



Factors Influencing Effectiveness of Teaching Practice (TP) by Agriculture Student Teachers at University of Eswatini, Luyengo

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ABSTRACT The purpose of the paper was to find out factors that influenced the effectiveness of teaching practice in high schools by agriculture student teachers of the University of Eswatini during teaching practice in year 2017. In this study, a descriptive correlational survey was employed, which involved all Agricultural Education students on teaching practice in 2017 (N=39). Purposive sampling was conducted and a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Reliability coefficient of instrument was $\rho=.72$. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Findings revealed that characteristics of stakeholders involved in planning and execution of teaching practice and characteristics of the student teacher (knowledge of theory, attitude and willingness to learn) were the main factors that influenced the effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice. Factors that had a negative influence on the effectiveness of teaching practice were teaching practice programme timing, supervision by cooperating school and behaviour of students taught. Overall, the 2017 teaching practice was effective.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ngidi and Sibaya (2013), Teaching Practice (TP) is a key component of a teacher training program that grants student teachers experiences in the actual teaching and learning environment. It is the central pivot of teachers' professional training and contributes significantly to the quality of the teacher. According to Kombo and Kira (2013), Teaching Practice represents the range of experiences to which student teachers are exposed when they work in classrooms and schools. Its overall purpose is to expose student teachers to the actual teaching and learning environment. Hence, during the teaching practice, student teachers observe subject teachers at work so as to learn about teachers' skills, strategies and classroom achievements. Teaching Practice is also the time when student teachers evaluate their own teaching experiences through interactions with teachers and lecturers and, through self-reflection, implementation of a variety of approaches, strategies and skills with a view to bring about meaningful learning.

It can therefore be said that Teaching Practice is designed to prepare students for maximum practical and professional training in the field of education by equipping them with the following: i) providing an experience through participation and observation under the auspices

of the institutions to which students are attached; and ii) providing professional skills which are acquired through planned programmes so as to meet and satisfy the needs of the profession as well as the environment to which the students are being prepared for (Kombo and Kira 2013).

Teaching practice is a core course in teacher education in the University of Eswatini, Luyengo (University Calendar 2017). According to Bourdillon who was cited in Ngara et al. (2013), teaching practice goes beyond just knowing what to teach and knowing how to teach; the purpose of teaching practice is to develop several competencies in the trainee teacher which include interpersonal, pedagogical, intercultural and psychological competencies. Students in the University of Eswatini are prepared for teaching practice through lectures, observations of teaching by competent qualified teachers, micro- and peer teaching.

Although, Teaching Practice was designed to achieve all the listed points above, there are still some dissatisfactions on its effectiveness among education stakeholders. Marais and Meier (2004) further stated that Teaching Practice is a challenge, especially in developing countries such as Eswatini, where the effectiveness of the teaching practice can be diminished or eroded by the range of challenges, such as low and

uneven levels of teacher expertise, a wide-ranging lack of resources as well as lack of discipline among a wide cross section of learners and educators. Other challenges include imperfect timing and short duration of Teaching Practice, for instance, in the University of Eswatini, Faculty of Agriculture (Luyengo), the 2017 teaching practice was planned and executed once, between June and August in Eswatini High Schools by the Department of Agriculture Education and Extension. In this situation, the competencies acquired by the student teachers, the quality of supervision and the time spent on teaching practice (eight weeks in this case) may be limited. These challenges, if not addressed, may affect the effectiveness of teaching practice and may in the long run affect student teachers' perception of the teaching profession (Quick and Sieborger 2005).

Literature indicates that several studies have been conducted to investigate different topics on Teaching Practice. For instance, the study by Komba and Kira (2013) focused on the effectiveness of teaching practice in improving student teachers' teaching skills in Tanzania. Studies by Ngidi and Sibaya (2003), and Marais and Meier (2004), focused on the student teacher's experience and anxieties during teaching practice. Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009), and Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2014), on the other hand, conducted studies whose aims were to explore the ways in which students' experiences during teaching practice influenced their perception of and attitudes towards the teaching profession. However, a thorough review of the literature indicates that in the Kingdom of Eswatini, a few studies have been conducted on Teaching Practice. A study by Nyaumwe and Mavhunga (2005) only looked at why mentors and lecturers assessed Mathematics and Science student teachers on teaching practice differently. Another study by Luneta (2009) focused on mentoring as professional development in Mathematics education: A teaching practicum perspective. There is hardly any study done in the context of Eswatini to investigate the effectiveness of Teaching Practice by University Agricultural Education Students in the Kingdom of Eswatini, Luyengo and hence, factors that influenced its effectiveness have also not been determined. A knowledge gap exists, of which this study sought to fill.

