

Student Teacher Evaluation on Preparation, Supervision, Teaching Environment and Teaching Practice

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Abstract

This paper investigated if there was a significant difference between the evaluation of female and male student teachers in the following areas of teaching practice: preparation, supervision, teaching environment and teaching practice experience. The data collected was encoded and analyzed using the Predictive Analysis Software (PASW). Twenty six (26) student teachers undertaking their TP at various schools within Nandi Central District, nineteen (19) females and seven (7) males participated. To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted in three schools within Nandi South District which had students on teaching practice; one boys' school, one girls' school and one mixed school. A reliability Coefficient of 0.60 was set as a cut-off point. The males feel they did not gain much from the feedback of the supervisors, whereas their female counterparts benefitted immensely from the supervisors' feedback. Both females and males agree that the collaborating teacher did not attend their lessons and therefore they were not of much help. Female student teachers tend to agree with the housing conditions provided in these schools whereas their female counterparts are less satisfied.

Keywords: Student teacher, evaluation, supervision, preparation, teaching environment

1. Introduction

After demonstrating their readiness to go to the field to practice teaching, the students of the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton are sent out to different secondary schools, where they are supervised for the whole school term. During this period, the university supervisor, the student teacher and the cooperating school, work as a team, with the aim of helping the novice teacher to gain attitude knowledge and competence before they are sent out to the Teachers Service Commission for deployment. However, it was not clear how the student teachers evaluated this exercise. This study, therefore, was a follow-up to another published in the *International Journal of Education* by same authors, Tuimur et al (2012), which tested if there was a significant difference between evaluation of student teachers grouped according to teaching subjects in preparation, supervision, teaching environment and teaching practice experience. In the present survey we tested if there was a significant difference between the evaluation of female and male student teachers in preparation, supervision, teaching environment and teaching practice experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1.1 Teaching Practice Defined

A number of terms such as the practice teaching, student teaching, teaching practice, field studies, infield experience, school based experience or internship are used to refer to this activity (Taneja, 2000). The term practice teaching embraces all the learning experiences of student teachers in schools (Ashraf, 1999). The term practice teaching has three major connotations: the practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher; the whole range of experiences that students go through in schools; and the practical aspects of the course as distinct from theoretical studies (Stones and Morris, 1977).

2.1.2 Place of Teaching Practice in Pre-service Programs

Practice teaching is one of the most important aspects of any pre-service program, if not the main event (Henry, 1989; Silberman, 1970). Practice teaching occupies a key position in the program of teacher education. It is a culminating experience in teacher preparation. It provides opportunity to beginning teachers to become socialized into the profession (Furlong et al, 1988). Performance during practice teaching provides some basis for predicting the future success of the teacher. Outgoing popularity and centrality of practice teaching is an important contributing factor towards the quality of teacher education program. During practice teaching, working with students in schools provides a high degree of emotional involvement of a mostly positive nature. Student teachers feel themselves grow through experience and they begin to link to a culture of teaching. During practice teaching, they feel engaged, challenged and even empowered (Trowbridge and Bybee, 1994; SharaFuddin, and Allison, 1969). Student teachers in field-based programs have the opportunity to use their teaching practice experiences to regularly apply pedagogical theory and course learning to assist them to develop as a skillful, knowledgeable and reflective teacher (Bell, 2004).

One of the central issues underlying current debates about teacher education and teacher quality is concerned with the knowledge that teachers need to be successful in teaching all students to high academic standards. Although there has been extensive writing over the years about the so called "knowledge base" in teacher education (e.g., Darling Hammond & Bransford, 2005) and about the particular teaching practices that novices

need to learn how to enact (Ball & Forzani, 2009), this work has focused on analyzing what teachers need to know to be well started beginners. Similarly, over the years, a substantial literature has emerged in the U.S. and elsewhere on the question of ,Who should be prepared as teachers to teach in democratic societies (e.g., Villegas & Lucas, 2004; Villegas & Irvine, 2010) and how this preparation should occur (e.g., Cochran Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Hollins& Guzman, 2005). Very little attention has been given however, to whose knowledge should count in teacher education.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) puts it this way: "What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what teachers can accomplish. New courses, tests, curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them productively. Policies can improve schools only if the people in them are armed with the knowledge, skills and supports they need" (p. 5). Unless teachers have access to serious and sustained learning opportunities at every stage in their career, they are unlikely to teach in ways that meet demanding new standards for student learning or to participate in the solution of educational problems (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

