

**PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS ON
TEACHING PRACTICE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN
LIVINGSTONEDISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

CHIDAKWA MWEETWA FRINAH

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Education**

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DECLARATION

I, **Chidakwa Mweetwa Frinah**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a fruit of my own efforts and represents my own ideas; and the content obtained from the scholarly work of others is duly acknowledged and referenced. To the best of my knowledge this dissertation has not been submitted in this University or any other place for a qualification of degree.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by **Chidakwa Mweetwa Frinah** has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Sociology of Education by the University of Zambia.

Examiner 1	Signature	Date
.....

Examiner 2	Signature	Date
.....

Examiner 3	Signature	Date
.....

Chairperson/ Board of Examiner's	Signature	Date
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Supervisor	Signature	Date
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents and friends whose proven love, encouragement and insights sustained me throughout the course of producing this work. I would also like to dedicate this work to fellow teachers and the teachers in the making (Student Teachers) whose long hours of work continue to shape the young minds of students into productive and moral citizens of our country, Zambia.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perceptions (referred to in this study as propositions or views) student teachers and teacher educators hold toward teaching practice in colleges of education in Livingstone District. The perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators were established as pivotal elements of gauging the benefits of teaching practice program in colleges of education as well as identifying the challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators during the teaching practice period. The study utilized the qualitative approach. The design used was a case study. A total sample of 26 participants consisting of 16 student teachers and 10 teacher educators was purposively drawn from two government colleges of education and three schools in Livingstone District. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussion with the student teachers and One-to-One interview with the lecturers and class teachers. Analysis of data was done thematically where emerging themes were presented in a descriptive form. The findings from the study revealed that, though student teachers and teacher educators showed positive perceptions towards teaching practice, student teachers were more appreciative of the benefits of integrating teaching practice in the teaching and learning process. The study further found that student teachers faced challenges such as lack of orientation, supervisor's poor skills in teaching practice, lack of teaching/learning materials, practical teaching skills, and classroom control and management skills. Based on the findings, the study concluded that the positive perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on the teaching practice program play a key role in the success of the practicum. The study further established that, identification of the challenges of student teachers and teacher educators and their subsequent resolution are key pathways of enhancing practical teaching skills, classroom control and management of the future teachers on one hand, and the work of colleges on the other. The study recommends that colleges of education should consider addressing the challenges that student teachers have regarding teaching practice as it is done at college and schools. In the same vein, the colleges of education in the district should, among other things prioritize teaching practice by allocating more time to the course during the theoretical training in colleges so as to better equip student teachers with practical knowledge and skills for their future work. Furthermore, the colleges should also provide instructional aids in the schools in order to strengthen the link between pre-service training experiences and the employment work places of future teachers. In order to strengthen these, student teachers performance during teaching practice should be assessed in all areas such as lesson planning, record keeping, general teaching skills and style of delivery of subject matter.

Key words: *Teaching practice, Perceptions, Student teachers, Teacher educator.*

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BED	Bachelor of Education
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
TP	Teaching practice

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Perception:** Refers to an insight into something or the faculty of perceiving or the result of something perceived by an individual. In this study perceptions refer to propositions or views that student teachers and teacher educators hold toward teaching practice practicum.
- Teaching Practice:** Refers to an essential component of teacher training that helps the student teachers to have the experience in the actual teaching and learning environment. It represents a range of experiences to which student teachers are exposed during their training in college and in the schools.
- Pre-Service Teacher:** A university or college student training as a school teacher who undergoes teaching practice before graduation.
- Pre-Service Teacher Education:** Academic and professional education offered to pre-service student teachers in colleges of education during their training.
- A Teacher Educator:** Refers to a person, who helps trainee teachers to acquire the knowledge, competences and positive attitudes required to be effective teachers.
- Student-Teacher:** A person who is teaching in a school for a limited period under supervision as part of a course to qualify as a teacher.
- Strategies:** A sequence of decisions purposely undertaken to achieve a goal or tools to address the challenges of teaching practice.
- Reflective practice:** Is an active and careful consideration of the basic assumptions and conclusion one holds in a direct experience that inform future actions.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation, limitations and operational definitions of terms used in the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The primary aim of any educational enterprise is to equip learners with skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes that can make them function effectively in the society. Thus, education is a powerful tool used to develop teachers' desirable habits, skills and attitudes through the shaping of behaviour of individuals for adequate adjustment in the society or teaching profession (Furco, 1996). Considering this, quality education becomes an essential factor in realising these desired aims of education of every nation. Hence, the role of teachers is a crucial factor in determining whether or not these desired educational aims and objectives are to be achieved. This suggests that for quality education to be achieved, Zambia should have professionally trained teachers who are physically and psychologically sound who possess practical quality knowledge, skills and attitudes for the betterment of educational institutions. For this reason, Du plessis (2014) is of the opinion that "the teaching profession should be for those who are intellectually competent, effective and efficient decision-makers, creators of warm classroom environment, seekers of alternative strategies, and possessors of professional interest and pride" (p. 88). This brings teachers' training and their perceptions, particularly of teaching practice into sharp focus given the decisive role that teachers play in the education system of every nation.

Pre-service teachers' stage of training is a good starting point to begin with. These are students who are undergoing teaching training in educational training institutions, on whom the academic success of a nation's next generation depends. Therefore training institutions like Colleges of Education in Livingstone district have a daunting task of training quality teachers who will be able to implement the curricula to achieve its intended outcomes. Teacher education institutions generally expose their students to a teacher preparation curriculum made up of four key

components: (1) liberal or general studies, (2) specialised subject-field or content studies, (3) professional and pedagogical studies, and integrative studies (Menshah,1991).While these may be good technical areas of focus for teacher preparation they leave out the influence that pre-service teachers and teacher educators hold in relation to the pedagogical training on prospective teachers, especially teaching practice practicum.

Over the years, teaching practice has been an important component of the teacher training program in Zambia. In Zambia, Teaching practice is a mandatory requirement for students in colleges of Education. According to Muzata (2013), the exercise of teaching practice is to acquaint student teachers with the practical knowledge of teaching and learning process including lesson plan preparation, presentation, class management, communication skills, evaluation and the required personality of professional teachers. He denotes that teacher preparation is incomplete without teaching practice and consequently teacher education in Zambia is characterized by teaching practice as one of the major assessment provisions leading to graduation. He further notes that teacher education everywhere in the world is characterized by teaching practice as one of the central components of teacher education. To this effect a student who fails teaching practice does not graduate, even though he or she may have superb theoretical abilities.

In order to enhance teacher preparation, colleges of education have their roles of imparting theory related to teaching and learning in the classroom and schools on their part are expected to closely guide the student teachers throughout the field experience of teaching practice. Student teachers in 2nd and 3rd year are deployed to schools to practice teaching. During this period lecturers go to observe them and help them to acquire teaching competence. This is a very important time of enhancing and assessing the linkage between the theories taught in colleges and the practical situations faced by trainee teachers in the classroom. Suffice to mention that it is also a time that lecturers can learn from the supervisors guiding trainee teachers in the schools in the areas and aspects which could be included in the theory at the colleges.

Monk and Dillon also emphasized that:

Higher education institutions, schools and students should focus on the competences of teaching throughout the whole period of initial training. The progressive development of these competences should be monitored regularly during initial training. Their attainment at a level appropriate to newly qualified teachers should be the objective of the every student taking a course of initial training (2005, p. 3).

During this period the expected competences required to be developed by trainee teachers are subject knowledge, subject application, class management, assessment and pupil progress' record keeping (Monk and Musonda, 1999). To assess the acquisition of teaching skills, the length of teaching practice is a critically important element. Initially the teaching practice period in Zambia was different from institution to institution. Currently the Ministry of General Education guides teacher education institutions to give student teachers a period of teaching practice not less than three months or one school term.

Ball (2009), further summarized this by saying “The work of teaching is not only unnatural but intricate. Each episode of instruction comprises many tasks and moves, many of them invisible to a casual observer” (p62). It is during this period that the student teacher gets to translate the skills and theory learnt into reality through actual classroom teaching. Chen and Mu (2010), added that pre-service teacher training programs cannot be complete without an effective practicum program where student teachers go to the field and face the various classroom related situations and taking responsibility for each one of them. Alnaji (2000) observed that during this period student teachers may successfully start preparing and planning for their lessons, perform teaching and assess their students. The teaching practice component aims at improving confidence, putting theory into practice, learning about student behavior, testing knowledge of subject matter, receiving constructive criticism, discovering teaching strength and weaknesses and developing a core set of pedagogic values to which a professionally competent teacher adheres. Al-magableh (2010), further noted that teaching practice provides a multi-source feedback to the teacher trainees regarding their activities in the cooperating schools. He denotes

that it is important to note that the teaching practice may influence the professional qualifications of the student teachers.

Marais and Meier (2004) argued that teaching practice is a challenging but important part of teacher training especially in developing countries where the effectiveness of the teaching practice can be diminished or eroded by a range of challenges, such as geographical distance, 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. They argue that if these challenges are not addressed, they may affect student teachers' performance during teaching practice and may in the long run affect their perception of the practicum program and the teaching profession as a whole.

Consequently, student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions are important components of teaching practice in developing competencies in student teachers during their initial training. The manner in which teaching practice is conducted coupled with the student teachers' perceptions of it might, to a large extent determine how successful a teacher will be in performing duties upon graduation and entry into the teaching career (Heerald, 2014) It is a commonly recognized fact world over that the quality of education is heavily relied upon, many things, its delivery by equally well qualified teachers entrusted with responsibility of teaching. This further means that the success of the education system of any country is anchored on the good preparation of trainee teachers and actual execution during teaching in classrooms.