According to Bhargava (2009), an effective teaching practice programme can be achieved when both the placement school and the University work in tandem. Understanding factors that influence the effectiveness of teaching practice facilitate the training institution's awareness of the extent to which the Teaching Practice model best prepares prospective teachers, so that adjustments can be made where lacking. The study, therefore, may also serve as a basis for improvements of Teaching Practice in Agriculture Education at the University of Eswatini, Luyengo campus.

Theoretical Framework

Teaching practice is a form of work-integrated learning that is described as a period of time when students work in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training in order to apply theory in practice (Kiggundu and Nayimuli 2009). It is an integral component of teacher training and refers to students' placements to schools to practice lesson planning, classroom organization and most importantly, classroom teaching. According to Marais and Meier (2004: 221), Teaching Practice is an essential part of an effective professional training. There is no teacher education program that can be said to be complete without an effective student teaching practice program (National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) 2008).

According to Taneja (2000), Teaching Practice can be referred to by a number of terms. These include practice teaching, student teaching, field studies, infield experience, school-based experience or internship. However, as stated by Koross (2016), the term "teaching practice" has been accepted almost universally and uncritically by all concerned with the preparation of teachers and its use encompasses all the learning experiences of student teachers in schools. It is a professional exercise which is focused on helping the student-teacher to bridge the gap between theory and practice in education and develop competence as well. In the process of bridging the gap between educational theories and practice, the student-teacher, through a program of cooperative and interactive guidance, acquires valuable skills in teaching and the management of teaching from experienced teachers, thus, improving their quality (Endeley 2014).

Understanding the effectiveness of teaching practice can be enriched by taking into account the intended outcome of this programme. The concept of teaching practice is made clearer by looking at the objectives of the exercise as enumerated by Akbar (2002). Some of which are: to provide prospective teachers with the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher pupil's relationship; to provide an opportunity for evaluating the students' potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession; to develop personal relationship with others; administrators, teachers, parents and students; to provide the future teachers with experience in school in order to overcome the problem of discipline and enable him/her develop some method of control; to provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication of learning; to enable the student teachers to effectively plan and prepare lessons; to develop skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and method of teaching; to develop desirable professional; interest, attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession; to enable students acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behaviour; to provide student teachers with the opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to benefit from constructive criticism; to provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover one's strength and weakness; to develop skill in future teachers which is related to teaching like fluent speaking, meaningful reading, using chalk-board and other teaching materials.

Endeley (2014), stated that supervision is the core of teaching practice exercise. The supervisor has an important role to play in practice teaching as a resource person, an adviser, a general morale booster, an interpreter of feedback and an assessor. Gujjar et al. (2010) also believed that the duty of a university supervisor is not only to evaluate the lessons of teaching practice, but to use his/her abilities to make this experience results-oriented. He/she should have meetings and conversations with teacher educators, experienced teachers of the institution, educationists, concerned school head teachers and other teachers. Introductory lectures should be arranged before the departure of student teachers to the practicing schools in order to

acquaint the student teachers with the preparation of lesson plans and other assigned activities. During Teaching Practice, it is the duty of supervisors to supervise their lessons, other assigned activities, carry out guidance and counselling as well as provide the student teachers with feedback to enable them criticize and reform themselves. The role of supervisors is therefore of great importance in ensuring an effective teaching practice, hence, University supervisors should work closely with associate teachers, support the student teachers, and visit the school sites often (Beck and Kosnic 2000).

