


Exploring the Teacher Internship Processes of School Attachment and Final Lesson Examination at Teacher Training Colleges in Rwanda

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Abstract

Final-year students in Rwandan Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) continue encountering difficulties in the school attachment and final lesson processes. This study consequently examines the teacher internship components of school attachment and final lesson examination at TTCs in Rwanda. The objective was to find out if there were any gaps (the duration question included) in the two components and develop intervention strategies which encompass a teaching practice model aimed at scaling their effectiveness in alignment with the CBC for the achievement of SDG 4 which is hinged on quality education. A mixed method approach of four TTCs from the Eastern and Western Provinces out of the 16 in the country was purposively selected due to their geographical locations. A total of 100 participants were selected, including 20 TTC tutors, administrators, and 80 Year 3 students from the classes of 2022 and 2023, due to their relevance to the study. Data were collected through individual interviews, open-ended questionnaires and document analysis after a pilot study at a TTC in the Western province. The Theory of Change (ToC) perspective whose principles emphasise transformative change to foster quality education by identifying teacher education institutions as agents of change and game changers was used. Data gathered were analysed using a thematic approach. The study found that the school internship programme components of school attachment and final lesson examination were compartmentalised. The study suggests that the Rwanda Education Board improves the teaching practice curriculum by combining the school attachment and final lesson components.

Keywords: school attachment, teacher internship, final lesson examining, teaching practice, teacher training colleges.

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Introduction

Teacher education programmes worldwide have changed curriculum models to meet the requirements of the 21st-century teacher product. The emerging 21st-century educational transformations have seen several countries, including, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda adjusting their teaching practice models (REB, 2019). However, education institutions' attempts to adjust their teaching practice programmes to 21st-century emerging trends could experience unforeseen challenges (Ngao & Xiaohong, 2020). Consequently, this study was inspired by the awareness that effective teaching practice processes are a means to fully implement the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) and achieve SDG 4, which is about quality education (UNDP, 2023). The CBC is designed to develop learners' competencies rather than just knowledge. CBC is characterised by approaches that are largely learner-centred, criterion-referenced, constructivist and focused on learning outcomes with an emphasis on formative assessment (REB, 2020). Furthermore, the idea that an effective teaching practice model is a means of developing a teacher who is a change agent and a game changer, a means to the student teachers' professional development and has a bearing on learners' performance (Aglazor, 2017) has motivated this study. The purpose of the study was to find out if there were any gaps in the TTC teacher internship processes of school attachment and final lesson examination components and develop intervention strategies for their improvement. The strategies would encompass the duration, timing and assessment procedure for the effective implementation of CBC. The need to effectively implement the CBC at the primary school level, therefore, calls for continuous comprehensive engagements to change the mindset of educators concerning TTC teaching internship processes and assessment procedures.

Internationally, effective teacher internship programmes have been considered the bedrock for a teacher's professional identity and an important factor in determining quality education (Glazor, 2017). In this regard, if the internship programme is ineffective, it risks being irrelevant to the community, globally and to the world of work (Ngao and Xiaohong, 2020). Thus, teachers need to be fully equipped with knowledge, understanding and practical abilities to integrate the competence-based approaches in and outside the classroom (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007). However, despite wide research coverage showing the evolving nature of the teacher education component of teaching practice internationally, little is known about the Rwanda teacher education experiences in the school attachment and final lesson examining

component processes at the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) level, which the current study aims to address.

TEach practice/teacher internship has been defined as a hands-on training period for student teachers that helps to bridge the gap between knowledge for teaching and knowledge from teaching, that is, theory and practice by trying out new ideas and challenging ‘taken for granted’ practices under the supervision of an experienced mentor (Mudavanhu, 2016; Mapfumo, Chitsiko and Chireshe, 2010). In Rwanda, school attachment is a component of teacher internship. Teaching practice thus provides opportunities to try the art of teaching which is a means to equip learners with skills to integrate theory and practice before joining the real world of work. It also develops student teachers’ positive approach and attitudes to the school community which facilitates professional growth awareness and provides opportunities to establish strong relationships with learners, teachers and other education stakeholders as well as the opportunity to discover and develop one’s ability as a teacher (Sithole and Mafa, 2017; Aglazor, 2017; REB, 2020). The school internship is therefore a professional development approach whereby school-based mentors and TTC tutors are involved in mentoring the student teacher in all educational activities for purposes of effective Competence Based Curriculum implementation and skills acquisition. As such, an effective teaching practice component makes a global teacher product in that, such programmes are designed to provide an opportunity to develop and evaluate aspiring teachers’ competence in actual school settings (Maphosa, Shumba and Shumba, 2007).