The rationale upon which the government of Zambia hinges teacher education is the proper training of teachers, without which the learning process cannot be achieved. According to Chishimba (1996), teacher education in the *Zambian context*, refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and the wider community at large. In Zambia the model that is employed in the training of teachers is the alternative concurrent model where the trainee teachers simultaneously studies both, one or more academic subjects and the ways of the teaching that subject. Teachers who are produced through this model, it is argued, tend to teach subjects rather than pupils in the early stages of their profession unless they have been inducted very well and many effective skills have been

integrated in the content for in-service training. Since student teachers in the Zambian case are not involved in the school based in-service training as their main focus is to finish their teaching practice and be assessed for certification purposes, the emphasis on teaching practice at college and in the schools where trainee teachers are sent becomes of critical importance to this model. Against this backdrop, the perceptions of the student teachers and teacher educators regarding the teaching practice become key components of good and effective teaching.

Further, while in college student teachers receive training in academic and practical aspects of teaching through peer teaching and micro teaching. During the teaching practice period, student teachers are attached to a host teacher who serves as a mentor to the student, and in order to provide effective support to the student teacher, the host teacher needs to identify areas where the student teacher needs professional support and assistance in developing their teaching capabilities. The host teacher or supervisor has an important role in practice teaching as a resource person, an adviser, a general morale booster, an interpreter of feedback, and an assessor. College supervisors should work closely with the host teachers, support the student teachers, and visit the school sites often, a situation which seemingly lacks in the colleges under study.

Supervision is the core of Teaching practice exercise. Valid information on student teachers performances is obtained only through the supervision of their live teaching. The role of supervisors therefore is of great importance in ensuring quality. Beck and Kosnik (2010) believe that a college supervisor's duty is not only to evaluate the lessons of teaching practice, but to use his/her abilities to make this experience results oriented. During teaching practice it is the duty of the supervisors to supervise their lessons, other assigned activities, carry out guidance and counseling as well as provide the student teachers with feedback to enable them to criticize and reform themselves. Host teachers and others concerned with the student's progress all aimed at enhancing the continuing growth and quality of the student teaching practicum.

Furthermore, student teaching practice is a kind of apprenticeship stage during which the students are sent out to schools to gain professional and practical experience by translating all educational theories they have acquired or learnt during training into practice. It is a practical teaching activity by which student –teachers are given an opportunity in actual school situations to demonstrate and improve training in pedagogical skill over a period of time. The practicum

plays a major role in bridging the gap between theory and practice but beyond that, it offers the context for students to develop their personal teaching competence.

The term practice 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. Whatever definition is given to Teaching practice, the most important fact is that 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.

According to Eraut (1988, cited in Yan and He, 2009), it is through the practicum experience that student teachers develop important professional knowledge such as knowledge of people, knowledge of themselves, self-control and interpersonal sensitivity- all of which are important traits that would see them through their professional lives. Ferron (1978:17) also affirms that;

Teaching practice should essentially be a counseling exercise, with sufficient time and scope for student teachers to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Since most people learn best by doing, all students in training are given practice in actual teaching for several weeks at a time. The essential ingredients for excellent instructions or supervision of student teaching, quality field instructions, proper scheduling, and sufficient time are severely lacking.

The current study contends that the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators towards the practicum as it is administered in colleges of education and the schools can shed more light on its effectiveness in preparing pre-service teachers for their future roles.

It had been found by several committees on Teacher Education Training in Zambia that many students have vehemently asserted that teaching practice was one of the most valuable but one of the poorly conducted parts of their teacher training. The arrangements made for it were subject to severe strain and in some areas, approach breakdown. Many teachers in schools remained

ignorant of the purpose of teaching practice and even more importantly, they do not seem to realize the critical contributions that teaching practice can make to the success of the career of future teachers (Chishimba, 1996).

Against these backdrops, it was important that teaching practice should be given the highest priority because this was a stepping stone for them from being prospective teachers to being competent ones. This becomes sharply important because it is held that pre-service teachers who go on teaching practice regardless of the period are expected to teach well. There are a number of issues surrounding student teachers' teaching practice which should be addressed because teaching practice is a vital component of teacher training which any student should get involved in and not skip as it satisfies the full package of teacher training. In highlighting this importance, the current study sought to investigate the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice of two (one private and one government) selected colleges in Livingstone district in Zambia.

1.3 Statement of the problem

It is important to understand the perceptions held by student teachers and their teacher educators toward teaching practice. Such perceptions influence the accomplishment of teaching practice goals. Perceptions, while different from concrete observation of behaviours, provide valuable information about how teaching practice must be provided to students (Murphy 1987). Keithwood (2006) reiterated that student teachers and educators base their perceptions on whatever evidence they have in their specific experiences. Since introduction of teaching practice into the education programme in colleges of education in Livingstone district, Zambia, it seems no empirical study has been conducted to find out how the pre-service teachers perceive teaching practice. It is in light of this, that a study to investigate the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators in relation to teaching practice was deemed appropriate.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators in relation to the teaching practice program in selected colleges of education in Livingstone District, Zambia.

1.5 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore the Perceptions of Teaching practice by student Teachers in colleges of Education in Livingstone district. .
2. To establish the benefits of teaching practice to student teachers and teacher educators in colleges of education and in Livingstone district.
3. To assess challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice in selected colleges of Education in Livingstone district. .
4. Strategies to alleviate challenges of teaching practice in colleges of education.

1.6 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do student teachers and teacher educators perceive teaching practice during training in colleges of education and in schools during school experiences in Livingstone district?
2. What are the benefits of teaching practice perceived by student teachers in colleges of education and during the practicum program in schools in Livingstone district?
3. What challenges do student teachers and teacher educators face during teaching practice in the colleges of education and in the schools in Livingstone district?
4. What strategies are being employed to alleviate challenges of teaching practice in colleges of education and schools in Livingstone district?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study has attempted to provide information about student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions on their experiences on teaching practice in colleges of education. This information

could be useful to student teachers' educators, student teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders in teacher education. The findings of this study might influence change in the planning and execution of teaching practice programs in schools and colleges.

Furthermore, the findings of the study are poised to add new information to the existing body of knowledge regarding the importance of student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of teaching practice and can thus, provide valuable information for further and future academic research.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Handal and Lauvas (1987) practical theory of teaching. The theory holds that the practical theory is understood as the intermingling of personal experience which transmits values, skills and knowledge to learners. In this vein, teachers place great emphases on the content, skills and knowledge that learners are supposed to learn. The theory looks at classroom teaching where each teacher's preparedness depends on the value, belief, knowledge, professional identity and action during teaching in the classroom situation. The theory focuses on teacher's ability to be practical, emphasizing that every teacher should possess practical and theoretical skills and techniques of teaching. This theory is a kind of map, which enables the teacher to locate current problems and situations in a meaningful context (daily classroom context) and so enable them to teach effectively.

Many proponents of educational theories have supported practical theory. Sanders and McCutcheon (1986:54-55) assert that a practical theory of learning and teaching constitutes relevant conceptual and experiential structures and visions that provide teachers with reasons for acting as they do in practical situations. Practical theory is also personal and contextual and so places demands on teachers according to the needs of different teaching contexts. It is practice that works in particular contexts avers Connelly, Clandinin & He (1997).

The theory is most appropriate to the study as it emphasizes that, the strongest determining factor of pre-service teachers in education is their experience. Student teachers gain experience from the theoretical training in colleges as well as from the practical activities they undertake during teaching practice. Handal and Lauvas (1987) maintain that the theory governs teachers' actions

in a classroom situation and in turn, governed by ethical considerations which subject pre-service teachers to observing professional teaching ethics. It is not the static but the constant integration and incorporation of new ideas such as the ones generated from the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators to the ever-changing body of knowledge, experiences and values which are relevant to teaching experiences at any particular time.

While formal knowledge acquired from colleges is important, the trainee teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions provide the necessary perceptual and conceptual change thereby producing concomitant changes in the practices of teacher educators and trainee teachers. In guiding teachers' practices, a practical theory is therefore a set of "guidelines or rules-of-thumb used to guide behavior and provides reasons for actions in response to practical problems" (Fieldman, 1994:8). Since a practical theory refers to a bundle of personal claims pre-service teachers and teacher educators embrace, they are crucial to how their pedagogical practices relating to teaching practice are shaped. It is for these reasons that the study was guided by the above theoretical orientation in exploring the perceptions of pre-service teachers and teacher educators in relation to the teaching practice program in Zambia.

Therefore, the selection of this theory is based on the assumption that pre-service teachers should use both the practical and theoretical teaching skills in order to develop better academic and experiential pathways of understanding the teaching and learning process with necessary and sufficient knowledge in subject matter to teach with confidence in a classroom situation. The application of the theory to the issue of education according to the researcher suggests that not only the values, knowledge and experiences (personal background) of regular school teachers but also, as a natural corollary, their concerns about education, which are influenced by these teachers' personal factors, will have a significant impact on their teaching practice.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

According to Orodho (2005) delimitations are choices made by the researcher describing the boundaries that have been set for the study. This study was confined to only two selected colleges of education in Livingstone district, one private college and one government college and the focus was on perceptions of teaching practice by student teachers and teacher educators.

Livingstone district was selected as no major research was conducted on teaching practice for primary school teachers at the colleges.