2.1.3 Promoting Student Learning in Teacher Preparation

Good teachers do many things to promote student learning. They lead discussions, plan experiments, design interdisciplinary units, hold debates, assign journals, conference with students, set up classroom libraries, organize a writer's workshop, take field trips, and so on. Good teachers know about a range of approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and they have the judgment, skill, and understanding to decide what to use when. Wasley, Hampel, and Clark (1997) call this a teaching repertoire which they define as "a variety of techniques, skills, and approaches in all dimensions of education—curriculum, instruction and assessment—that teachers have at their fingertips to stimulate the growth of the children with whom they work" p. 45.

Lesson planning and preparation to improve teaching competencies have long been recognized by educational institutions as an integral part of teacher preparation worldwide (Jacinta and Regina, 1981; Kizlik, 2008; McBer, 2000). It is generally observed by educators that effective lesson plans communicate explicitly instructional activities while ineffective ones do not (Kizlik, 2008; McBer, 2000). One of the most important attributes of lesson plans and planning is that they add value to teaching and classroom instruction. In theory, lesson planning is done in the context of the broader curriculum and longer-term instructional plans (McBer, 2000).

Garrett et al. (2007, p.19) highlight that teaching is a challenging yet rewarding experience to the student as they recognize teaching as a "Highly complex process that brings together a vast array of knowledge, skills and competencies applied in an uncertain world of practice". It is all the more challenging for the student teacher as s/he undertakes the teaching practice experience serving as the new, novice teacher in the school setting. Tannehill (1989, p.245) points out that the purpose of the practicum is seen as an internship, "Gaining experience to build upon, practicing while still learning, and discovering what it is really like to be a teacher". No matter how the teaching practice is designed or administrated, it is still the prominent place where the student teacher learns professional knowledge and competence as a teacher (Behets & Vergauwen, 2006; Hascher et al., 2004). Hardy (1999) reports that teaching practice is where real teacher education is learned, while Metzler (1990) notes that teaching practice can be viewed as entry into the final learning process as a student and exiting as a more informed teacher at the end of the process. No teaching practice placement can ever be considered ideal. The student teacher is challenged on many levels and this is taken into consideration from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor as they recognize that the student teacher is still in the learning phase of their teaching career. As Paese (1984, p.54) commented, "Student teaching has always been recognized as the most valuable experience in professional preparation by graduating students and experienced teachers". Teaching practice is the fundamental focal point of any teacher education program, being the cumulating aspect of all previous experiences throughout the course of the college degree.

2.1.4 Student Teacher and Supervision

The student teacher and the teaching practicum have been the focus of a wide array of academic discussion over many years (Anderson, 2007; Ayers & Housner 2008; Behets & Vergauwen, 2006; Hascher et al., 2004; Paese, 1984; Zanting & Verloop, 2001). This research centered on the mentoring experiences of the student teacher, the role of the university in training the student and the interactions between the supervisor, cooperating teacher and the student. During teaching practice, the student is at a stage where their peers and the beliefs of veteran teachers can easily influence them to change their teaching behavior (Keay, 2009). Throughout the practice, the student works in collaboration with a supervisor and a cooperating teacher. It is an assumption that the student is in an ideal position to gain wisdom from the cooperating teacher, supervisor, and teaching colleagues, however, this may not always be the case as not all students are in ideal schools or teaching triads. The teaching practice journey is an emotional time for the student. Hascher et al. (2004) report that for the student, the teaching practice placement can be a nerve-racking experience with a roller-coaster of emotions felt daily. They highlight the stress associated with being caught in the middle between trying to please the supervisor and the cooperating teacher adding to the many fears that face the student while on in the field, "They are afraid of failure, of a lack of acceptance by their mentors, of misunderstanding by pupils and of problems with classroom management and discipline" (p.625). Capel (1992, in Mawer, 1996) concurs emphasizing that it is no wonder that, with this