Teacher education internship in Rwandan Teacher Training Colleges contexts

Like her Southern Africa and East African Community (EAC) counterparts, Rwanda introduced the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2015 to improve the quality of education, particularly at the primary and secondary school level in alignment with 21st-century teacher expectations (REB, 2019; REB, 2015). The EAC comprises Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda (REB, 2015). There are 16 teacher training colleges (TTCs) in Rwanda that train pre-primary (nursery) and primary school teachers for three years at the basic education level after transitioning from 3 years of general secondary to teacher professional education (REB, 2020).

The Rwanda teacher education internship comprises four components. They are, micro-teaching, demonstration school practice, school attachment and final lesson examining (REB,

2020). Micro-teaching/peer teaching is a method used in pre-service and in-service teacher programmes whereby teacher trainees practice teaching to their peers in small groups before they are deployed to teach in either demonstration schools or schools for teaching practice (school attachment), (REB, 2020). Microteaching provides an opportunity for mastery of teaching skills such as scheming, lesson planning and teaching methods ultimately enhancing the confidence of student teachers. The student teacher's micro-lesson is reviewed, discussed, analysed, and evaluated by the tutors and peers to give effective feedback. Demonstration school practice is whereby students are deployed to teach in schools near TTCs in the second term of the second year, for a minimum of two weeks to strengthen CBC implementation (REB, 2020). School attachment has been defined by REB (2020), as a period during which a student teacher spends in a school doing teaching activities that include observation of the school environment and lessons from mentors, participating in extracurricular activities as well as teaching lessons in their areas of specialisation. The final lesson examination is conducted in the third term of year three for every student at demonstration schools. The final lesson is assessed by internal assessors (tutors from the host TTC) and external assessors (tutors from another TTC), (REB, 2020). These components are regarded as determinants of the overall effectiveness of the teaching internship and the sustainability of quality education by Ndiokubwayo and Murasira (2019). The study's focus on two out of the four teacher internship components was motivated by the authors' earlier study findings on teacher internship at TTCs in Rwanda which revealed major gaps in the school attachment and final lesson components (Takavarasha and Zimuto, 2024). The study findings motivated this study to engage in an in-depth understanding of the school attachment and final lesson processes for purposes of coming up with recommendations to improve the practice. It is also important to note that there is scant literature about teaching practice at the Basic Education level in Rwanda, let alone the school attachment and final lesson examining components at the TTC level. The current study thus helps to identify existing gaps and come up with recommendations for timely interventions that may improve the effectiveness of the teacher internship at the TTC level for the achievement of quality education.

Rationale for The Study

While there exist some studies on teacher internship, there appears to be no research that combines school attachment and final lesson component processes at Teacher Training College contexts in Rwanda. The purpose of this study was to find out if there are any gaps in the two-component processes through the views and perceptions of participants to recommend

strategies for their improvement for the effective implementation of the CBC. Furthermore, no study known to these researchers has been conducted so far to appraise the stakeholders of the extent to which the school attachment and final lesson examining components have been implemented to date in line with the CBC requirements. The identification of school attachment and final lesson examination components gaps was necessary in informing policy and practice to recommend adjustments towards strengthening the programme where necessary hence the need to undertake this study. The study's mixed method approach with Theory of Change (ToC) lenses helped to provide a thorough analysis of the data gathered. A study of this nature therefore helps to further align the Rwanda education system to international standards and make it more relevant to local and global contexts.