1.10 Limitation of the Study

This study only reflected a small segment of student teachers, class teachers and lecturers in colleges of education and in the schools where trainee teachers are sent for the practicum program. Therefore, the findings of the study could not be generalized to other colleges of education except to those with similar characteristics to those used in the study.

1.11 Summary

This chapter gave a background to a study on perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators in colleges of education. The chapter also presented a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objective and questions, significance of study theoretical framework, delimitation, limitations and definitions of operational terms used in this study.

Therefore, the next chapter endeavors to review various literature deemed relevant to the study based on studies done at Global, African and Zambian contexts.

1.12 Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter one gave a background to the study on perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators in colleges of education. The chapter also presented a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objective and questions, significance of study theoretical framework, delimitation, limitations and definitions of operational terms used in this study. Chapter two, reviewed related literature to the study of other researchers and scholars. Chapter three focused on explaining the research methodology. It looked at the paradigm, research design, population sample as well as the sampling procedure used in the study. It also discussed research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis as well as ethical considerations before providing a summary of the chapter. Chapter four presented the findings of the study on the socio-economic life of school leavers with visual impairment in Ndola District in Zambia.

Chapter five looked at discussion of findings. Chapter six provided the conclusion of the study, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents a review of literature on teaching practice as experienced by teacher educators, student teachers and host teachers of practicing schools. Kombo and Tromp (2006) defined literature as the written materials that a researcher has consulted so as to understand and investigate the research problem at hand.

Several research findings make it abundantly clear that pre-service teacher's school practice is one of the potential tools in the molding of teachers into their career path; it is one of the chief sources of technical skills in teacher education. Brown and Brown, (1990) explains that teaching practice provides pre-service teachers with an opportunity to gain confidence, chance to put theory into practice, opportunity to learn the practical skills and an opportunity to improve the knowledge of subject matter.

2.2 Studies on Teaching Practices from the Global Perspectives

Everyone can claim to be a teacher and in fact everyone teaches others in one way or the other. Parents teach children, peers show their friends how to do things and all of us have a role to advise others on how certain things should be done. We take this as teaching but this is the lowest part of it. But professional teaching, the teaching in which a trained teacher is expected to teach children in formal setting is beyond natural teaching. It requires expertise beyond the natural abilities a person may possess. As quoted by Ball, (2009:p.42) in press saying that "professional classroom teaching, on the other hand, is specialized work that is distinct from informal, commonplace showing, telling or helping". Teaching as a specialized area requires certain skills that are unnatural and have to be acquired through rigorous training. Teaching practice provides the skills in addition to the content students acquire.

As it is conceived from global perspectives, learning to teach is a multifaceted process (Darling-Hammond and Shulman 2005), hence teacher education programs around the globe are prepared to develop professional and quality teachers to encounter teaching challenges in classrooms. Particularly teacher education programs are intended to develop student teachers' knowledge,

skills, and characters in order to prepare them to educate students effectively and professionally at schools.

To achieve the purpose of teacher education programs, the academic programs of the teacher education should include an important element such as school practicum experiences which facilitate student teachers to experience what it means to be a teacher within an academic context under the guidance of school teachers and teacher educators from the universities as Zeichner (2010) pointed out that teaching practice is one of the most critical components of teacher education that affects the quality of teachers. According to Cosmas and Cobbold (2011), professional experience is a period in schools where the prime focus for the trainee teacher is to practice teaching under the supervision of a mentor. The mentor should be trained to understand the range of tasks that make up the student teacher's role, including planning, assessing, and reporting. During the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers learn to teach by means of the personal experience they get in the field (Munby et al. 2001). They fully appreciate the craft, professional demands and dimensions of teaching, learn the realities of day-to-day teaching in a real classroom, and simultaneously learn to put pedagogical theory into practice. As the bridge between theory and practice, the practicum also provides the context in which pre-service teachers develop a personal teaching competence (Smith and Lev-Ari 2005).

The issue of teacher preparation continues to occupy academic discourse relating to student outcomes and student achievement. Research has supported the view that there is an inextricable connection between student outcome, quality of teaching and teachers, and teacher preparation. Consequently, there have been calls and recommendations for reforms in the way student teachers are prepared during training for their role of teaching. (Darling-Hammond 2000).

Literature review from the studies that have already been conducted on teaching practice reveal that student teachers were not adequately prepared for teaching practice (Heerald 2014, Hobson, 2002, Sinclair 2003). The researchers argue that the main reason of student teachers' inadequate preparation is due to lack of emphasis on teaching practice in colleges of education as well as lack of proper materials and supervision in the schools where trainee teachers are sent for the practicum program. In the same vein, a study done by Jahin and Alexander (2006) indicated that

if teachers are trained well enough to be competent, they help in playing an important role in the country's development.

Bisher, (2005) also concedes that teachers are indispensable despite new developments in education such as teaching aids that are technically new and facilitate the teaching and learning process. A well trained teacher can promote and simplify knowledge for students taking into account their diverse individual differences. It is therefore inevitable for teacher educators to focus on student teachers pre-service training. The teaching practice period is one of the most important components of the teaching training program. Promoting the learning and achievement of pupils is the main aim of teaching practice. Teaching practice is what ultimately makes a difference in the mind of a pre-service teacher and this affects knowledge, skills attitudes and the capacity for teachers to contribute to contemporary societies' educational and developmental needs (Queensland College, 2011).

In another study by Govida (2004) titled *Teacher preparation for the World of work: A study of pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji* revealed that beginning teachers were not adequately prepared for the demands of work and responsibilities expected of them as perceived by the profession and other stakeholders. He further found that lack of physical facilities, quality of educational resources, outdated and foreign based curriculum, lack of support from management were the factors that hindered adequate professional preparation of beginning teachers. The revelations by Govida (2004) in his study had an important role to play in this study in that it established the role of teacher education more especially pre-service education. Pre-service Teachers need to be prepared in order to meet the demands of their work with confidence. It is on this premise that this study sought to establish the availability of teachers teaching in schools. Have they received adequate training or not is a question yet to be answered.

Furthermore a study conducted by Caldwell, (2006) revealed that the focus of training program for teachers has been overwhelmingly on initial teacher education, which includes training on pedagogy. The content that the pre-service teachers aim to teach is suggested by Caldwell (2006:195) thus;

Pre-service education needs to be more focused on the things teachers will be expected to know and do once in the classroom. However the findings indicated that there were gaps between what the institution was offering and what was taught in schools. The study further noted that pre-service teachers were exposed to theories more than methodology which in most cases did not take into account consideration of things happening in schools.

Additionally, during pre-service training, pre-practice instructions are expected to be taught together with other aspects of teacher education. The only exception experienced is during the pre-practice instructions phase when colleges of education or individual tutors concentrate on the basic practice instructions in order to prepare students adequately for teaching practice. The pre-service instructions refer to basic teaching skills which students should acquire before they go on teaching practice to enable them to do well during teaching practice. Usually student teachers are introduced to basic teaching skills during the pre-practice instructions phase. The pre-service instruction phase is a transitional period to teaching practice. It is when a college generally accords trainee students an opportunity to practice basic teaching skills. This phase enables student's time to make mistakes and to learn from mistakes before they go on teaching practice. The aforementioned information is insightful to the current study as it highlighted pertinent issues surrounding the teaching practices. However, for the current study the main thrust was to capture and bring into perspective the benefits and challenges faced by student teachers.

In terms of the content of teacher preparation programs, different countries emphasize different components in the curriculum or amount of time devoted to each one. But in general, most include courses and experiences that address subject matter, the foundation of education courses, professional studies (such as pedagogy and method courses), child development and practicum (Ben-peretz, 1995; Cobb, 1999). In literature, the debate over whether to emphasize content or pedagogy is clear and abundant. The tendency in most countries in the 1990s was to emphasize the teaching of content in the initial preparation and the pedagogy in the practicum and in the induction programs for new teachers, as well as in other professional development opportunities. Until recently, however, the issue of content was not addressed by the majority of professional development experiences, as most focused exclusively or primarily on the format, structure and organizational arrangements of education and teaching (Baker, 1999; Denzin, 2008).

Considering the Ben-perez's finding which shed light on the need to maximize the availability of whatever pedagogical strategies in teaching practice, what remains unknown is the fact of the types of pedagogical strategies student teachers were exposed to and how they appreciate them.

At the same time, many countries still focus on content without pedagogy. For example in Ethiopia, as in many other African and Latin American countries, most of the teacher preparation institutions including universities and colleges which offer a certification program do not offer to students the opportunity to experience a period of classroom teaching under supervision. (If they do, this period is very short).A debate that this study sought to find out.

Burns (2000) focused specifically on the preparation of science teachers in Africa and report that few opportunities for practical work are offered in their pre-service preparation. As a result, once these are hired in schools to teach, science is taught in lecture format with little emphasis on the practical applications of such knowledge. On the contrary, in Zambia schools, colleges and Universities, student teachers are given the opportunity to experience the classroom environment and this is done during the period of teaching practice accompanied with certification at the end of the course's content.

In Zambian colleges, the duration that a student teacher would be out for teaching practice is normally a term, which amounts to three months. This is done in order to make sure a student teacher is well acquainted and equipped with the teaching practice experience in readiness for deployment in the labor market.

Although, according to Haigh, Pinder, and McDonald (2006) practice teaching in education is still a challenge since it does not fully prepare student teachers for the actual classroom teaching. Starkey and Rawlins (2012) mentioned that these student teachers should be well-monitored, supervised, and guided by their supervising teachers through "online discussions" and classroom teaching observation for them to become prepared. Through constant monitoring and guidance from the teacher educators, these student-teachers will learn how to handle and manage not just their daily lessons but the students and their classroom as well. Because of this, Tuli and File (2009) described practicum teaching experiences among pre-service teachers as the most important part of teacher education program.

