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Effectiveness of School Internship Programme: Perceptions of Prospective Teachers

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Abstract

School internship programme is the practical aspect of teacher training, as prospective teachers find an opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge, teaching methods, principles and techniques in real situations. The study is a descriptive survey which sought to assess the perceptions of 662 prospective teachers for the school internship programme. The data was assessed through mean scores. High levels of satisfaction was found among prospective teachers on the dimensions of professional and institutional socialization; learning and professional development; socio-emotional aspects; and professional identity and vocational competencies. But prospective teachers were not satisfied with the support and supervision provided during the internship. There is a need to adopt all the effective strategies for improving school internship programme, such as placement of prospective teachers in good host schools; and mentees and teacher educators be trained for effective mentoring and supervision. The innovative strategies should be embraced to strengthen all the components of internship programme to positively affect prospective teachers' preparation for real time teaching.

Keywords: School internship programme; Teacher training; Prospective teachers; and Dimensions of school internship programme.

Teacher education is an important foundation of any educational system. The primary aim of teacher education institutions is to create quality courses that effectively prepare prospective teachers for their future career. Quality teacher education programs require field placements to give opportunities to prospective teachers to experience the context of their career, to watch and learn from experts in the field, to understand more of the workplace culture into which they are entering and to demonstrate their transferability of theory into practice (Zeichner, 2006).

Teaching practice or practicum is a key component of a teacher training program. If the literature and folklore of teacher education agree on one point, it is that the

student teaching experience or practicum is important. 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, 2008). Rigden (1994) argued that real world experiences beat any textbook explanation of the classroom. So, one is not yet a teacher until they are induced into the teaching profession through teaching practice.

Like all the other professional programmes, field engagement is an essential component of any teacher education programme. In the case of teacher education programmes, the sustained engagement of prospective teachers with the students and teachers in schools over a period of time is known as

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school internship which equips the prospective teacher to build a repertoire of professional understandings, competencies and skills, and positive attitude to schooling and teaching. In fact, it is this component of the teacher education curriculum which facilitates transformation of a student-teacher from being learners in the art and science of teaching to adequately-equipped teacher to perform the responsibilities of a teacher in actual school settings (NCTE, 2014).

The internship is conceived as a professional learning bridge between the end of pre-service professional preparation