Beck and Kosnic (2002) in their study on "Components of a good practicum placement" found that emotional support from the associate teacher, peer relationship with associate teacher, collaboration with associate teacher, flexibility in teaching content and method, feedback from the associate teacher, sound approach to teaching and learning on the part of the associate teacher as well as heavy but not excessive workload during teaching practice are other main factors that will determine the effectiveness of the teaching practicum. During teaching practice, a student teacher is assigned to a qualified and experienced subject teacher. This teacher has to assume a multi-faced role of being a guide, supervisor, counselor, overseer, coach, teacher, model, supporter, critic and instructor; evaluates the quality of the student teacher's performance and engage in frequent conferences with the student teacher so as to ensure continuous progress and/or early identification of problems; encourages the student teacher to participate in community activities; helps the student teachers relate theory to practice; and keeps a record of attendance and tardiness of the student teacher. If excessive absences or tardiness are observed, the oversight teacher reports this to the university supervisor and prepares and submits evaluation reports according to schedule.

Osunde and Egerton (2015) also stressed that the relationship between the student teacher and the oversight teacher plays a significant role in the effectiveness of the TP. Cooperating or oversight teachers who are able to articulate the practical knowledge that underlies their teacher behavior are believed to provide student teachers with greater opportunities for learning. When compared to class time, the student teacher

spends more time with the cooperating teacher than any other individual. Learning how to teach and learning about teaching relies greatly on the empathy, close professional understanding and common language built up between the subject mentor, and this depends not only on possessing certain skills and strategies, but also on maintaining a certain student teacher relationship.

Teaching Practice in the Kingdom of Eswatini

The goals of teaching practice are similar in most teacher training institutions. That makes teaching practice a compulsory course in all the teacher training institutions in Eswatini. Such preparations are carried out in teacher education institutions such as the Colleges of Education (William Pitcher and Ngwane Teachers 'College) and Faculties of Education in Universities. They produce teachers with Primary Teacher Diploma (PTD), Bachelor of Education (B. ED) and Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc. Ed), Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Education (B.Sc. Agric.Ed), Master of Science (M.Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to teach at the various levels of education, depending on qualification and need. Teacher production at the various institutions require a program which includes both theoretical and practical aspect. The theoretical aspect involves the various theoretical courses offered at the various levels to prepare would be teacher to acquire basic knowledge of teaching, while the practical aspect involves the application of the theoretical knowledge in real classroom situation which is achieved through Teaching Practice.

This study focused on the evaluation of teaching practice conducted by the Department of Agriculture Education and Extension in the University of Eswatini, Luyengo, 2017. The Degree Programmes in the institution takes a period of four years. Agriculture education students are expected to go for teaching practice once; at the end of their third year, from July to August and then come back for their final year in the institution. A student will, therefore, have completed eight weeks of teaching practice upon graduation. Students are posted to different schools of their choice where they are expected to spend the eight weeks per teaching practice session. They are assigned to cooperating teach-

ers who are usually Head of Departments in the various schools selected based on their competence and to University supervisors only from the Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Education and Extension, Luyengo. They are expected to see the student at least three times during each session. Student teachers after observing the cooperating teacher begin teaching and the cooperating teacher follows up the student closely in all aspects of the student's professional life. At the end of the exercise, the student receives an aggregate score from the cooperating teacher, the University supervisor and a student's 'portfolio which is made up of a report, lesson plans, lesson notes, a journal and teaching aids.

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to find out the factors influencing the effectiveness of 2017 teaching practice by agriculture student teachers of the University of Eswatini, Luyengo campus with a view to offer suitable suggestions for the enhancement of effective teaching practice organization and management for agriculture student teachers. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice by agriculture students in Eswatini high schools;
2. Identify the characteristics of all the stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of 2017 teaching practice in the High Schools of Eswatini;
3. Identify factors influencing effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice by agriculture students in Eswatini high schools.