All teacher education curriculum in all higher education institutions included practicum teaching as one of the requirements for the degrees. No teacher education and arts programs students are allowed to graduate without finishing the required number of hours for both actual classroom observation and practice teaching. Pre-service student-teachers usually take their practicum teaching experience out of the campus, in the nearby public elementary and high schools or in-campus at the basic education department of their university or college. Although the practicum experience of the teacher education students is more systematic and formal as it is guided with the policies and guidelines from the Department of Education compared with the practicum experience of the Bachelor of Arts students, these pre-service teachers are trained to become well-prepared and qualified teachers who can pass on their knowledge to the next generation of students.

A study was done in the Philippines which explored the pre-service teacher training programs through the practicum experience of the 21 junior and senior Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts student-teachers from a private university in Mindanao, Philippines. Data were taken from classroom observations, group interview, and modified questionnaire. The findings revealed that there was a different standard policy of pre-service teacher training programs for Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts- English. While BEd-English concentrated on developing professional teachers for secondary schools, BA-English focused on developing not just teachers but professionals with exceptional communication skills. The student-teachers also reported some challenges in practicum teaching; classroom management teaching confidence, and lack of teaching resources. The above study differs slightly from the current study as it was seemingly a comparative study between two universities with students doing different programs.

For example, in Nepal peer-teaching sessions would be arranged to introduce a practical element to teacher education (Holmes, 1993) Brazil where one of the teacher training programs had no capacity to supervise teaching practice, microteaching was incorporated into face-to face sessions with teachers (Oliveir 2003). The Open University in United Kingdom, does not supervise teaching practice but has tried to link theory and practice by inviting teachers to report on their classroom experiences of ideas and practical activities covered in the course (Perraton, 1993).

Cook, B (2004) also contended that teaching practice provides pre-service teachers with career-related direction, practical experience and interpersonal skills. For Furco (1996), teaching practice helps pre-service teachers in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing them with hands-on experience that enhances their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study. It also assists pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between the academic learning process and the practical reality (Lam & Ching, 2006). All the above reviewed studies did not attempt to look at perceptions student teachers had about teaching practice and the impact of the extent of their training, a situation that the current study sought to find out.

Another study by Chen and Mu (2010) was carried out, in their cross-national comparison of pre-service teacher education in China found out that pre-service teacher training programs cannot be complete without an effective practicum program where trainee teachers go to the field and face the various classroom related situations and taking responsibility for each of them. Similarly, Al-magableh, (2010) identified some of the problems that trainee teachers may encounter in China. These problems include lack of visual aids, a large number of learners in class, lack of working space for the trainee teachers as well as lack of references. In addition, Alsa'eed's,(2006) evaluation of teaching practice program in Kuwait university from student teachers and the findings indicated that, the administrative roles performed by the training team and cooperative schools were sources of problems for trainee teachers.

In contrast, Abo (2003) identified teaching practice and went further to find out the influence of gender and specialization on them. The findings were that: There were no problems found in teaching practice that relates to its organization and cooperative school. However, there were problems in relating to the supervisor and cooperative teachers. Supervisor related problems included abandoning trainee teachers when they start practicing teaching, not checking their lesson plan books and being busy with learners in class while trainee teachers are engaged in teaching the class. On the other hand, cooperative teachers did not offer the trainee teachers any help and were not happy to be observed by the trainee teachers when teaching.

Pre-service teacher education varies dramatically around the world in such aspects as institutional context, content areas, time allocation and forms of practical experiences for the students (Ben-peretz, 1995). It also varies in how societies perceive its purpose. Although many

societies consider this preparation to be the only professional preparation teachers will receive throughout their careers, the current tendency is to acknowledge that this is merely the first step in a longer process of professional development. During initial training and their first few years in the classroom many teachers experience difficulties in learning to teach (Calderhead and Beatty 1999). The reason enough to embark on this study which investigated the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators and ascertain the levels of difficulties during their teaching practice in schools.

Kane, (1991) in his book entitled 'The first year of teaching', Real world stories from American teachers discovered that teaching practice is one of the most important undertakings for the trainee teachers. While on teaching practice, trainee teachers do not expect to start teaching the class straight away. During the first teaching practice trainee teachers are expected to spend most of their time in the first two weeks observing the class teacher. In most cases during early teaching practice, the class teacher may observe the trainee teacher in order to advise, and then if the trainee teacher enhances his or her confidence, the class teacher will therefore decide to observe the trainee teacher from a distance. The content of Kane's book concerning how important teaching practice is to trainee teachers in American situation is a true reflection of what happens in Zambia educational system. During the teaching practice period, a student teacher does not right away go into the classroom to teach but would be given some time to interact with the most experienced teachers to help in mentorship before being declared ready to handle a class. The area of interest of this study was to capture the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators towards the issues surrounding teaching practice in colleges of education. This is premised on the assertion that most trainee teachers who are frequently observed, supervised and guided become very competent, efficient and effective and may be allowed to work independently within the class.

Zeicher and Liston (2013) conducted a study on 'Reflective Teaching' in New York. The findings of the study were that trainee teachers are expected to progress in achieving their professional development and must be aware of the requirements for each placement during school experience. This is so because the progress made by trainee teachers towards achievement of the teaching standards needs to be assessed on regular basis. Trainee teachers are expected to place a greater emphasis on the content, the knowledge and skills that pupils are supposed to

learn. In as far as the aforementioned study has brought out matters considered vital in terms of what trainee teachers are expected to do in their core duty, the same expectations are attached even to the student teachers in a Zambian setting. However, what is not known is the extent to which the same trends are true for the Zambian student teachers, the data need for the current study.

Another study conducted by McIntyre's (1990) on Oxford Internship Scheme and Cambridge Analytical framework in London revealed that trainee teachers expect to have access to different forms of professional knowledge and that practical knowledge of teachers must be a central part of that training if unearthed. This meant that they were expected to keep necessary records of teaching practice. However, McIntyre, (1990) suggests that different forms of professional knowledge should all be used to interrogate each other as well as used to support, guide and communicate with one another in the teaching during teaching practice. Trainee teachers expect to be systematic in lesson preparation in that practical classroom and training can only be provided by class teachers working together with the students in terms of guidance and communication during preparation as well as in their classroom and schools.

Further, Portner, (2002) did a study on 'Being Mentored: A guide for protégés'. The study reported that during teaching practice trainee teachers expected mentors to train and supervise them. They are required to teach their subjects in order to assess their competence in classroom situations because these mentors are generally understood to fulfill roles such as supporters, encouragers, counselors, helpers and role models. The study points out that the new generation of teachers differs from those that are about to retire in important ways, rather than regarding teaching as a lifelong commitment, many new teachers both those who completed traditional teacher preparation programs and those who did not approach teaching tentatively or conditionally. Portner's study is very rich and gives direction to the current study as it explains other roles of a teacher apart from the core duty of teaching. In a Zambian situation every teacher is a supervisor, counselor, parent, role model and fits everywhere be it a student teacher who is still at college or a serving teacher, all are considered the same except their levels of experiences and areas of responsibility.

A study by Allen, (2002) stated that with regards to trainee teachers' expectations, the most common ones would be trainees expecting professional and cordial interaction with their supervisors or mentors being provided with teaching methods for use while on teaching practice, knocking off from school upon finishing and not report for work if they are not working on that particular day. Trainee teachers also expect their mentors to support them while on teaching practice.

Another study by Adentwi, and Baafi, (2011) found that teaching practice provides student teachers with the chance to express their personal educational philosophies, theories and understandings and creates an opportunity for student teachers to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in the profession of teaching and learning. However, student teachers faced challenges during this professional exercise. It was also discovered that a conducive environment, exploration of experiential knowledge, student centeredness, and teaching language as a social practice are the fundamental teaching philosophies. While this study examined the challenges that student teachers faced during their teaching practices, it was not known whether the challenges faced in the Eastern Cape, South Africa were similar to those faced by student teachers in Zambia among the colleges of education particularly in Livingstone District.

A study done by Kabilan (2008) on the challenges faced and strategies adopted by Malaysian teachers during teaching practice revealed that student teachers faced various challenges during classroom teaching. The challenges include; mixed ability class, use of mother tongue and teacher centeredness. Kabilan, (2008) discovered that mixed ability class was an extremely huge challenge for beginning teachers. A large class of 40-50 pupils with mixed levels of abilities was a problem, the reality of teaching with over enrolled pupils was a difficult endeavor. Additionally, the fact that there are 40-50 pupils in class who have their own individual levels of abilities poses a big challenge to pre-service teachers and creates a situation that is almost impossible to surmount. According to this study, teaching pupils of mixed levels of abilities was a real and genuine challenge that was faced by students and one that needs serious attention by professionals in the education sectors.

Another challenge was the use of mother tongue and teacher centeredness. Kagoda, A (2013) discovered that as much as the student teacher was asked to use English language during an

English lesson, most of the pupils did not understand English very well. Yet it was not until later that this student realized that using English exclusively in the teaching situation left pupils feeling lost and confused because they did not comprehend the explanation given in English. Later the teachers compromised and made allowances for pupils to employ their mother tongue when completing tasks. Most pupils who employed their mother tongue were afraid to ask questions in English which made their participation low. This discovery brings to light the importance of getting views from student teachers on the perceptions of teaching practice regards the extent of training they receive in their locality in consideration of the dominant language used. Barrier in communication brings about a failed lesson.

