE. Permit was further sought from Kenyatta University, Division of Research, Innovation and Outreach as well as from the University of Nairobi, Research, Production and Extension.

4. Results

Staff participation in teaching practice was assessed in different ways, with responses coming from the B.Ed teaching staff and B.Ed students. The researcher was concerned about the preparation of students for teaching practice, supervision, duration of the teaching practice, monitoring and evaluation and the teaching practice load for the students.

4.1 Students' Preparation for Teaching Practice

Academic staff were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Academic staff perspective of preparation of students for teaching practice

Academic Staff Perceptions	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Students in B.Ed program undergo Teaching Practice preparation by taking specific and mandatory units	Frequency (n)	31	4	1	0	36
	Percentage %	85.7	11.4	2.9	0	100
B.Ed program students are adequately prepared for Teaching Practice/Practicum	Frequency (n)	23	11	2	0	36
	Percentage %	65.0	30.0	5.0	0	100
Academic staff in my university are involved in the preparation of students for B.Ed Program Teaching Practice/Practicum	Frequency (n)	28	6	2	0	36
	Percentage %	77.0	17.2	5.7	0	100

Source: Filedwork Notes (2017)

From the findings, most of the academic staff strongly agreed that B.Ed students were being prepared for teaching practice (85.7 percent). Similarly, the majority (65 percent) strongly agreed that B.Ed students were adequately prepared for teaching practice. It was also established that B.Ed academic staff were largely involved in the preparation of B.Ed students for teaching practice. Basically, the findings show that B.Ed students were prepared for teaching practice by B.Ed academic staff.

4.2 Supervision

The study further intended to establish the extent to which academic staff were used in the supervision of students in teaching practice. Academic staff were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to the statements displayed in (Table 2).

The findings show that the majority of academic staff strongly agreed that only B.Ed academic staff were allowed to supervise students in teaching practice (57 percent). Though majority disagreed that any other academic staff participated in the supervision of B.Ed students in teaching practice (48.5 percent), a considerable proportion (27.3 percent) strongly agree that it was happening, an implication that some students were supervised by academic staff who were not in their profession. The study further found that school mentors were being appointed to participate in teaching practice. At least 44.4 percent of the academic staff strongly agreed that mentors were being used to supervise students while undertaking teaching practice. The study further sought to examine the opinions of the B.Ed students in regard to supervision while in teaching practice (Table 3).

Table 2. Academic staff perspective of academic staff participation in the supervision of students in teaching practice

Academic staff perspectives	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Only BEd Program Academic staff in my university supervise students on Teaching Practice for B.Ed program	Frequency (n)	21	4	10	1	36
	Percentage %	57.6	12.1	27.3	3.0	100
Any other Academic staff in my university can supervise students on Teaching Practice/Practicum for B.Ed program	Frequency (n)	10	4	18	4	36
	Percentage %	27.3	12.1	48.5	12.1	100
My university appoints School Mentors to assess/supervise students in B.Ed program	Frequency (n)	16	8	5	7	36
	Percentage %	44.4	22.3	13.9	19.4	100
In my university B.Ed program students on Teaching Practice/Practicum are supervised by School Mentors	Frequency (n)	9	7	7	13	36
	Percentage %	25.1	19.4	19.4	36.1	100

Table 3. B.Ed students' perspective of academic staff participation in the supervision of students in teaching practice

B.Ed students' perspective	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
BEd program students on Teaching Practice/Practicum in our university are supervised by Academic staff	Frequency (n)	98	22	160	38	318
	Percentage %	30.8	6.9	50.4	11.9	100
Students in our university are supervised by Mentor supervisors during the B.Ed program Teaching Practice/Practicum	Frequency (n)	146	48	84	40	318
	Percentage %	45.9	15.1	26.4	12.6	100

Most of the students disagreed that they were being supervised by B.Ed academic staff while undertaking teaching practice (50.4 percent), which is actually contrary to the statements by the academic staff. On the other, the majority strongly agreed that they were being supervised by mentor supervisors (45.9 percent). The implication is that most students were not supervised by B.Ed academic staff, but were instead assigned to mentors in their respective centres of teaching practice.

4.3 Duration of Teaching Practice

The study further sought to establish the duration B.Ed students were expected to undertake teaching practice. Both the academic staff and the students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on the duration of teaching practice (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents opinions regarding the duration of teaching practice

Respondents opinions	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<u>Staff</u>	Frequency	26	10	0	0	36
Teaching Practice/Practicum for B.Ed students in my university takes one school term.	(n)					
	Percentage %	72.2	27.8	0	0	100
<u>Students</u>	Frequency	138	62	44	74	318
In our university inadequate time is allocated to Teaching Practice/Practicum.	(n)					
	Percentage %	43.4	19.5	13.8	23.3	100

Most of the academic staff (72.2 percent) strongly agreed that teaching practice was taking one school term, which is equivalent to three months. Majority of the students (43.4 percent) found the one-term limit inadequate to undertake teaching practice. However, 23.3 percent strongly agreed that it was adequate. The implication is that students deemed participation in teaching practice as inadequate and therefore required a better practice.