Statement of The Problem

Although the teacher internship components of school attachment and final lesson examination offer immense opportunities to put theory into practice by student teachers in Rwandan TTCs, they have not yet been evaluated since the inception of CBC in 2015. As such, understanding the experiences of Year 3 students and tutors through the Theory of Change lenses is crucial in coming up with recommendations to enhance teacher internship effectiveness.

Research Objectives

The Research objectives were to;

- Establish the participants' experiences with the TTC internship components processes of school attachment and final lesson examination in Rwanda.
- Identify factors that impact negatively on the effectiveness of TTC internship components of school attachment and final lesson examination processes in Rwanda.
- Recommend strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the TTC internship components of school attachment and final lesson examination in Rwanda.

Methodology

A mixed methods research design was implemented in this study and a sample case of four Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) was purposively chosen to collect data from a population of 16 TTCs in Rwanda. Informed by the Theory of Change (ToC) throughout the research processes, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, integrated and analysed thematically for purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). The study integrated both qualitative and quantitative data

to broaden the researchers' understanding of the phenomenon under study instead of overreliance on a single method. (Creswell and Creswell 2018). In addition, the mixed methods design was adopted because the research questions could not be answered using just one method, making them complementary for stronger findings and conclusions through triangulation (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, the mixed methods enabled the collection of both close-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data which proved advantageous for this study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Of the four selected TTCs, two were from the Eastern province and the other two from the Northern province. The case study method of four TTCs was chosen for strategic reasons given the size of the research, their geographical location which was within the researchers' locations and the time available to complete the study (Yin, 1986). The choice of two case studies from two provinces was also chosen so that different aspects of the issue can be illustrated from different provinces to come up with a broad understanding of the teacher internship components under study. Informed by the Theory of Change lens whose principles emphasise transformative change to foster quality education, the current study regards teacher education institutions as agents of change and game changers through examining the school attachment and final lesson examination, possibly leading to a more effective teacher education programme in Rwandan TTCs.

A total of 100 participants were selected, including 20 TTC tutors (10 males and 10 females), administrators, and 80 students (40 males and 40 females) from the Year 3 2022 and 2023 Year 3 2023 classes. The underlying assumption in considering the student teachers, tutors and administration as study participants was that they were the key stakeholders of teacher education on the ground and that their views would go a long way in improving the teacher internship processes. Students' perceptions were crucial in giving a say/voice in their training. Purposive sampling allowed the researchers to deliberately choose participants they wanted to include in the sample (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). In this case, the Year 3 student teachers were sampled for the reason that they are final-year students who have completed the teacher training cycle with teaching practice experience. The chosen students also had attributes of being proficient in English, outgoing and having participated in the two components of the final lesson examination (June 2023) and school attachment (November 2023). The tutors were chosen because they took part in the two components of the teacher internship programme

whilst the administrative staff were chosen for their positions and supervisory roles at the institutions.

The semi-structured questions for the interviews and questionnaires were generated in alignment with the research questions, giving room for diversity as participants were allowed to respond from their perspectives. Further probing during the interviews when the need arose led to an in-depth understanding of the topic (Cohen, Morrison and Manion, 2011). The face-to-face interviews were conducted to complement the questionnaire responses and document analysis and served to address grey areas which would have arisen leading some interviews to be conducted in two sessions for an in-depth understanding.

Data Collection Methods

The two types of data (qualitative and quantitative) were combined concurrently at several stages of the research process including the data collection, the data analysis, interpretations and the presentation of findings (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Both data types were accorded equal weighting during the research processes. The researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compared the two to determine the corroborations and differences (Mertens, 2003). The researchers found concurrent data collection appropriate in that it has a shorter data collection period as compared to other approaches such as sequential.

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected through individual interviews, questionnaires and a school attachment observation checklist after a pilot study in one TTC from the Southern province. Pedagogical documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, student supervision forms and student's school attachment final reports were analysed in a concurrent manner when the researchers were still in the field given the time frame of the research. The analysed documents included the school attachment supervision form, final lesson examining form and pedagogical documents (schemes of work, lesson plans and class diary). A questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was administered to students whilst face-to-face interviews were conducted with tutors and administrators. Closed questions helped to elicit specific information from the respondents, while the open-ended questions assisted the respondents to freely express their perspectives (Cohen, Morrison and Manion, 2011).