In another study done by McDonald & Hedley, (1999) it was revealed that trainee teachers learn to teach by means of the personal experience they get in the field. The study further revealed that trainee teachers fully appreciate the craft, professional demands and dimensions of teaching. They also expect to learn the realities of day to day teaching in a real classroom and simultaneously learn to put pedagogical theory into practice. The practice also provides the context in which trainee teachers are expected to develop a personal teaching competence. Personal experience is usually done with the purpose of understanding that students learn from experience, which prepares them for the full scope of the teachers' role, for accomplishing the central purpose of teaching. McDonald and Hedley (1999) revealed that: students expect to develop the ability and disposition to keep on growing in knowledge and skills .This in turn shapes up their conception about teaching and learning in a School as well as their attitudes towards work and learners. Based on the findings of the foregoing studies, it is clear that trainee teachers may have expectations during teaching practice as alluded to by Bond (2002) who explained that: beginning teachers enter classrooms today with high expectations for themselves and for their pupils. Yet we all know that first year of teaching is a sobering experience for most new teachers and that, over the course of one year, teachers experience a decreased strength of belief in their own efficacy and in the learning potential of their pupil.

Regardless of the length of a program or the level of preparation, pre –service teacher education has received a lot of criticism everywhere. For example, in a review of literature, Villegas-Reimers (1998) presents some problems that exist in teacher preparation in Latin America. Among these problems she includes: curricula of poor quality; too much emphasis on theory and

little or none on practice; programs that are too short; a weak relationship between programs and school practice; the poor preparation of teacher educators and lack of attractive characteristics of the teaching profession (such as low status and low salaries), which in turn affects those who enter the profession, who stays and for how long. Based on this argument, Zambia is not an exception to this criticism. This is so because there is a wider gap between the theory and the practice and this normally creates a gap between what the labor market demands and what colleges and Universities could afford to provide in terms of knowledge and skills. However, there are efforts to try and make the situation different in which the government has introduced and categorized courses into two pathways namely academic and vocational simply to bridge the gap between theory and practice. (Villegas-Reimers 1998).

These criticisms are also found in developed countries, e.g. in the USA, Goodland (1990), identified the following problems concerning teacher preparation in a majority of the institutions throughout the country; education courses are taught by adjunct faculty, as the education faculty distance themselves from teacher education; teacher education programs and curricula are set by external agencies, thus not allowing any autonomy; programs have little coherence; teacher preparation colleges have weak relations with schools and cooperating teachers in the field. This list of problems, in a way, explains why it is believed that teacher education preparation does little in terms of improving education and the professional development of teachers, and why there is a call for change and improvement in the pre-service teachers' practicum.

Even though the responsibility of teacher preparation largely rests on the training institutions, on the other hand, Jerome, Hayward and Young (2003), believe that pre-service teachers should assume the responsibility for personal professional development. A teacher should feel that he or she owes it to himself or herself and the pupils to continually develop professionally. Different skills will need to be planned for. This means that student teachers should not blame their inabilities or inadequacies on the teacher educators, because they can also contribute to self-professional development outside the lecture room. In addition to the argument above, Danielson (2008) noted that the first, and in some respects the most important, contributor to professional learning is a culture of inquiry. It is essential that all educators recognize that the work of professional learning never ends. It is a career- long endeavor that one should protect and guide jealously. This initiative is well achieved through the continuous professional development in

which teachers share experiences of teaching and give and take chances of teaching each other on certain topics. This initiative is practiced everywhere, Zambia inclusive.

Most of the foreign studies delineate the need for institutions that provide teacher education to provide teacher candidates with the basics and preparatory skills to create classrooms that will alleviate their fears as prospective teachers. Substantial amount of evidence reveals that teachers who have had more preparation for teaching outweigh in their confidence, preparedness, and success with learners when compared to the ones having had little or no preparation (Lepage, Darling-Hammond, & Akar 2005). A critical argument is that teacher education programs are accused of not preparing student teachers adequately for the realities of the classroom. In brief, literature shows that teacher preparation programmes has a positive impact on student learning. However there is not much research on how it impacts teacher candidates who are on teaching practice. This information is important to the current study however, the two studies are at variant as the current study presented and sought to investigate the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on how what happens when a student teacher moves away from the learning institution to the real world of teaching and its implications on their teaching experience program.

2.3 Studies in Africa

A recent study done by Chimhenga (2017) on *The Student Teachers' Perceptions On Teaching Practice Supervision In Zimbabwe: Is It A Process Of Grading Or Improvement Of Teaching Skills* revealed that Supervisors are expected to observe how student teachers prepare, deliver the lesson and conduct themselves as members of the teaching profession and are expected to advise the students on how to improve their teaching skills. Further, the findings indicated that majority of student teachers who participated in the teaching practice observed that the supervisors gave grades which did not reflect the comments made about the teaching performance of the student teacher. While the aforementioned study invoked on a descriptive survey in a quantitative approach which sought to analyze student teacher's perception towards teaching practice as an exercise for grading or improvement and examine student teacher's perception towards student-supervisor comments during discussion after classroom assessment, The current study

endeavored to investigate the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice by invoking a qualitative approach.

In Botswana, Mannathoko (1990) conducted a study on the coordination of teaching practice in secondary schools. She wanted to find out various aspects of coordination and the challenges encountered. The study revealed that channels of communication needed to be improved on. She noted that while the School of Education held seminars to discuss teaching practice issues, these seminars were not held regularly. In addition, the study showed that channels of communication between university coordinators and the schools were very weak; there was a need for a more structured program for working with schools and developing a rapport with school head teachers. Further, the number of student teachers who went for teaching practice increased every year. This posed a challenge on coordination of teaching practice.

Lecha (1999) conducted another study in Botswana that investigated some practical issues about teacher preparation. The study revealed that in terms of teaching methodology, the common criticism in Botswana is that the initial training of teachers is dry, inadequate, and removed from the practical realities of the school situation. Commenting on the above findings, Lecha (1999) added that even though the program of teacher preparation at college is not ideal, many critical voices are often heard about the shallow nature of the instruction, especially in providing useful practical experience to the trainees. It was argued that while simulation exercises, such as peer teaching and micro-teaching, were a useful part of teacher preparation, they still lacked the value of a real life teaching experience. Lecha's observation implies that it is not only the school teaching experience that is shallow but also the instructions that are received from the teacher training institution before entering the classroom.

Additionally, Mannathoko (2013) conducted another study in Botswana entitled "Does Teaching Practice Effectively Prepare Student-Teachers to Teach Creative and Performing Arts?" revealed that Teacher Education involved the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they require to teach effectively. Teaching practice (TP) was an integral part in teacher education because it allowed student-teachers to apply the theories into practice. Effective preparation of student-teachers in practical subjects could help them teach the arts efficiently. Effective teaching means quite a lot of things and such those that are preparing for

teaching practice or peer teaching are required to tailor their teaching along the lines of effective teaching. As a result, promoting learners' skills specifically; creative and practical skills support healthy development. Further, the findings revealed that student-teachers in the three Colleges of Education were introduced to the general pedagogy skills of teaching in primary schools by their tutors who in most cases were not arts specialists. Furthermore, there were concerns from student-teachers that lecturers rarely assessed the arts during teaching practice and therefore, trainees did not get any assistance to prepare them to teach the Creative and performing arts subjects.

In pre-service teacher education colleges, educators strive to devote a considerable portion of pre-service teachers curricular for them to go for teaching practice. From the beginning, their course works in education are interwoven with classroom experiences which in turn expose potential teachers to what lies in store for their future work. Azeem's (2011) study on problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice reveals that teaching is an exciting and rewarding activity but like other professions it is demanding and as a consequence pre-service teachers face a lot of challenges while on teaching practice. It was revealed that significant challenges included; lack of teaching resources, lack of financial support and lack of co-operation among teachers. The gap between the realities of teaching and taking on college courses becomes evident from the first practice teaching session undertaken by pre-service teachers, some of the evidence suggested that when making instructional decisions teachers tend to devaluate and in many cases, rarely draw upon the kind of theory that is presented to them in their pre-service training. While Azeem's (2011) study has brought out challenges faced by trainee teachers such lack of teaching resources, lack of financial support and lack of co-operation among teachers.

In Nigeria, Wallace (1991) viewed teaching practice as an opportunity given the pre-service teachers to develop and improve their professional practice in the context of a real classroom which is usually under supervision. From above statements, it can be deduced that teaching practice provides a variety of interesting experiences to the pre-service teachers as it offers them the opportunity to practice some of the ideas they have acquired during their classroom learning. According to National Commission for Colleges of Education (1996), teaching practice is to help the pre-service teachers to develop positive attitude towards the teaching, to expose them to real

life classroom experience, to discover their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching, to provide a forum for them to translate educational theories and principles into practice, to provide them with the necessary skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experiences for full-time teaching after graduation.

In the opinion of Bukaliya(2012), internship (teaching practice) helps trainees' to gain knowledge and interest in teaching as well as helps in personal development such as decision making skills, critical thinking skills and also increase confidence and self-esteem to support this, Mensah (1991) conducted a study on organisation and supervision in Ghana and his study concluded that generally teaching practice is to provide opportunities for student teachers to develop and evaluate their competencies in the major areas of teaching. In the same study Mensah (1991) investigated problems of teaching practice in initial teacher training colleges in Ghana. He concluded that negative interaction between supervisor and supervisee often resulted in frustration and poor performance. He further noted that a good supervisor should establish and maintain productive relationship with his/her supervisee. Among other things, Mensah specifically reported that teaching practice is to test trainees' professional knowledge, understandings and skills, to develop both personal and professional competencies under optimum conditions as well as to evaluate their competencies and readiness to enter the teaching profession.