plethora of emotions, the student is nervous, stressed, excited and overwhelmed by the teaching experience. In other studies, research on supervision in physical education, Chambers (2009) examined PETE students' professional learning on TP within a community of practice framework. Results concluded that (a) untrained cooperating teachers were unsuitable mentors and (b) untrained university supervisors were inappropriate tutors for PETE students as they both needed teaching expertise, a positive disposition and adequate training to embrace their respective roles. Belton et al. (2010) investigated the impact of a new cooperating Physical Education teachers program from a cooperating teacher's perspective. As a result of this program, the cooperating teachers had a more defined role which allowed them to provide an enhanced learning environment for the student teacher while in their care (Belton et al., 2010, p.150-151)

Goodnough et al. (2009) explain that one of the most crucial aspects of any teaching experience is the relationship that is created within the triad (cooperating teacher, student teacher, and the supervisor). Rodgers and Keil (2007) call this the traditional student supervision triad. This triad is composed of those with professional skills and expertise on one hand and participant needs on the other. These triad members must work together to ensure the success of the teaching practice for the novice student teacher. Valencia et al. (2009) argue that each member of the triad should not operate in a single world, rather the triadic relationship involves each triad member simultaneously working together to meet the demands of each respective world. Anderson (2007) stated that if any member of the triad falls short of his/her responsibilities this can have profound effects on the teaching practice and most importantly the student.

2.1.5 Teaching Practice Experience

When examining the literature related to the student and how the teaching practice influences their development, reports vary from student's teaching behavior to student conceptions of the practicum and their own professional growth (Keay, 2009; Zanting & Verloop, 2001).

Programmatic research conducted over many years at The Ohio State University (Siedentop, 1982) supports the idea that student performance can be improved during the teaching practicum. This long-term programmatic research examined training cooperating teachers to become mentors, concluding that as a result of improved cooperating teacher mentoring, the student teaching performance improved over a ten week time frame.

The cooperating teacher is the teacher whose classes the student teacher teaches during their teaching practice placement and is the professional who is intended to provide guidance and assistance to the student for improving pupil learning and teaching practice. Mentoring must be situated in such a way that the cooperating teacher or supervisor must find the right mix between giving the student support while empowering them with responsibility (Mawer, 1996). By ensuring that the quality of mentoring is of a high standard you help to ensure that the student can optimize his/her teaching performance on all levels. Mawer (1996) pointed out that the quality of the mentoring would, in turn, affect the quality of the subject taught and received by the pupils in the school. Similarly Tannehill and Zakrajsek (1990) noted that success for the student on teaching practice is directly related to the quality of mentoring received.

McGaha and Lynn (2000, p.43) describe a mentor as, "An experienced teacher who will give time, patience, and understanding to the novice teacher", thus the cooperating teacher makes up one of the two supervisors in the triad. Much of the literature places the cooperating teacher as the most influential person for the student during the teaching practice experience (Anderson, 2007; Chambers, 2009). They are seen as the go-to person in times of the student need, they have the experience and skills available to offer help and advice in any situation. The cooperating teacher acts as a role model who should provide a good example to the student (Anderson, 2007). Some of the many attributes of effective mentors that were identified in the literature (Capel, 2003; Cothran et al., 2008, Kim Yau in Mawer 1996; McCullick, 2001; Zanting et al., 2001) include: Ability to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills, skilled at giving pre-lesson guidance, provide constructive and positive feedback, competent in his area of teaching, willing to listen to student concerns and ideas and committed to the profession of teaching physical education.