Data Analysis

Since the data collected was both quantitative and qualitative, thematic analysis through descriptions, frequencies and percentages was used (Mertens, 2003). The interviewees' responses were audio-recorded and handwritten in memos and then transcribed. Interview data was then combined with the questionnaire responses and data from the documents. Themes were developed from similar codes according to their meaning to the research questions and participants' responses (Bazeley, 2013; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The internship documents were analysed using a checklist that focused on the rubric, content quality and adequacy and supervision frequency. Some of what the participants said was presented verbatim using pseudonyms such as Y3 for students, T1, 2 etc. for tutors and A1, 2, 3, etc., for administration. This provided a richer and more informed picture of the phenomena. The findings and discussion section which is the discussion phase presents the themes that emerged from the data gathered. The following were the themes that came out of the data collected; experiences of the TTC internship components processes of school attachment and final lesson examination, factors that impact negatively on the effectiveness of TTC internship components and strategies to scale the effectiveness of the TTC internship components of school attachment and final lesson examining.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research study from data collection, storage, analysis and reporting the findings. Participants were adequately informed of the purpose of the study and participation was voluntary through obtaining consent before interviews and questionnaire administration. Furthermore, participants were informed of their right to withdraw or continue with the study at any time. The anonymity of participants and study locations was also maintained by asking them not to write their names on the questionnaires.

Findings and Discussion

Deployment Patterns and Their Impact

The research found that the quality of the deployment pattern is fairly wide although the largest student concentration was in the district of the TTCs. Participant T4 remarked that *there is a good deployment pattern as student teachers practice teaching at schools near their home area, within walking distance and getting support from home*. Participant T2 indicated that *the*

deployment is fair, but there are instances where one student is deployed at a school making them unable to share ideas with fellow students. However, participant observations indicated that a few students were scattered countrywide. The deployment pattern of students in districts far away from the TTCs brought about many challenges as tutors had to travel long distances using inconvenient public transportation. Participant T5 argued that *we are mainly faced with transport challenges as we have to visit learners in some remote areas in faraway districts.* Participant Y3 2022, reiterated that *sometimes you are visited by one tutor who will be tired because they would have travelled a long distance and will be suffering from fatigue and I think it affects the way they assess you.* The same sentiments were also uttered by Participant A 5 who said, *we do not have transport for the tutors so they have to travel using public transport to reach faraway districts which in most cases is not good for the assessment programme.* The above finding hence points to the fact that poor transport provisions and the deployment of learners in faraway districts affect the smooth running of the school attachment.

The deployment challenges may be said to be affecting the end product of the teaching practice negatively. Such a countrywide student deployment pattern is problematic in that it has time and financial implications. This finding is similar to Mapfumo, Chitsiko and Chireshe (2012) and Takavarasha and Zimuto's (2024) studies that found that teaching practice can be stressful sometimes due to challenges of supervision. This is because tutors have to travel and hustle up until they reach their destinations. In most cases, these destinations are reached when one is already tired as postulated by participant Y3. Deployment patterns of this nature could be attributed to a lack of a zoning system by TTCs in the country. In this case, the country has 30 districts and 16 TTCs. Thus, each TTC may deploy in their districts and then share the remaining districts. This helps in standardising the process ultimately avoiding unnecessary overlaps. Such a deployment pattern helps to cut transport costs, and time and enables frequent visits as almost all schools will be within reach. The career pathway placements should be done with deployment patterns in mind. Deployment patterns should therefore be improved through zoning. This could start from the student deployment/admission in TTCs whereby they can be deployed in their home districts. This helps to cut expenses, and time and increases the frequency of supervision. T7 also pointed out that *it is better to deploy at least 2 students at a school so that they can help each other.* As such the researchers suggest that learners could be deployed in batches for them to help each other and make visits easier for the tutors.