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The study further sought to establish the extent to which academic staff participated in teaching practice and how their participation influenced the quality of B.Ed program. Academic staff were asked to indicate their opinions regarding participation of teaching staff in monitoring and evaluation of B.Ed students while in teaching practice (Table 5).

From the findings, majority of the academic staff strongly agreed that they were assigned two weeks session to assess students during teaching practice (65.7 percent). Another 50 percent strongly agreed that assessment of students while undertaking teaching practice was assigned 4 weeks. The findings further show that most of the academic staff were required to assess the students for a minimum of 2 sessions. The implication is that though there was a requirement of assessing the students four sessions, a minimum of 2 sessions was deemed appropriate. From the findings, every academic staff was assigned between 20-25 students to supervise during the teaching practice/practicum (50 percent).

Table 5. Academic staff perspective on assessing B.Ed students in teaching practice

Academic staff perspective	Frequency	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Academic staff are assigned a two weeks session each to assess students during B.Ed Program Teaching Practice/Practicum	Frequency (n)	24	6	4	2	36
	Percentage %	65.7	17.2	11.4	5.7	100
Assessment of Students on B.Ed Program Teaching Practice/Practicum in my university takes 4 weeks	Frequency (n)	18	3	9	6	36
	Percentage %	50.0	8.8	23.5	17.7	100
During B.Ed Teaching Practice/Practicum students must have a minimum of two assessments in every subject	Frequency (n)	20	8	4	4	36
	Percentage %	54.3	22.9	11.4	11.4	100
B.Ed Program students on Teaching Practice/Practicum in my university are only assessed for the mandatory minimum number of times per subject	Frequency (n)	12	5	11	8	36
	Percentage %	33.3	13.9	30.6	22.2	100
B.Ed Program students on Teaching Practice/Practicum in my university are only assessed the three times per subject	Frequency (n)	13	12	5	6	36
	Percentage %	36.1	33.3	13.9	16.7	100
B.Ed Program students on Teaching Practice/Practicum in my university are only assessed for four times per subject	Frequency (n)	7	13	10	6	36
	Percentage %	20.0	36.6	26.7	16.7	100
Academic staff supervise B.Ed program students on Teaching Practicum on their first and second visit in the same subject	Frequency (n)	7	21	7	1	36
	Percentage %	19.4	58.3	19.4	2.9	100
Every academic staff in our university is assigned 20-25 B.Ed program students to supervise during the teaching practice/practicum	Frequency(n)	10	18	6	2	36
	Percentage (%)	27.8	50.0	16.7	5.5	100

4.5 Discussion

Participation of academic staff in teaching practice is an aspect that is only unique when it comes to B.Ed program. CUE requires that all B.Ed students must participate in teaching practice in a recognized educational institution before completing their studies. However, the

universities have tasked the academic staff with supervision of these students while in the field. Other than use of the academic staff, KU has also started using mentor supervisors, who are normally drawn from the institutions of internship. The practice has majorly been done in Nairobi County and its environs. From the words of one the departmental chairperson at Kenyatta University;

‘... the model of mentor supervision has really helped to ensure quality practicums ...you see when a university supervisor visit student for only one or two days during the whole period of teaching practice, little can be achieved in terms of quality. I can say mentor supervisors are good and should be used to supplement the work of university supervisors.’

Just like in the requirement of CUE, most of the academic staff and the students admitted that teaching practice takes one semester in both universities. Moreover, most of the respondents agreed that only academic staff in the school of education were expected to supervise students while in teaching practice. However, there was a considerable proportion of academic staff and also students who said that supervisions were carried by academic staff who were not in the school of education, a situation that raises questions on whether such staff were equipped with information on what was supposed to be assessed. Failure to use qualified staff during supervision meant that such supervision did not consider the basic outcomes that B.Ed students should have got from the same, hence the quality of the teaching practice could not be guaranteed.

While most of the academic staff admitted to have been assessing students for four weeks, most of the students denied it, an implication that the staff might have been assigned four weeks but take less time instead. On the ground, supervisions have always been done at least two rounds within the semester, which is practically inadequate especially when the university has not involved a mentor supervisor. Moreover, the fact that some academic staff have also been involved in instruction of other students within the university in concurrent with supervision of students in teaching practice and owing to the fact that these academic staff are expected to conduct their core duty of research, makes it very hard for all the obligations to be performed adequately. In fact, some academic Staff have had to devise mechanisms of supervising large number of students. Some of the mechanisms employed include bringing all the students from a particular area at a chosen center, which definitely means the supervision is not really done at the center where students conducted their teaching practice. One of the chairpersons of departments in UoN said;

“... some students perform the teaching practice in far places, in fact there was a time when I supervised just one student at Kenyan-Tanzania border. You see this is not cost effective. Moi University had introduced a requirement where students were not supposed to take teaching practice to places beyond Kericho...I felt that was a good move”.