The research hypothesis was that the knowledge of theory by student teachers is the main determinant factor contributing towards an effective Teaching Practice programme by University of Eswatini students, Luyengo Campus. Knowledge of factors contributing to effective Teaching Practice will indeed enhance the teaching practice programme and practices employed.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive correlational design with close ended questionnaire used to collect data. Quantitative data was yielded in

the study. The units of study were selected from a population of 48 student teachers who completed the 2017 teaching practice. Purposive sampling was used to select only year 4 students (39) who completed teaching practice in high schools across the country in 2017. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Questions in the questionnaire were formulated following an in-depth literature review and were based on the objectives of the study. Instrumentation particularly development of questionnaire was based on the products of measurement of variables: i) Dependent variable- Effectiveness of teaching practice; and ii) Independent Variables – Characteristics of student teachers which included attitude, willingness to learn, involvement of the students in the teaching and learning process, knowledge of theory by student teacher, duration and timing of the 2017 TP as well as the supervision by cooperating teachers. All variables were measured at interval and ratio levels.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section A measured the effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice by agriculture student teachers at University of Eswatini, Luyengo Campus. Each respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which students achieved the teaching practice objectives by circling the number that best corresponded to his/her response using a Likert-type scale in Section A. Basically, the rating scale was as follows: 1 = Very Low Extent, 2 = Low Extent, 3 = Slightly above Low Extent, 4 = High Extent, 5 = Slightly Extent High Extent, 6 = Very High Extent. Section B was on the characteristics of stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of teaching practice. The rating scale was as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = slightly disagree, 3 = disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = strongly agree. Section C consisted of demographic characteristics of the student teacher. Then, Section D was general and contain comments from student teachers which were open ended.

Questionnaire was validated for clarity, suitability and relevance to research objectives by a panel of experts from the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension, in the University of Eswatini, Luyengo campus. It was also checked for face, content and construct validity.

All the suggestions and corrections were effected before the reliability test. To measure the consistency of the instrument, a test-retest method with an interval of two weeks was used on 20 Consumer Science Education year 4 students. Results from the two tests were analyzed using SPSS where the Spearman rank correlation was used to compare them. A reliability of 0.72 was computed and the instrument was considered reliable. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaire on University of Eswatini, Agricultural Education year 4 students who completed their 2017 teaching practice in High Schools across the country. SPSS version 20 employing descriptive and inferential statistics such as correlation and regression coefficients were used to analyze data. Correlation and multiple regression analysis were computed to determine the explanatory and causal relationships of the factors influencing effectiveness of Teaching Practice. The correlation coefficients were used to find out if there is any relationship between the effectiveness of teaching practice and the characteristics of stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of the 2017 teaching practice. The Davis scale of descriptors was adopted and adapted for the purpose of describing the magnitude of the correlations. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the main factors (amongst the characteristics from Objective 2) which influenced the effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice. In stepwise regression, each variable was entered in sequence and its value was assessed. If adding the variable contributed to the model, then, it was retained, but all other variables in the model were then retested to see if they contributed to the success of the model. If they no longer contributed significantly, they were removed. Since the regression analysis treats all independent variables (X) in the analysis as numerical, nominal variables included in the regression model were dummy coded, assigned the numbers '0' and '1' to indicate membership in any mutually exclusive and exhaustive category. The variables that were entered in the regression model were:

Dependent variable: Y= Effectiveness of 2017 Teaching Practice (1 = Very Low Extent, 2 = Low Extent, 3 = Slightly above Low Extent, 4 = High Extent, 5 = Slightly Extent High Extent, 6 = Very High Extent).

Independent Variables: **X1**= Learning Experience – Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X2** = Teaching Practice - Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X3** = Willingness to learn - Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X4** = Attitude of student teacher - Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X5** = Age (1= 0-20 years, 2= 20-30 years, 3= 30-40 years, 4= 40-50 years, 6=50 and above): **X6** = Supervision - Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X7** = Behavior of students - Level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Slightly Above Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Slightly Above Agree, 6= Strongly Agree): **X8** = Gender - (Female: no=0, yes =1), and (Male: no=0, yes =1): **X9** = District of School - (**Hhohho**– Hhohho = 1, Manzini = 0, Lubombo = 0), (**Manzini** – Hhohho =0, Manzini =1, Lubombo =0) and (**Lubombo** – Hhohho =0, Manzini =0, Lubombo = 1): **X10** = Type of school – (**Mission**- Mission=1, Government=0, Private=0), (**Government** - Mission=0, Government=1, Private=0), (**Private** - Mission=0, Government=0, Private=1).

$$\text{The model: } Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + \dots + b_{10}X_{10} + e \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

The first step taken before the multi regression analysis was to check for multicollinearity. Inter-correlations between the variables of the study were determined and, in this study, there were no multicollinearity problems as the correlations between each of the independent variables were below .80. An a priori probability was set at .05 to determine the level of statistical significance.