Challenges With the Duration of The School Attachment Component

The participants indicated that the one-term (three months) duration of school attachment was too short to allow students to adequately grow in the profession. One participant said, that *the time you start getting accustomed to the teaching modalities the school attachment comes to an end*. Another student teacher concurred *the time is too short; we do not have the opportunity of even know the abilities of the learners we will be teaching for us to be effective in our teaching*. The arguments point to the fact that student teachers are of the view that although school attachment is important and is done in Rwandan TTCs it does not offer them with ample opportunity to unravel their worthy. However, many scholars Sithole and Mafa, 2017; Aglazor, 2017; REB, 2020 among them argue that, besides applying the theoretical skills learnt at college, the school attachment enables students to discover and develop one's ability as a teacher among other issues. It also allows having classroom experiences such as interacting with and understanding learners and catering for their individual needs. It provides opportunities to have classroom experiences and it allows the development of qualities crucial to teaching such as humility, interpersonal skills, openness and patience. Thus the findings of this research resonate well with contemporary literature which indicates various advantages that come with school attachment including establishing relationships with learners, teachers and other stakeholders involved in education. Therefore, the various responsibilities expected of student teachers require more than one term's practice.

Host School Protocols and Cooperation from School-based Supervisors

There has also been an observation that the school attachment protocols were very good, in most cases with the administration and teachers very welcoming, supportive and cooperative to student teachers and supervisors. However, it was found that some school mentors were not available when tutors gave feedback to students after supervision leading to the tutors being unable to share the student teacher's progress with the mentor. Participant T 16 points out that *out of the five schools I visited, I only met mentors in two schools. Some of them were avoiding me I do not know why*. Participant T 8 added *sometimes you find the mentor around the school but they will avoid meeting you until you decide to talk to the student teachers and leave*. The above postulations point to the fact that some mentors avoid meeting TTC tutors who would have visited schools for learner assessments. Thus tutors will resort to assessing student teachers without the guidance of school-based mentors. This finding is a disjuncture of what a mentor ought to be by Chireshe and Chireshe (2010). The authors described a mentor as a

qualified and experienced classroom teacher whose roles include being a supervisor, guide, counsellor, coach, overseer, teacher, role model, supporter, assessor, critic and instructor. The failure of tutors to meet the mentor might be detrimental to the final product since the mentor and tutor are the co-players in the moulding of student teachers during the teaching practice process. The lack of coordination between them could mean that the student-teacher will not receive the necessary feedback required for professional growth. The avoidance of participation by some mentors is thus problematic as it leaves the tutors without the full knowledge of the student's daily performance in real class situations. This consequently affects the end product of the teaching product.

The Contention Regarding the Frequency of Tutor Visits

The findings revealed that one hundred per cent of participants were dissatisfied with the once-off School attachment supervision visit frequency in one term (three months). This however has been found as not being enough time for student teachers' grooming in the profession enabling them to effectively implement the CBC. Participant T 10 said, *we normally visit them once because they will be out for only one term which is effectively three months*. Participant T 6 added *we visit them once and considering the duration of the teaching practice I think we cannot do more than that*. Participant A 3 also said *the resources allow us one visit due to the time these students spend in teaching practice*. Participant Y3 2022 said *I was visited once and it was at the end of the term when learners were preparing to write their end-of-term examinations*. The findings show that the three-month school attachment duration was a contributory factor to inadequate supervision visits. This finding indicates a short duration of teaching practice when compared to what other teacher education teaching practice programs offer in other regions. For example, in Zimbabwe, post-advanced-level secondary school student teachers do teaching practice for 2 terms (6 months) whilst the post-ordinary level student teachers do their teaching practice for one year (University of Zimbabwe DTE Handbook, 2015). Furthermore, college lecturers are expected to do at least two assessments/supervision visits to each student per year (Chireshe and Chireshe, 2010). Similarly, in Tanzania, the pre-service programme consists of two years of training in content and pedagogy, with three school practice periods of 8 weeks each. In Uganda, the pre-service teacher programme duration is three years. It consists of two years of training in content and pedagogy, with three school practice periods of 8 weeks each. In Kenya, the primary school teacher training course duration is 2 years, with three sessions of teaching practice, one in year