Valencia et al. (2009, p.308) provide an adept description for the university supervisor, "University supervisors were, for the most part, retired school administrators or teachers who held master's degrees and had some prior experience with mentoring or supervision". While on teaching practice, students at times can feel isolated from the university, if something goes wrong or a student feels upset at any time, the university generally is not aware of it.

Metzler (1990) argued that the many problems faced by the student teacher cannot wait for the irregularity of the visits from the supervisor. However, early research by Zimpher, deVoss and Nott (1980) acknowledge the importance of the supervisor suggesting that without the input of the university supervisor, the student would often not be provided with feedback and critical analyses of their teaching.

Supervisors see their main goal as one of helping students to, "Have a positive experience in the field", (Valencia et al., 2009, p.312). In order for teacher education programs to impact the type of mentoring received by their student from the supervisors, it is essential that they first establish current practice.

This study investigated if there was a significant difference between the evaluation of female and male student teachers in the following areas of teaching practice in preparation, supervision, teaching environment and

teaching practice experience.

3. Methodology

This study was an evaluation study whereby a description of a particular situation is given and then an evaluative judgment is done. The data collected was encoded and analyzed using the Predictive Analysis Software (PASW).

3.1 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to identify schools where student teachers of University of Eastern Africa, Baraton were undertaking their Teaching Practice. During the survey, twenty six (26) student teachers undertaking their TP at various schools within Nandi Central District, tHANKnineteen (19) females and seven (7) males participated. Each student teacher was assigned a collaborating teacher and each one was asked and agreed to respond to the questionnaire.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was modeled on the four-point scale numbered as 4 = Agree, 3 – Tend to agree, 2 – Tend to disagree, 1 – Disagree. These points represented the level of agreement or disagreement by the respondent. To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted in three schools within Nandi South District which had students on teaching practice; one boys’ school, one girls’ school and one mixed school. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was computed. A reliability Coefficient of 0.60 was set as a cut- off point. The obtained Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for each sub-scale of each questionnaire was as follows: Students’ Questionnaire: Teaching Effectiveness – 0.866 Student Teachers’ Questionnaire: Preparation – 0.624 (after one statement was deleted) Supervision – 0.862 Teaching Environment – 0.609 (after one statement was deleted) Teaching Practice Experience – 0.621 (after one statement was deleted)

3.3 Data Gathering Procedures

After obtaining the research permit from the National Council of Science and Technology, the researchers visited the schools with the questionnaires to be administered. The school principal was requested for permission to have audience with the student teachers, collaborating teachers and the students with a view to administering the questionnaires. The researchers went ahead and administered the questionnaires to the various respondents. On student teachers, the researchers sat with them and went through the questions together. The questionnaires were collected the same day.

4. Results and Discussion

In this paper, we investigated if there was a significant difference between the evaluation of female and male student teachers in the following areas of teaching practice: preparation, supervision, teaching environment and teaching practice experience.

Table 1 gives test of significance of differences of evaluation of various areas of teaching of male and female student teachers. The findings indicate that the female and male student teachers do not differ in their evaluation of preparation and teaching environment. Preparation and teaching environment are generally similar because of the same curriculum and pedagogical practices in different schools, hence similar results. Preparing schemes of work and lesson plans, among other practices, is a similar exercise regardless of the teaching environment one is placed in.

Table 1: *Test of Significance of Differences of Evaluation of female and male student teachers and areas of teaching practice namely preparation, supervision, teaching environment and teaching practice experience.*

| | Sex | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean Ranks | Mann-Whitney U | p-value |
|------------------------------|--------|----|--------|----------------|------------|----------------|---------|
| Preparation | Male | 7 | 3.7347 | .23224 | 10.55 | 46.500 | 0.237 |
| | Female | 19 | 3.8271 | .17547 | 14.55 | | |
| Supervision | Male | 7 | 2.7143 | .58464 | 8.39 | 30.500 | 0.037 |
| | Female | 19 | 3.1614 | .30333 | 15.39 | | |
| Teaching Environment | Male | 7 | 3.3968 | .49215 | 11.86 | 55.000 | 0.501 |
| | Female | 19 | 3.5556 | .42873 | 14.11 | | |
| Teaching Practice Experience | Male | 7 | 3.2381 | .26781 | 7.57 | 25.000 | 0.015 |
| | Female | 19 | 3.6374 | .35687 | 15.68 | | |