Background Characteristics of Respondents

The background characteristics of respondents that participated in the survey included: gender, age, district of school, location of school

and type of school (refer to Table 1). A distribution of these characteristics is presented. More males (70.3 %) than females (29.7%) went out for the 2017 TP and the average age was 24 years old with a standard deviation of 3.75. A high proportion of respondents did their teaching practice in the Manzini region (54.1%), followed by Lubombo region (18.9%), then, the Hhohho region (16.2%), whilst the rest at Shiselweni region (10.8%) with a mean of 2.59 and a standard deviation of 0.89. Majority of student teachers did their teaching practice in rural settings (67.6%) and urban settings (32.4%) with a mean of 1.32 and a standard deviation of 0.47. With regards to type of school, the highest proportion taught in government schools (83.8%) followed by Mission schools (16.2%) with a mean of 1.83 and a standard deviation of 0.37.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to demographic characteristics (N = 39)

<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	11	29.7
Male	26	70.3
<i>Age</i>		
21-30 years	35	94.6
31-40 years	1	2.7
Above 40 years	1	2.7
<i>District of School</i>		
Hhohho	6	16.2
Lubombo	7	18.9
Manzini	20	54.1
Shiselweni	4	10.8
<i>Location of School</i>		
Rural	25	67.6
Urban	12	32.4
<i>Type of School</i>		
Mission	6	16.2
Government	31	83.8

RESULTS

The findings are reported based on the objectives of the study.

Objective 1: Effectiveness of the 2017 Teaching Practice

Results show that most of the teaching practice objectives were attained by student teachers during the 2017 teaching practice (refer to

Table 2). This is reflected by the overall mean of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 1.19 which proved the 2017 TP to be effective. Highly rated effective teaching practice objectives include among others the following: Improved students' public speaking skills ($\bar{x}=5.43$); Punctuality/time management ($\bar{x}=5.24$); and Planning and Lesson preparation skills ($\bar{x}=5.14$). Teaching practice

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations regarding the effectiveness of the 2017 Teaching Practice by student teachers, UNESWA, Luyengo (N= 39)

<i>Teaching practice effectiveness</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
I improved my public speaking skills	5.43	0.80
I learnt to be punctual (time management)	5.24	1.12
I gained appropriate skills of effectively planning and preparing for lessons.	5.14	1.18
I developed my knowledge on good teacher's conduct.	5.05	1.08
I had the opportunity to put theories into practice	4.87	1.25
The environment helped me to develop desirable professional interest, attitudes and ideas relative to the teaching profession	4.78	1.06
I gained skills of selecting appropriate teaching aids for my lessons.	4.70	1.05
The teaching practicum improved my assessment skills of student learning.	4.60	0.96
I had the opportunity to develop an appropriate teacher-student relationship	4.57	1.32
I developed skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching.	4.54	0.96
I learned the appropriate classroom management skills.	4.49	1.15
I developed communication skills with other teachers at school	4.38	1.44
I was involved in extra-curricular activities	3.73	1.81
I gained the knowledge of using positive discipline to encourage student learning.	2.87	1.25
I developed communication skills with students' parents	2.62	1.44
I gained skills of using positive discipline to encourage student learning.	2.41	1.12
Overall	4.34	1.19

objectives with low level of attainment by student teachers included among others the following: Knowledge of using positive discipline to encourage student learning ($\bar{x}=2.87$); Communication skills with students' parents ($\bar{x}=2.62$); Skills of using positive discipline to encouraging student learning ($\bar{x}=2.41$).

Objective 2: Characteristics of stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of TP

Results show the response mean values of characteristics of stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of TP (Table 3). Highly rated characteristics of stakeholders were attitude ($\bar{x}=5.29$), willingness to learn ($\bar{x}=5.20$) and involvement ($\bar{x}=4.57$). Characteristics that were lowly rated include student behaviour ($\bar{x}=3.70$), supervision from cooperating school ($\bar{x}=3.34$) and teaching practice ($\bar{x}=3.31$).