As such, preparation of the students in teaching practice, and those in lecture always remain inadequate and such, the B.Ed program in such scenarios become of low quality. Though the requirements by CUE may seem fulfilled in paper, the practicality of this remain in question since the commission has not really defined when the academic staff should or should not participate in performing certain functions such as participation in teaching practice.

Basically speaking, both students and academic staff find participation in teaching practice as an important requirement in preparing B.Ed students for their task ahead, a finding that is congruent with that of Biggs (2011). However, the fact that the teaching staff is overburdened with these obligations, which most of the times happens to be concurrent, makes it difficult to deliver quality services. As such, some students argued that the staff have always appeared unprepared when performing these functions. Many other studies including Plaiser, Hachey and Theilheimer (2011) have stressed the importance of students participating in teaching practice. However, this study has found that though the participation is important, it has increased the workload of academic staff to an extent that it does not only affect the quality of the teaching practice itself but also lowers the quality of the contents delivered to students in lecture halls since the instructors' lack adequate time to prepare for notes and examinations. Moreover, when students are aware that supervision would take place at certain periods, like they talked of July, they are likely to become less serious in their work during other times, hence lowering the quality of the teaching practice again.

5. Conclusion

Other than the classwork workload, the study established that the academic staff were tasked with huge duty of supervising students while in teaching practice. Being a compulsory undertaking, B.Ed students have to be monitored while in the field. Though some students admitted to have been supervised by non-B.Ed academic staff, most of the B.Ed academic staff were being involved. Supervision by non-B.Ed academic staff meant that learners were being assessed by unqualified staff, hence the assessment could be irrelevant. Moreover, academic staff who were involved in the teaching practice were also scheduled to instruct other students in lecture halls as well as perform other assigned administrative duties, especially when it came to full-time academic staff. Owing to the fact that all the tasks had to be done by the same academic staff, it made it hard for the staff to deliver quality services to B.Ed students. However, KU sought the involvement of mentor supervisors in some schools of attachment, where regular teachers were assigned to supervise and report on the level of undertaking by the respective students. Despite this fact, the academic staff in the university still argued that they had many students to supervise, some of them located in very remote areas. In fact, some supervisors devised their own mechanisms of handling large number of students in teaching practice; for instance, some of them would assemble students in a common hall, mostly away from their stations of practice. Such mechanisms can only be inappropriate as far as quality of assessment is concerned. CUE expects that supervisors should visit students in their stations of attachment. However, it appears that universities are not keen on ensuring such professional practices are upheld. Even the appointment of mentor supervisors is not well regulated, hence the researcher could not find a policy guiding the recruitment and the nature of assignment given to them. As such, the quality of experience gained by students during teaching practice cannot be guaranteed, even by considering the opinions of students.

The challenges surrounding participation of B.Ed academic staff in teaching practice, such as large number of students, remoteness of some stations, engagement into other duties within the university and inadequate time allocated for supervision makes it difficult for the

academic staff to ensure quality experience is gained by students in teaching practice, and as such, this study concludes that teaching practice has not modelled B.Ed students as expected by CUE. Moreover, it is evident that academic staff were not adequately involved in the postmortem of the Teaching Practice neither do they get feedback on the whole exercise. As such, they are normally unaware on areas they need to improve on.

5.1 Recommendation

i) The study recommends Commission for University Education to come up with standard guidelines, which define the kind of teaching practice Bachelor of Education students should be subjected into, the qualification of academic staff expected to conduct the preparation and assessment as well as the nature of the schools where students can undertake the teaching practice. In so doing, they will compel all the universities offering the degree to ensure quality standards are adhered to at all times.

ii) The study further recommends the university management to incorporate the model of mentor supervisors and regulate their recruitment, incentives and reporting in order to reduce the burden of B.Ed Academic Staff participation in teaching practice.

iii) The study also recommends that the term Teaching Practice should be replaced by School Practice as the former presents teaching practice as just an academic undertaking which is not the case.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AACTE: American Colleges for Teacher Education

B.Ed : Bachelor of Education degree

CUE: Commission for University Education

ECDE: Early Childhood Development Education

EFA: Education For All

MDG's: Millenium Development Goals

NACOSTI National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

SDG's: Sustainable Development Goals

UoN: University of Nairobi

WEF: World Education Forum

SWAP: Sector Wide Approach to Planning

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