In the same vein, Gower and Walters (1983) pointed out that teaching practice is to provide the trainee with an opportunity to try out techniques, to allow them to approach teaching situation under sympathetic supervision and to provide them with an opportunity to have teaching evaluated and constructively criticized. In his study, the pre-service teachers reported that teaching practice had bridged the gap between the theory of the classroom and world of practice. Therefore, teaching practice programme was perceived as a valuable way to acquire broad competencies where practical knowledge obtained supports and complements the theoretical studies learned in the classrooms and that teaching practice was found to examine student trainees' performance in their professional skills. In spite of the fact that teaching practice is very essential of teacher education programme, it was faced with a number of challenges.

In his support Adekule (2000) conducted a study in the secondary schools and identified inadequate time and unserious attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice programme which often resulted to the pre-service teachers not gaining the intended skills, confidence and knowledge needed to cope with classroom situation.

Nwanekezi, (2011) investigated attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice in the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria and identified inadequate preparation of students for teaching practice, lack of necessary equipment, facilities and materials for the exercise, poor learning environment in relation to poor ventilation, class congestion as well as short practicing period. This was a common discovery in most of the related literature that was reviewed.

In a further debate, other scholars stated that the challenges facing the trainee teachers seem to be based on the criteria used in the development of assessment for teacher competence. It is a distinguishing mark between those who are competent and those who are not yet competent. This was echoed by Goh and Matthews (2011) in their study in South Africa. Their central argument was that no matter how good the program can be, there must be an open, fair assessment system to ensure that those who fail to cross the threshold of minimum competence receive a fail grade. This requirement would warrant dependable, robust assessment procedures throughout the course.

Teacher pedagogical centeredness was another challenge which in some cases reduced the participation of learners in the classroom and only encouraged rote learning. To this end, the teaching methodological approach alongside teaching practice should aim at improving the classroom practices of the teacher. The assumption of separating theory and practice cannot be sustained in this undertaking of evaluating the critical role that teaching practice brings to the classroom situation between the teacher and learners. In this case, theory and practice should be mutually enhancing each other. This is the most salient reason the researcher in the current study seeks to emphasize and demonstrate by focusing on the evaluation of the teaching practice program for pre-service teachers, in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice. (Bloomberg, 2003).

According to Koross (2016) notable challenges to teaching practice were poor placement of students in schools that did not have adequate facilities for practice, rush assessment by lecturers or supervisors due to large numbers of students they have to observe within a short time and poor management in some schools characterized by lack of timetables and mentoring staff.

Kross (2016) divided challenges facing student teachers on Teaching Practice in Kenya into geographical, administrative, professional, instructional, supervision, social and financial challenges. According to Kross (2016), the geographical challenges included long distances to school and impassable roads. Administrative challenges included rejection of student and overload of student teachers with more lessons. It was noted that if such difficulties are not carefully handled, then teaching practice for student teachers would create stress, uncertainty frustration and consequently failure.

A recent study by Adentwi and Baafi (2011) on Perception of Pre-Service Teachers' Towards the Teaching Practice Program in College of Technology and Education, it was reported that on-campus teaching practice equip entrants with requisite teaching knowledge, skills, experience, efficacy, professional development and support their learning. Lack of teaching aids, inadequate time, poor planning, lack of administrative support, and lack of proper orientation on the role of on-campus teaching practice were some of challenges identified.

Mokoena (2017) also reported lack of materials and short period for teaching practice. This was different from the colleges in Livingstone as the students said they the full term for their teaching practice was adequate time for them. The same challenge was reported about Vaal university students in South Africa who reported that they were posted for teaching practice too late in the year when most teachers in the host schools had completed their syllabus and revising for examination. In spite of these challenges, the program was rated to be good by the pre-service teachers. This study was educative and directional to the current study as it pointed out issues on the challenges faced such as Lack of teaching aids, inadequate time, poor planning, lack of administrative support, and lack of proper orientation on the role of on-campus teaching practice. However, it was not clear on what challenges were student teachers and teacher educators in Zambia colleges of education facing during their teaching practice period, hence the current

study treated challenges encountered by student teachers and teacher educators in the teaching practice as key objective among others.

Internationally, teaching practice in Distance Education (DE) is an issue that has been researched for some time. Several studies on teacher training through Distance Education (DE) reveal that the organization of practice teaching for student teachers presents both logistical and educational challenges (Du Plessis, 2013). Problems facing practical teaching via DE include: the placing of students at approved schools, mentoring and supervising them during school visits, building relationships with all stakeholders, assessment, and feedback (Du Plessis, 2013). Mubika and Bukaliya (2013) state that some problems in the training of teachers arise specifically from the nature of distance education among which are the factors to do with its scale, distribution of students, technology integration, tutors and schools, range of stakeholders and partners responsible for different tasks.

These authors further note that the assessment of students' competences during teaching practice remains problematic and contentious.

Additionally, debates about the assessment of the practice of student teachers often reflect on-going philosophical debates about the nature of teacher education and traditional barriers between teachers and academics (Mubika & Bukaliya, 2013). Despite this, practice teaching remains a pillar of teacher education as it provides opportunities for evaluating in-service teachers in authentic environments. In-service teachers enrolled in distance programs are usually in their place of work when they attend the teacher training programs.

However, finding the means to assess their teaching practice eludes most institutions. Educational difficulties arise from the old problem of integrating theory and practice. Educational difficulties also arise from the fact that the task of supervising coupled with other duties makes it almost impossible for the teacher educator to witness as an in-classroom observer the wide range of instructional strategies that form the basis of an inquiry learning environment (Mubika & Bukaliya, 2013). Due to numerous challenges encountered by distance education (DE), some institutions had abandoned supervision of teaching practice because of organizational difficulties. However, various alternative strategies have been put in place in

attempting to mitigate the supervision needs of the teacher training program. However the above study gave a major reflection on student teachers under distance education. Although some findings were similar to the ones the researcher found in the case of the full-time student teachers in Livingstone district, the context in which the findings were sought were different.

Azeem (2011) conducted a study on problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice and revealed that teaching practice was designed to smooth the transition from teacher to student. At the same time the teaching practice assignment gave the teachers training institutions an opportunity to evaluate the students teaching capabilities. It was one of the most important components of the teacher training program. It also provided opportunity for student teachers to put their theoretical studies into practice. However, there were some inconsistencies between what has been learned in college or university and the actual situation in the classroom. Further, the study added that it was the responsibility of teacher education institutions to provide such learning experiences to student teachers that they may be able to identify, select and innovate organize such learning experiences which may develop competence in the student teachers to teach the course of their specialization on the one hand and recreational activities and social useful production work on the other hand.

In another study by Myalla (2014) in Tanzania on assessing the impact of the duration of pre-service teacher education on teachers work performance and teaching competencies in Tanzania the case of nyamagana municipality revealed that teachers for grade(3) three lacked competence and skills in teaching which was against the professional code of conduct .The study revealed that lack of education competence was attributed to short time or duration for pre-service training as they lacked theoretical and practical skills for them to effectively teach in class. while the aforementioned study was designed to identify the problems faced by the student teachers during teaching practice in Tanzania, the current study was an investigation of student teachers and teacher educators' views on teaching practice by exploring their views, benefits and challenges faced during the teaching practice period in Zambia.

2.4 Studies Done on Teaching Practice in Zambian Context

Zambia also espouses the global grid of making sure student teachers are trained thoroughly in order to improve the teaching and learning process through contributing quality education to the general populace. Quality education emanates from quality teachers and quality teachers are produced in Colleges and Universities under strict quality teaching and supervision.

In order to fully understand teacher preparation, there is need to understand the two terms: ‘teacher’ and ‘preparation.’ A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competencies or values whereas preparation is the activity or process of making something/someone ready for or ready for something. Therefore, teacher preparation is the process of making a teacher ready for something. In order to make the teacher ready there is need to undergo a variety of activities which will help him/her to help others acquire knowledge and or other skills. This therefore, means that for teaching to be effective, a teacher has to be provided with appropriate and intensive training to ensure that they know when and how to teach using specific methods (Adenkule 2000). With this in mind, it is important then to ensure that the teacher who is a driver in the success of any teaching is prepared before the implementation of any policies takes place.

A teacher plays an important role in the learner’s acquisition of knowledge and development of skills needed in their future survival. It is also believed that competency – oriented teaching has become the most outstanding aspect of teachers’ responsibilities. A teacher who lacks competencies will not deliver as expected. Konstantinos and Charl (2015) state that, the core of teacher’s knowledge is firstly linked to the exhaustive mastery of his subject matter and adequate methods and means to convey it. Teachers therefore, have a great role to play if children are to learn. This can only be achieved if the teacher has received proper training for him or her to deliver effectively.

The education system in Zambia like any other country keeps on changing. Because of the changing nature of education, teachers are themselves supposed to be perpetual learners. Quality education requires the availability and use of textbooks and other educational materials. Without these aids to the learning process, effective teaching and learning in the modern sense cannot

take place. Suitable materials enable pupils to acquire and apply knowledge, to learn at their own pace and to assess their own progress. Although considerable improvements have been made in recent years in the provision of educational materials, these still remain critically short in many schools. The supply of books has improved greatly, thanks in large measure to donor assistance, but the same cannot be said for the utilization of these new resources. The legacy of years of resource starvation has left its mark on schools and teachers. Few classrooms have facilities for the storage or display of books and materials, with the result that these items tend to be locked away in storerooms or heads' offices. There appears to be considerable reluctance to make use of books, partly because teachers have not been trained in the use of this resource, partly because of fear that the books might be damaged or lost. It has become clear that merely 'dropping' resources into schools is not having the desired educational outcomes. More attention needs to be paid to the use of these resources for teaching and learning purposes. With these happenings, it brings the researcher to a realisation why a study on perceptions of teaching practice by student teachers is important.