Objective 3: Factors influencing effectiveness of 2017 Teaching Practice

The results obtained from the multiple regression analyses testing the predictive effects of a number of variables on the effectiveness of the 2017 Teaching Practice are presented (refer to Table 4). A significant model emerged at $p < 0.05$. If the P value is less than 0.05, the variable is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.

The model: $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e \dots \dots (2)$ emerged in the study, Where:

Y = the estimated value of the Effectiveness of 2017 Teaching Practice
a = constant; estimated value of Y when each independent variable is zero

X_1 = Knowledge of theory by student teacher

X_2 = Type of school

X_3 = Attitude of student teacher

e = error

Three (3) variables were found to explain and predict the effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice by University of Eswatini students, Luyengo. These variables were: (1) Type of school ($t = 3.61$; $p = 0.00$); (2) Knowledge of theory by student teacher ($t = 2.28$; $p = 0.02$); and (3) Attitude of student teacher towards teaching practice ($t = 2.23$; $p = 0.03$). These variables explained 36 percent of the variance in the effectiveness

Table 3: Characteristics of stakeholders ranked in descending order

Characteristics	Stakeholder	Grand Mean	Standard deviation
Attitude	Student teacher	5.29	0.90
Willingness to learn	Student teacher	5.20	0.94
Involvement	Students	4.57	1.18
Knowledge of theory	Student teacher	4.09	1.16
Learning experiences	Training institution	3.95	1.34
Student behaviour	Student	3.70	1.42
Supervision by cooperating school	Cooperating school	3.34	1.31
Teaching practice programme	Training institution	3.31	1.10

of the 2017 teaching practice by University of Eswatini students, Luyengo as shown by the Adjusted R². The knowledge of theory by student teacher explained 16 percent of the variance and is the main determinant factor contributing to the effective teaching practice with a positive beta value of 0.40. This is also supported by the t-values and p-values in Table 4 which showed the impact of the predictor variables on the dependent variable. A big absolute t-value and a small p-value suggest that a predictor variable is having a large impact on the dependent variable. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted that knowledge of theory by students is the main determinant factor contributing to an effective teaching practice as perceived by University of Eswatini, Luyengo Campus students. The type of school where student did his/her teaching practice also explained 16 percent of the variance with a positive beta value of 0.40. The attitude of student teacher towards teaching practice explained 8 percent of the variance with a positive beta value of 0.31. This leaves about 64 percent of the variance unexplained. Other variables not investigated in the study could explain the variance unexplained by the model.

Effectiveness of Teaching Practice in University of Eswatinican be predicted using this model

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + e$$

Where Y = the estimated value of effective teaching practice

a = intercept (constant)

b_i = slope; partial regression coefficient

X₁ = knowledge of theory

X₂ = type of school

X₃ = attitude of student teacher

e = error

The model specific for this study was therefore: Effective teaching practice = 2.71+ 0.33 (knowledge of theory) + 0.48 (type of school) + 0.31 (attitude of student teachers) + 8.10. The effectiveness of teaching practice can also be summarized using a diagrammatic model as presented in Figure 1.

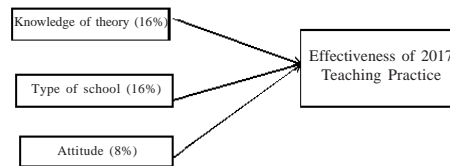


Fig. 1. Regression model

Table 4: Explanatory and predictor variables for Teaching Practice effectiveness

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change	B	Beta	t	p
Type of school	0.40	0.16	0.14	0.16	13.32	0.48	3.61	0.00
Knowledge of theory by student teacher	0.57	0.32	0.28	0.16	4.02	0.33	2.38	0.02
Attitude of student teacher	0.64	0.41	0.36	0.08	4.89	0.31	2.23	0.03
Constant	2.71							

P < 0.05, Adjusted R² = 0.36, Standard Error = 8.10

In support of the above findings, the same characteristics had the highest to moderate relationship to the teaching practice effectiveness index with type of school ($r=0.40$), knowledge of theory by student teacher ($r=0.35$), attitude of student teacher ($r=0.32$) and willingness to learn ($r=0.31$), (refer to Table 5). The other characteristics had a low but positive relationship with the effectiveness index and these were; the teaching practice characteristics ($r=0.28$), supervision ($r=0.12$) and students behavior ($r=0.11$). The findings also indicated that some of the characteristics had a low negative correlation with the TP effectiveness. This suggests that these characteristics influenced the effectiveness of the 2017 TP negatively. These were: gender ($r= -.22$) and age ($r= -.26$). The learning experiences by student teachers, however, had a negligible association with the effectiveness of teaching practice.