1 and two in year 2. In Burundi, the candidate should have an Ordinary level certificate to qualify for admission into a teacher education course and qualifies with a D7 Certificate after four years of training. Those who join after secondary 6 (S6) do the course for two years and graduate with a D6 certificate (REB, 2020). On the other hand, in Rwanda, there a 3 years of teacher training after 3 years of secondary (Ngao and Xiaohong, 2020). This indicates that the Rwandan TTC school attachment duration needs a longer duration to be in line with regional trends and for the effective implementation of the CBC curriculum.

The Final Lesson Examination and The Internship Assessment Challenges

About the final lesson examination, it was observed that the lessons were conducted at demonstration schools for two weeks, that is, one week for each TTC as an exchange programme. It was evident that the final lessons were well prepared by students as evidenced by their detailed lesson plans, varied media and effective lesson presentations. The students were examined in two lessons (lesson 1 and lesson 2) on different days by a panel of three assessors. The panel comprised 1. an external assessor, who was a tutor from a visiting TTC and was the panel leader, 2 an assessor from the host TTC and 3 a school-based mentor from the host demonstration school. The three assessors fill in separate supervision forms during student-teacher lesson delivery. The marks from each assessor are then averaged to come up with a final mark for one lesson. The final marks for lessons 1 & 2 were then recorded and averaged in a different form called consolidated form which was signed by three assessors to confirm the student's final mark. However, it was observed that the final lesson was done in demonstration schools and not where the teaching practice took place. Participant T 6 has it that, *our final lessons are done in term 3 at demonstration schools near our TTCs after the school attachment in term one*. Although the process of conducting the final lesson examination at demonstration schools is strategic to TTC administration and its stakeholders, it is a disadvantage to the student teacher who will be meeting the learners for the first time and may fail to control them due to lack of knowledge on class behaviour. Student teachers would therefore teach in unfamiliar environments, teaching students with unfamiliar names and behaviours as well as being unaware of the learners' special needs. impacting negatively on their classroom management skills and performance. Thus if the final lessons are conducted at a familiar place with familiar learners the student teachers' performance may be enhanced.

The process of conducting the final lesson examination 5 months after the school attachment practice leads to the compartmentalization of the two components and disrupts term three learning activities as well as examination preparations by both tutors and students. Participant Y 3 2023 said *we do the final lesson in demonstration schools and it comes when we will be preparing for our final examinations*. The above findings indicate that the timing of the final lesson and its location is seen as being problematic by the student teachers. The learners believe that the final lesson could be effective if it is done at teaching practice schools and done at the end of the teaching practice for convenience's sake. This is even though the school attachment is examined through the final lesson. Thus, school attachment culminates into the final lesson examination, making it a climax and a conclusion to the teaching practice. Therefore, the ideal situation could be that the final lesson be assessed at the end of the school attachment. This helps in giving a true reflection of the student performance and to cuts on time, and costs and saves students room teaching in unfamiliar environments.

These two aspects aim to achieve the same objective which is to develop a holistic teacher. Be that as it may, the research has found out that ninety-nine per cent of the total sample believes that these two components must be combined for effective management and time-saving purposes. Participant A 4 posits *that I think if these aspects are combined we will save time and it will enable the learners to concentrate on their final summative assessment examinations without disturbances. This will also ease the pressure on us as administrators*. Participant A 1 added, *if these two components are combined it will help learners since the final lesson assessment will be conducted while they are still in their placement schools. These are the environments they will be used to and that will enable them to perform exceptionally*. The same sentiments were expressed by Participant Y3 2022 1 who said *I think if the two are combined we will be able to do the final lesson when we will be with our school-based mentors thereby increasing the chances of us being coached on how to teach properly*. The findings above show that participants are of the view that the final lesson must be done during the time students will be in school attachment. This according to the above findings will allow the learners to receive guidance on proper lesson delivery from their mentors as well as allow them to have ample time for final examination preparations when they come to their respective TTCs. Combining the two as postulated by Participant A 4 will also help the administrators plan and execute their duties efficiently since the hustle of organising the final lesson would have been removed.