The evaluation of supervision of male and female student teachers differed significantly (FEMALE MEAN = 3.1614, SD=0.30333 and MALE MEAN= 2.7143, SD=0.58464). The Mann-Whitney U is 3.500 with a p-value of 0.037 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. To identify the specific areas of supervision where the males and females differed in their evaluation, a comparison of responses is shown in table 2.

Table 2: *Comparison of Responses of Males and Females on Supervision*

| | MALES | | FEMALES | |
|--|--------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| The number of visits by the supervisors is adequate. | 3.0000 | 1.15470 | 3.4737 | .84119 |
| The feedback I got from the supervisor was helpful during teaching practice. | 3.2857 | 1.11270 | 4.0000 | .00000 |
| The interaction with the supervisor(s) during his/her visit was friendly. | 3.4286 | 1.13389 | 3.8421 | .37463 |
| All supervisors came from my department. | 2.4286 | 1.39728 | 3.6842 | .67104 |
| An external supervisor came to assist me during my teaching practice. | 1.7143 | 1.11270 | 2.1053 | 1.41007 |
| I was not visited by a supervisor during my entire teaching practice. | 3.5714 | 1.13389 | 3.4737 | 1.12390 |
| The supervisor was always in time for my lessons. | 3.1429 | 1.06904 | 3.7368 | .65338 |
| The supervisor often left before the lesson was over. | 3.5714 | 1.13389 | 3.5789 | 1.01739 |
| The supervisor made undue demands that were not related to his/her work. | 3.1429 | 1.21499 | 3.5263 | 1.02026 |
| I was assisted by my collaborating teacher to obtain teaching resources. | 3.0000 | 1.15470 | 3.6842 | .74927 |
| My collaborating teacher attended all of the lessons that I taught. | 1.7143 | 1.11270 | 1.5263 | .90483 |
| I was given an orientation tour of the school by my collaborating teacher. | 2.2857 | 1.25357 | 3.2632 | .99119 |
| My collaborating teacher checks my lesson notes before I gave the students. | 1.7143 | .95119 | 1.7368 | 1.04574 |
| The principal of the school saw me more than once to discuss my progress during teaching practice. | 1.8571 | 1.21499 | 2.3684 | 1.25656 |
| I found the collaborating teacher to be very helpful during my teaching practice. | 2.8571 | 1.34519 | 3.4211 | .83771 |
| Valid N (listwise) | | | | |

Table 2 above shows the responses of males and females on supervision. Both males and females agree that the number of visits by their supervisors is inadequate at a mean rating of 3.000 and 3.4737. The males have a lower rating than the females; this may be because of the attitude of the supervisors that females require more support than the males. The males feel they did not gain much from the feedback of the supervisors with a low rating of 3.2857 whereas their female counterparts benefitted immensely from the supervisor's feedback with a very high rating of 4.000. This point reinforces the fact that indeed the males were visited fewer times than the females. The males also feel the supervisors were less friendly with an average rating of 3.4286 as opposed to the females who felt the supervisors were quite friendly at a high rating of 3.8421. This may be explained by the fact that ladies are more welcoming and friendly than the males and therefore the supervisors will naturally respond the same way. The student teachers indicate from their responses that they did not have the services of an external supervisor with very low ratings of 2.1053 for the females and 1.7143 for the males. There is therefore need by the department to organize for external supervisors to visit their students during TP in order for them to benefit from an external view. The female teachers felt the supervisors made undue demands that were not related to their TP with a rating of 3.5263 as compared to their male counterparts who rated at 3.1429. This may arise from the fact naturally ladies are willing to go out of their way to give assistance to their visitors, for example meals and accommodation.