Table 5: Correlation coefficients between effectiveness of TP (Y) and the independent variables (X)

Independent variables (X)	Scale of measurement	Correlation coefficients
1. Type of school	Nominal	0.40pb
2. Knowledge of theory	Interval	0.35r
3. Attitude of student teacher	Interval	0.32r
4. Willingness to learn	Interval	0.31r
5. Teaching Practice	Interval	0.28r
6. Supervision	Interval	0.12b
7. Student Behavior	Interval	0.11pb
8. Gender	Nominal	-0.22r
9. Age	Ratio	-0.26r

To enrich the findings of the study, factors influencing the effectiveness of teaching practice as mentioned by Agriculture student teachers at University of Eswatini, Luyengo campus are presented (Table 6). A majority of students responded positively to having knowledge of subject matter to be taught (54.1%), followed by attitude of student teacher (32.4%). Factors with a negative influence on their teaching practice were timing of teaching practice (40.5%) with a majority of respondents, followed by duration of teaching practice (27%) and lastly, inadequate supervision by cooperating teachers (16.2%).

DISCUSSION

There is a general consensus that teaching practice occupies a key position in a teacher

Table 6: Suggestions by student teachers on the factors influencing effectiveness of Teaching Practice

Items	Frequency (n=48)	Percentage (%)
<i>Positive Factors</i>		
1. Knowledge of subject matter to be taught.	20	54.1
2. Attitude of student teacher.	12	32.4
3. Small class sizes.	5	13.5
<i>Negative Factors</i>		
1. Timing of teaching practice (second term).	15	40.5
2. Duration of teaching practice (8weeks).	10	27
3. Inadequate supervision by cooperating teachers.	6	16.2
4. Inadequate teaching materials.	3	8.1
5. Large class size.	3	8.1

training programme. It is during the teaching practice that prospective teachers are exposed to observe and have an experience on the teaching profession (Yan 2010). Teaching practice therefore should ensure that it gives the prospective teachers enough experiences, hence, the factors that influence effectiveness of teaching practice should be taken into consideration. Generally, the student teachers in this study indicated that they benefited from 2017 teaching practice as they were able to attain a number of their teaching practice objectives. Students indicated that they were able to learn public speaking skills and punctuality among other things. They have gained the appropriate skills of effectively planning and preparing for lessons. The opportunity to put theories into practice was also appreciated by students. These findings are in line with findings by Koross (2016), who concluded that student teachers found teaching practice to be very beneficial and it provided an opportunity for the trainee teachers to increase their professional competence. In this study, the goal of teaching practice which focuses on providing student teachers the opportunity to learn the art of teaching in actual classroom situations, under the guidance of an experienced cooperating teacher and students were attained. According to Komba and Kira (2013), quality education plays a significant role in the development of any nation. This is because it is easier to mobilize educated people to take part in the national development process than those who are not educated. Based on the

results of the study, one can assert that the University of Eswatini, Luyengo is training and producing teachers of good quality. Quality education cannot be achieved if a nation does not have quality teachers and Teaching Practice is generally accepted as an important contributing factor towards the quality of teacher education programme in any country.