In Zambia, teaching practice is part of the teacher training course at all levels of teacher training and it's taken as a very serious exercise that leads to successful graduation of a student. According to Muzata and Penda (2014) in their study entitled "Pedagogical Experiences of Students on School Teaching Practice", it was indicated that in Zambia, No student doing a teaching course in Zambian colleges is allowed to graduate without passing teaching practice. It is quality assurance test because trainee teachers are assessed in the application of the theories they have learnt. The findings of the study revealed that during Teaching Practice, Students adopted one common way of introducing lessons; the lecture and group discussions method of teaching were the most prominent methods of teaching. The study further indicated that while students exhibited knowledge of their subjects, they had difficulties using the discussion and group work methods. Problems of time management made them fail to conclude lessons on time. The study also revealed that there was also less use of real objects as teaching aids and generally the use of teaching and learning aids was limited. The above study however only concentrated on teaching methods and not the perceptions students have on teaching practice, a thought that the current study attempts to explore.

In the study done by Manchishi and Mwanza (2013) indicated that at the University of Zambia, the students go for teaching practice after their third year of study. This comes after they have arguably completed enough content and methodology courses to teach. The purpose of the study was to establish the effectiveness of the University of Zambia school teaching experience. Interview guide, observation checklists and focus group discussion were instruments used. Respondents included Head teachers, serving teachers, student teachers and University of Zambia lecturers. The findings revealed that the design and delivery of the University of Zambia student teaching experience was not effective because of the disparities in the length of the teaching practice duration which disadvantaged some students who only managed to do 8 weeks or less. Although the University is currently revising the period a student teacher should stay in the field for teaching practice. The other reason for its ineffectiveness was that student teachers were only well vested in content and not methodologies and they did not receive the necessary help from the University lecturers and the cooperating schools. In addition, teaching practice was not graded thereby rendering it irrelevant. They added that having teaching practice during the students fourth year was not appropriate. In support of this, one male head teacher had this to say:

I think the student teaching practice is not effective. I would rate it at

5/10 because students are given a period of about six weeks, which I think is not adequate enough to prepare someone for the teaching industry I also think the teaching practice should be done in the third year the whole of the Second semester. After the students do their teaching methods, they should go into real schools to teach for a semester; one term at least. Like this, they will use their skills effectively because they are familiar with them, not teaching in the fourth year when student will have forgotten some teaching skills.

In a similar study done by Manchishi and Masaiti (2011) from the university of Zambia pre-service teachers on their practicum expectations, the findings are encapsulated in one student's experience who stated that;

My expectations of the practicum were to get an environment where there was a proper interaction between, teachers and us training teachers. But firstly, there was stereotyping from pupils, especially to start with, we were introduced as training teachers, so the pupils held a preconceived mind about us from their past experiences with student teachers, hence, this generated their attitude. Secondly, the teachers were suspicious of us, thinking that we had come to take away their jobs, while some just left their classes to us without supervision. But it was fairly good once we became acclimated to the environment.

The current study however is different from the above study as it did not look at expectations from the University of Zambia student teachers in Lusaka district with particular focus on their expectations for teaching practice. The present study is different as it sought to establish the perceptions of trainee teachers in various aspects while on teaching practice in primary schools in Livingstone district.

Another finding that came out of Manchishi and Masaiti (2011) study on the university of Zambia pre-service students from the school of education was that there was inadequate preparation for trainee teachers in the social aspect of the teaching profession, such as school community partnership and there was equally inadequate preparation of the trainee teachers with knowledge and skills to adapt to change in the classroom. In view of the findings, the study recommended that there was need for all stakeholders involved in teacher preparation to come together and examine the teacher training program at the University of Zambia. The above study is insightful to the current study in that it has highlighted vital components involved in teaching practice by showing the challenges trainee teachers faced out in the field for teaching and how the student teachers on teaching practice perceived them.

In the same study it was noted that the first challenge that student teachers faced in their placements was a lack of teaching and learning materials.

They reported that the school library did not have appropriate books that they needed. In addition there was no transportation for the student teachers to take them to the schools. Serving teachers were not cooperative as well.

The other challenge that the student teachers faced was classroom management. They attributed it to large classes, which they said were difficult to manage. All the respondents said that there was a lack of discipline in schools as pupils were rude and uncontrollable. The study established that there was no discipline in schools due to the fact that the pupils are very rude, and they make too much noise in class even when teachers talk to them. The other challenge pre-service teachers faced were lack of accommodation at the school sites where they were sent. The problems are further compounded by financial challenges something that is common in almost all the schools, colleges and universities. However, the current study differs from the aforementioned study in that it covers the critical component that perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators can bring to the success or failure of the teaching practice program in Livingstone district.

In the study by Muzata, (2013) carried out at Two Teacher Training Institutions on the Copper belt and Central Provinces of Zambia, it was discovered that students faced several challenges among them, the period of teaching practice was too short, lack of instructional materials and resources in schools, poor learning environments and overcrowded classrooms, difficulties preparing lesson plans, inadequate orientation for teaching practice before the actual teaching practice, lack of provision of field trips when necessary and other challenges that bordered on relationships with other experienced teachers. Some of the challenges faced with the experienced teachers was lack of friendliness and sociability, lack of respect by some experienced teachers', hiding of text books by experienced teachers and abandoning of classes by the experienced teachers. These experiences negatively influenced the student teachers' perception of the teaching practice and the teaching profession as a whole. The reviewed challenges do not only inhibit the professional development of a teacher beginning his career but also frustrates them. Githinji and Nderitu (2013) noted that teachers beginning a teacher career experience difficulties in discipline which was almost non-existent in most schools, classroom control and abuse by the mentors who imposed exorbitant demands on student teachers in terms of work overload. Such a situation if not carefully handled, teaching practice creates stress, uncertainty and frustration.

Education systems should work at addressing the challenges facing teacher preparation in order to enhance quality teacher preparation. Though there is a difference in this study, challenges that had to do with teaching within the classroom could be similar to the challenges students in this study faced. The study also did not take students perspectives as the focus was on classroom experiences during teaching practice.

In another study done by Simuyaba et al (2015) which was conducted in selected schools in Lusaka district in Zambia aimed at getting teachers' and headteachers' perceptions on the performance of University of Zambia student teachers on teaching practice. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Questionnaires and interviews for headteachers and class teachers mentoring the student teachers were administered. The main findings established that the training offered to the students did not prepare them well for real-life experiences in the field because it lacked values, attitudes, morals, practical approaches, methods and techniques to suit real life situations in schools thereby making the training ineffective and to some extent irrelevant. The study recommended more field observations within a classroom under the supervision of the classroom teacher, longer period of teaching practice where a student teacher is under close supervision of the classroom teacher and internship where a newly qualified teacher is supervised within his or her own classroom for sometime.

Most of the scholars have concentrated on looking at teacher training neglecting the other teacher who is already in the field, for example Chella (2015) also conducted a study on the preparedness of trainee teachers to teach initial literacy while on school experience in selected primary schools in Kitwe district. Her study was conducted using mixed descriptive method which provided valid and reliable information as respondents were involved in both questionnaires and semi-structured interview. The findings showed that majority of trainee teachers were not well prepared to teach initial literacy while in training and this was as a result of teacher trainers not being competent on these policy issues. This on its own suggests that most teacher trainers lack knowledge on how to impart literacy skills to trainee teachers which further points to inadequate preparation on their part. This was supported by Kashoki (1978) in his study on Zambia Adult literacy programme conducted in London where it was reported that there was inadequate preparation of trainee teachers with knowledge and skills to adapt to change in the

classroom. In addition he further suggests that all institutions that provide Teaching education to trainee teachers should render professional support and guidance. This shows that there were challenges in the preparation of the people to implement policy from colleges of Education. With regards to the expectations of trainee teachers in initial literacy, majority students expected lecturers and class teachers to provide support, guidance and teaching materials and also to tell the student teachers their weaknesses and how to teach using new methods in primary literacy programs. This study is different from the current study in that it was investigated at primary school levels in particular focus with literacy as opposed to the current which explored perceptions of student teachers at colleges of education at diploma level.

2.5. Synthesis of Literature Gap

The aforementioned reviewed literature both from the global and African perspectives had a lot to offer to the current study in that it has clearly shown that no country would ever attain its objectives of adopting the strategies of teaching practice in the learning process aimed at providing quality education to the 21st century teachers and learners in the absence of qualified teachers/mentors, appropriate educational training, materials, proper funding, suitable school infrastructure and community participation and especially proper teaching practices. However, literature also shows acknowledge gap of the influence of student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions regarding teaching practice especially in the local context of Zambia. It was therefore imperative to carry out this study and address the issues related to the perceptions trainee teachers and teacher educators hold concerning teaching practice.

Furthermore, although many studies world-over have clearly shown the role and importance of teaching practices in education, no clear documentation or comprehensible literature was found by the researcher on including student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions in the teaching practice program either at college or in the schools where trainee teachers are sent for field experience. The current study therefore investigated the student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of teaching practice to establish their influence on the success or failure of teaching practice in Livingstone district. It argues that it is not only about what student teachers learn in colleges or schools during their field experience, it is also about the perceptions they bring to this preparatory program.