On the collaborating teachers, the female student teachers felt they were assisted to obtain teaching resources at a high rating of 3.6842 as opposed to their male counterparts who did not agree with a low rating of 3.000. This could arise from the fact that females are more persistent than the males who tend to give up easily. Both females and males agree that the collaborating teacher did not attend their lessons at a low rating of 1.5263 and 1.7443 respectively. This confirms that the collaborating teacher does not understand their roles well in this process. Female student teachers tend to agree that they were given an orientation tour of their schools by the collaborating teachers at an average rating of 3.632 as opposed to the males who gave a low rating of 2.2857. This means the females were more curious to understand their environment better than the males who felt they could find their way. It may also mean the regular teachers were more eager to impress the female student

teachers than the males. Both female and male student teachers strongly agree that the collaborating teachers did not check their lesson notes before they gave the students with low ratings of 1.7368 and 1.7143 respectively. Again this shows that the collaborating teachers were less interested with the work of the student teachers. Overall, the female student teachers found the collaborating teacher more helpful at an average rating of 3.4211 while their male colleagues found them less useful at a low rating of 2.8571.

The results in table 1 indicate that the FEMALES (Mean Rank=15.68) under teaching practice experience had the highest evaluation but a big contrast for MALES (Mean Rank=7.57). The evaluation of teaching practice experience yielded a Mann-Whitney $U = 25.000$ with $p = 0.015$ which is less than 0.05 and we therefore conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the evaluation of females and males on teaching experience.

To get a better picture on why the evaluation of male and female students on teaching practice is significantly different, table 3 presents the mean evaluation on individual statements related to teaching practice.

Table 3: Comparison of Responses of Males and Females on Teaching Practice Experience

| | MALES | | FEMALES | |
|---|--------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| I was warmly received in the school. | 4.0000 | .00000 | 3.9474 | .22942 |
| The cooperating teacher supported me throughout my teaching practice. | 3.7143 | .48795 | 3.5789 | .83771 |
| The timing of teaching practice at UEAB (first term of schools) is inappropriate. | 1.5714 | 1.13389 | 2.8947 | 1.37011 |
| The housing conditions during teaching practice were good. | 2.4286 | .97590 | 3.2105 | 1.27275 |
| Apart from teaching, I participate fully in other teacher roles and responsibilities in the school. | 3.4286 | 1.13389 | 3.7895 | .53530 |
| The supervisors who came to see me were very helpful and friendly. | 3.0000 | 1.15470 | 3.8421 | .37463 |
| The teaching style(s) I learnt at UEAB were useful during my teaching practice. | 3.7143 | .48795 | 3.9474 | .22942 |
| I was fully supplied with teaching/learning resources by the school during teaching practice. | 3.7143 | .48795 | 3.5263 | .90483 |
| I was tempted to enter in a relationship with a member of the school's staff/student. | 1.4286 | .78680 | 1.0000 | .00000 |
| Valid N (listwise) | | | | |

Table 3 above shows the responses of the two sexes on their evaluation of the various teaching practice experiences. Both the males and the females are in agreement that they were warmly received in their TP stations with very high ratings of 4.000 and 3.9474. They also appreciate the support of the collaborating teachers with the males giving a rating of 3.7148 and the females at 3.5789. This shows that in general the collaborating teachers were supportive of the work of the student teachers. However, when it came to the actual teaching, the collaborating teachers were not as effective. The student teachers gave a low rating on the collaborating teachers' checking of notes before actual teaching. These collaborating teachers may have seen the student teachers as relieving them of their workload. In terms of the timing of the teaching practice, the male teachers seem to be more favorable of this period "the timing of the teaching practice period is inappropriate" (1.5714) while the females scored 2.8947. Most of the universities in Kenya take their TP in second term and may be the female teachers feel they should do the same.