Different characteristics of the stakeholders involved in the planning and execution of teaching practice such as the knowledge of theory by student teacher, type of school student teacher and attitude of the student teacher played a significant role in the success of the 2017 Teaching Practice. This is in tandem with Smith and Lev-Ari (2010) who stated that the knowledge the student teacher has, can have a great influence on the success of teaching practice. It is evident that students from the University of Eswatini, Luyengo are competent and have incredible knowledge of the subject matter, hence, the success of the Teaching Practice. Adeboye (2002) also confirmed this finding by stating that the depth of knowledge of subject matter by student teacher underscores the student teacher's preparation of his lesson, lesson notes and his ability to gather the relevant materials and teaching aids to supplement recommended books. The attitude of the student teacher towards teaching practice was found to be another important factor contributing to its effectiveness. This finding is in line with Perry (2004) who stated that for teaching practice to be effective, the student teacher should experience the excitement of being part of a real classroom setting, getting to know the learners, planning and organizing the classroom tasks. Any mixed feelings about their ability to cope with unfamiliar situations, control and manage learners can contribute to the making or breaking of a student teacher. Also, according to Maduewesi (1990), the learning environment (type of school) does contribute to an effective teaching practice by student teachers. It basically includes the classroom surroundings, physical facilities in the classroom and teacher- student relationship. Physical environment comprises all those equipment, materials, furniture and learning space that make up the place where learners learn. When all these things are made available to the student teachers, they will be motivated to carry out the task

assigned to them and the aim of teaching practice will be achieved as revealed by findings of this study.

Factors such as duration of teaching practice, timing of teaching practice and supervision from both cooperating school and University supervisor had a low relationship with effectiveness of the 2017 teaching practice by University of Eswatini students, Luyengo. They also were not significant factors contributing to Teaching Practice effectiveness. This finding is in contrast to findings by Pertunia (2015), who conducted a similar study in previous years and concluded that teaching practice of University of Eswatini agriculture student teachers was largely affected by its timing, being carried out during the second term where there are a lot of sporting activities in the schools. Pertunia stated that this therefore, leads to a negative impact on the quality of the teaching practice through reduced hours of real classroom experience. Other researchers such as Endeley (2014) and Komba and Kira (2013) in their own studies also stated that students who spent eight weeks in the field complained that it is not helpful enough to make them acquire good teaching skills. Supervision is also revealed by previous studies as a factor that has an influence on Teaching Practice. According to Magdeline (2013), the success of any teacher training programme is dependent on its practical component. Magdalene stated that it is therefore necessary that the planning and supervision of teaching practice are viewed as very important tasks and are preceded by careful planning and organization. If the supervisor teacher does not give support and provide the student teacher with opportunities to explore dilemmas and contradictions when the student begins to question the existing structure of his/her classroom, he or she may withdraw from the search rather than take further risks. When that happens, lack of supervisory support diminishes the student teacher-quality, such that there would-be no-good teachers to talk about in the schools in the foreseeable future. In the University of Eswatini, Luyengo, as evidenced by the findings, the supervisory component has been adequately addressed and has perhaps, led in part to the effectiveness of the Programme. Perhaps, with the revision of pertinent diploma/degree programmes, the identifi-

cation of overlaps in courses, reduction of the duration of programmes from five to four years and changes in courses offered, in response to the current socioeconomic challenges that took place in the academic year 2005/2006 at UNESWA (University Calendar 2012/2013), the teaching practice programme also improved in terms of implementation. There were no changes in its duration, however, as it still remained (8) weeks in 2017.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the 2017 teaching practice by UNESWA students, Luyengo was effective. Students learnt to be punctual, improved their public speaking skills and learnt the appropriate skills for effective planning and preparation for lessons. The knowledge of theory or subject matter by student teacher remains one of the major factors for teaching practice effectiveness. The type of school the student is attached and the attitudes of the student teachers are also crucial for an effective teaching practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is beyond reasonable doubt that Teaching Practice can play an important role in the preparation of teachers. On the basis of this study, the training programme of teachers is effective; however, it is recommended that efforts be made to further increase the knowledge and attitudes of the student teachers. This can be accomplished by introducing "Micro-peer Teaching", which is a subtopic under the course "Methods of Teaching and Testing in Agriculture" as a separate course in UNESWA, Luyengo. This will afford students more time to increase the knowledge of theory by student teachers, increase enthusiasm regarding the programme as well as improve their overall attitudes before teaching practice. The University of Eswatini, Luyengo should place their student teachers in Government-owned schools as more support by either cooperating teachers or administration is given to student teachers to enhance their development. The Ministry of Education should give incentives to attaching schools and cooperat-

ing teachers for contributing positively to the teacher training sector.

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