The study found that a panel of three assessors may not be necessary and problematic as there may be connivance between the TTC tutors as earlier discussed. In Zimbabwe, only one external examiner assesses a student and this is effective and adequate (UZ DTE, 2015). This indicates the possibility of using two instead of three assessors at a time. The use of a panel of three assessors on an exchange programme in examining could be problematic as there could be a ‘scratch my back’ and I scratch yours’ scenario among assessors from the paired TTCs leading to tendencies to inflate marks.

The absence of quality assurance processes was also noticed in the final lesson examination. Quality assurance processes are crucial in overseeing and monitoring the conduct of the examining processes and checking if several procedural processes are followed. Quality assurance processes could be administered by an institution of higher learning such as a university. The role of the university would be to offer guidance and supervision, and provision of advisory services to TTCs (UZ, DTE Handbook, 2015). This process may enable the TTCs to evolve from certificate to diploma and degree-level work shortly. In Zimbabwe, all 17 colleges of education are under the associateship of the University of Zimbabwe Department of Teacher Education (University of Zimbabwe, DTE Handbook, 2015) The teaching practice examination is summative and is referred to as an external assessment (Chireshe and Chireshe, 2010). This might also be adopted for quality assurance.

The findings indicate that tutors assess about 11 candidates each day during the final lesson which has been considered too much by assessors. Participant A 2 said *we normally assign eleven to twelve students per day*. When probed for more information he went on to say *The number is that much because the final lessons have to be done in a specified time*. Participant T 11 said *we are given several students that we have to asses per day and in most cases it is more than ten learners*. The findings above clearly show that there is a targeted large number of student supervisions that must be achieved per day. However, the targets which are large in number are in most cases detrimental to the production of quality results as the assessors would be fatigued. Tutors may end up engaging in a hurried process just to reach the target of the day, thereby compromising the quality of final lesson results.

From the school attachment and final lesson supervision forms, it was noted with concern that there was no grading scale. The absence of a grading scale on assessment instruments of this nature could lead assessors to allocate marks ‘in the dark’. A lack of a grading scale on the supervision forms may lead assessors to inflate marks to undeserving students. The grading

scale could be placed on the last page of the forms. This helps to inform the tutors and to make the mark allocations realistic. Thus the creation of a grading scheme which is realistic and practical is one strategy that could be adopted for quality assurance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teacher internship is a critical aspect of teacher preparation in TTCs and that the two components of school attachment and final lesson examination are equally valuable as the process attempt to bring fairness and objectivity to student internal and external supervision. The study, therefore, concludes that for student teachers to be able to fully implement the CBC and become more competent, they need more time to adequately put into practice the foundations of teaching and to be supervised more often to help them develop desired 21st-century teacher competencies as well as the expectations of the world of work. The school attachment and final lesson examinations needs to be upgraded by combining them to cater for a holistic and quality professional growth for the student teachers.

Recommendations

Informed by the above findings, the study recommends that;

- The deployment patterns of the TTC could be enhanced through zoning. TTCs could establish zones delineated by districts and or distance from their centers. In this model a TTC will only deploy in its zone which will be near the centre for easy access. The zoning could start from the time learners are deployed in various TTCs via the carrier pathway method. This will enable tutors to easily travel to schools and help students maintain consistent access to their schools, which is beneficial when they face challenges, as well as cutting on time and costs.
- We suggest combining the school attachment and final lesson components. This could be beneficial because the learners will be examined during their placement period. As a result, it may be helpful for REB to extend the school attachment duration from one term (three months) to one year. This would provide a more comprehensive professional education and allow a more thorough examination of the combined two aspects.
- To enhance authenticity and value, the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA) could consider including external quality assurance examination processes in the internship programme. This could involve partnering with institutions like the University of Rwanda to act as external examination boards. This approach would ensure the quality of the internship programme meets national and international standards.

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