Female student teachers tend to agree with the housing conditions provided in these schools with an average rating of 3.2105 whereas their female counterparts are less satisfied with a rating of 2.4286. This may arise from the fact that in most cases men don't care much about their surroundings and only want a place to lay their heads. The female student teachers feel that apart from teaching they are more useful in other duties than their male counterparts with a rating of 3.7895 and 3.4286. This may arise from the fact that females are more compassionate and responsible than the males and may not watch a situation and leave it unattended. Sometimes men tend to brush aside issues that require urgent attention and this makes them appear as though they are not responsible. Just as the female teachers have higher rating on supervision, they are more appreciative of the helpfulness and friendliness of the supervisors with a high rating of 3.8421 as opposed to the males who have a much lower rating of 3.000. Both the females and the males agree that the teaching styles they learnt at UEAB were useful during their TP with high ratings of 3.9474 and 3.7143 respectively. This response reinforces the point that the student teachers seem well prepared to handle the teaching practice program. They also agree that they were fully supplied with the teaching resources they needed with the males' rating at 3.7143 and the females

at 3.5263. When asked whether they were tempted to enter into any relationships during TP, the females disagreed at a rating of 1.000 whereas the males did the same at 1.4286. However, this seems to suggest that the males were more outgoing than the females though on a very low scale.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings indicate that the female and male student teachers do not differ in their evaluation of preparation and teaching environment. Preparation and teaching environment are generally similar because of the same curriculum and pedagogical practices in different schools, hence similar results.

Both males and females agree that the number of visits by their supervisors is inadequate. The males have a lower rating than the females; this may be because of the attitude of the supervisors that females require more support than the males. The males feel they did not gain much from the feedback of the supervisors, whereas their female counterparts benefitted immensely from the supervisors' feedback. This point reinforces that males were visited fewer times than the females. The males also feel the supervisors were less friendly as opposed to the females who felt the supervisors were quite friendly. The student teachers indicate that they did not have the services of an external supervisor. There is therefore need by the department to organize for external supervisors to visit their students during TP in order for them to benefit from an external view.

On collaborating teachers, the female student teachers felt they were assisted to obtain teaching resources as opposed to their male counterparts who did not agree. Both females and males agree that the collaborating teacher did not attend their lessons. This confirms that the collaborating teachers do not understand their roles well in this process. Female student teachers tend to agree that they were given an orientation tour of their schools by the collaborating teachers as opposed to the males. Both female and male student teachers strongly agree that the collaborating teachers did not check their lesson notes before they gave the students. This may show that the collaborating teachers were less interested with the work of the student teachers.

Both the males and the females are in agreement that they were warmly received in their TP stations. They also appreciate the support of the collaborating teachers. This shows that in general the collaborating teachers were supportive of the work of the student teachers. However, on the actual teaching, the collaborating teachers were not as effective. The student teachers gave a low rating on the collaborating teachers' checking of notes before actual teaching. The collaborating teachers may have seen the student teachers as relieving them of their workload. In terms of the timing of the teaching practice, the male teachers seem to be more favorable of this period ' ' the timing of the teaching practice period is inappropriate'. Most of the universities in Kenya take their TP in second term and may be the female teachers feel they should do the same.

Female student teachers tend to agree with the housing conditions provided in these schools whereas their female counterparts are less satisfied. The female student teachers feel that apart from teaching, they are more useful in other duties than their male counterparts. Just as the female teachers have higher rating on supervision, they are more appreciative of the helpfulness and friendliness of the supervisors as opposed to the males. Both the females and the males agree that the teaching styles they learnt at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton were useful during their TP. This response reinforces the point that the student teachers seem well prepared to handle the teaching practice program. They also agree that they were fully supplied with the teaching resources they needed.

The results emphasize the importance of supervision, preparation and having cordial teaching environment for student teachers, where developing stronger communication links within the involved stakeholders is necessary. Through improved communication with all members of the triad the TP practicum can become more focused on the student teacher to help identify strengths and weaknesses of his/her practices at an early stage. It is hoped that the results of this study will help inform further research in this area as supervision in Kenyan high schools is constantly gaining momentum.

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