2.6 Summary

This chapter presented a review of the related literature on the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators towards teaching practice in colleges of education. The chapter highlights the key dimensions and aspects of the research topic, namely the perceptions of the student teachers and teacher educators, benefits of teaching practices on the student teachers and the challenges faced during training and the teaching practice in schools. The chapter presented the global and Zambian views of the importance of teaching practice preparations of future teachers as well as the challenges pre-service teachers encounter in universities and colleges during their academic training. It also revealed that teaching practice is a very important undertaking in the training of teachers and should forever be in existent in teacher training to help students training to be teachers to enact what they have learnt in theory and practice. This helps to measure theory against practice as these two are different entities but intended for the same goal. The next chapter presents the methodology that guided the whole study in coming up with a systematic plan on how the data and other important parts of the study were achieved.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The current chapter presents the methodology employed in the study which includes the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques used in the study. It provides explanations on the research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures. This section ends with ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell, (2009) defined a research design as glue-like structure that holds all the elements in a research project together. Ngoma, (2006) has also noted that a research design involves a set of logical steps considered by the researcher in order to respond to the research questions. Orodho, (2003) defines it as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to the research problem. This study utilized a case study employing qualitative research design methodology with a descriptive component for the analysis of data collected. The case study design was deemed appropriate because the study involved the collection of detailed, in-depth data collection through focus group discussions with students and one-to-one interviews with the class teachers and college lecturers. The case study design added another advantage in that the study sought to collect the experiential views, attitudes and perceptions of individual trainee teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice so as to generate a case description as well as case-based themes.

Furthermore, the case study design gave the researcher numerous advantages, due to its flexibility and use of different methods of collecting data such as in-depth interviews (Kombo, 2006). According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) a qualitative approach involves description; it seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behavior of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. It is often used as a means to collecting verbatim statements from participants in view of the fact that open-ended questions allow respondents to offer responses within their natural context, and the value of the information provided can be exceptionally high.

Creswell, (2007: 74) concludes that “A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases. Since the researcher had specific cases for investigation, the case study design stood out as the most appropriate approach to the research problem because it drew its participants from Livingstone District only.

3.3 Study Target Population

A population is generally a large collection or a well-defined collection of objects or individuals that have the similar characteristics or traits (Kombo and Tromp; 2006). There are two types of research population. A target population is an entire group of objects or individuals that the researcher uses to generalize their findings whilst the accessible or study population is one that the researcher can draw their sample from and apply their conclusion from. In this study the target population comprised all trainee teachers and teacher educators from two colleges of education and three schools in Livingstone District.

3.4 Study Sample

Smith (2010) defined a sample as a subset of the population which consists of selected individuals or objects that a researcher chooses to participate in a study. It is a portion of the elements in a population that is studied in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn. Webster 1985 (as cited in Orodho and Kombo, 2002) defines a sample as a “finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole”. Total sample for this study consisted of 26 participants of which 16 were student teachers in their third year of their training program, 10 teacher educators (6 school mentors and 4 college Lecturers). The sample size for this study was small because the study employed a qualitative approach and the researcher wanted to collect in-depth data from the participants by conducting multiple interviews.

3.4 Sample size

Table 3.1 below provides details of the sample size for the study

Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

NO	CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1	Teacher educators (lecturers)	4
2	Student teachers	16
3	Teacher educators (mentors)	6
	Total	26

Participants were asked to state their gender and in response, they gave the following responses as tabulated in the table below

Table 3.2: Student Teachers' Gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY
Male	6 (student teachers)
Female	10 (student teachers)
Total	16

Source: Field data, (2018)

Table 3.2 above shows the student teachers who were drawn from the sampled colleges of education. Out of 16 student teachers who participated in the study, 6 were males and 10 were females. This implies that the majority of participants who participated in this study were females. This means that the study was dominated by female students' gender as opposed to males.

As for teacher educators, out of 10, 4 were males and 6 were females. This means that the majority among the teacher educators and in the study were males.

In terms of credentials, teacher educators were further asked to state the levels of their qualifications and below in the table is the information submitted.

Table 3.3: Participants' Qualification

LEVELS OF QUALIFICATIONS	FREQUENCY
Master's degree	3
Bachelor's degree	5
Diploma	2
Certificate	0
Total	10

Source: Field work, (2018)

Table 3.3 above shows the demographic characteristics of teacher educators and lecturers in term of their qualifications. From the total number of teacher educators and lecturers in this study, 5 held Master degree and 6 had Bachelor's Degree. Further, 2 had a Diploma and none of them had a certificate as a qualification in the field of teaching in the colleges of education visited. This implies that the majority of the teacher educators and lecturers held Bachelor degree and minority had both Master degree and a Diploma in the faculty of teaching.

Furthermore, the teacher educators were asked to give information on the number of years in service and the following were their submission below in the table.

Table 3.4: Participants' Number of Years in Service

NUMBER OF YEARS IN SERVICE FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS	FREQUENCY
1-10	3
11-20	3
21-30	2
31-40	2
41-50	0
Total	10

Source: Field work, (2018)

Table 3.4 above shows the demographic characteristics of teacher educators in terms of the number of years in service. Based on this information 3 teacher educators had served within the range of 1-10 years. The other 3 had served from 11-20 a period between years in service while 2 served for a period between 21-30 years and only 2 had served for a period between 31-40 years. However, none of the teacher educators served from 41-50. This implies that the majority of teacher educators served within the range of 1-10 and 21-30 and the minority fell within the range of 31-40. The years of experience above 10 years also indicate the importance of the length of time regarding the perceptions which teacher educators had embraced over the years and subsequently points to their consistency of embracing the perceptions.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling that involves purposively selecting individuals from the population based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013). Purposive sampling was used to select teacher educators because they were directly involved in the school teaching practice program. In many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access knowledgeable people, thus those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues. However, to be specific, the study used criterion sampling because the study sample involved teacher educators who were familiar with the teaching practices in colleges of education and schools. The main and only criteria for selecting them was because they were directly involved in the training of student teachers in teaching practice and so they were privy to their own perceptions of teaching practice as well as those of student teachers through interactions with them. The lecturers were identified through the College principal by virtue of their role in training student teachers in colleges on the importance of teaching practice, whereas the class teachers (who are the closest supervisors to the student teachers) were selected with the help of the teaching practice coordinator in the school because they were the ones who supervised, monitored, gave support and accompanied student teachers during the practicum period. Since they were perceived to be better placed to provide more information to the study, they were selected. Orodho and Kombo (2002) state that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich in cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied.

Black (1999) observes that purposive sampling ensures that those people who are unsuitable for the sampling study are already eliminated, so only the most suitable candidates remain. This means that the results of purposive sampling are usually expected to be more accurate than those achieved with an alternative form of sampling (Orodho and Kombo, 2002)

Student teachers were selected on the basis of their being the primary focus of the study and also their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The trainee teachers were selected using typical case sampling and were identified through the Teaching Practice Coordinator because at the time of the research they were based in schools for the practicum program. Typical Case sampling was appropriate because the student teachers were selected principally on the basis of them holding perceptions regarding teaching practice program in colleges and schools where student trainee teachers were assigned.

3.6 Research Instruments

The research used semi-structured interview guide and focused group discussions to collect data.

3.6.1 Interview Guide (Appendix No1 and 4)

Interviews are questions asked orally (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The content of the interview guide was based on the research questions. The Lecturers and the class teachers were asked to give their views on the pre-service teaching practice program. The interviewer further inquired whether the program had any benefits and additionally challenges. One to one interviews were used to collect data from teachers. One to one interviews were used on the basis that qualitative inquiry usually produces in-depth data. The interviews were conducted wherever the respondents felt most convenient and comfortable. It is from the thick description that the researcher was able to understand perceptions of student teacher and teacher educators in colleges of education in Livingstone district. Interviews are flexible because they consist of both open and closed-ended questions. They are important because they gather in-depth information which gives the researcher a complete and detailed understanding from both closed and open ended questions. Therefore using interviews enabled the study to get the first hand on perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on the teaching practices in selected colleges of education holistically.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide (Appendix No 3)

This study used focus group interview guides to collect data from 16 student teachers from the two sampled colleges of education in Livingstone District of Zambia. They were divided into three groups of five participants in two groups and six in one group. This type of research instrument was chosen and applied to this category of the participants in order to save on time and allow participants to interact and express their views freely on topic under investigation in a social context. It was better suited for the study because it maximized the collection of in-depth personal perceptions of student teachers and increased the proportionality of shared and common experiences as participants were able to affirm their own perceptions through what others shared. This aspect was also important for the confirmation of student teachers' perceptions as a shared phenomenon and for the reliability of the study.

3.7 Data Quality Assurance (DQA)

The state of acceptability in terms of it being true and unique academic product was done using Guba's four trustworthy strategy which is ideal for all qualitative studies. In this study, *credibility* was ensured through the correct plan from the beginning to the end which was a case study design that coincided with the study title; hence quality of data was assured. *Transferability* was ensured through contextualizing with other studies in which similar information was found and new information was added on to the body of knowledge hence, data quality was assured. *Dependability* was also employed through making research instruments reliable by conducting a pre-testing or pilot study and *Confirmability* was used through "Bracketting" or "Epoche" taking the information as it came from participants through verbatim reporting (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is the gathering of specific information aimed at proving and refuting some facts on how a researcher collects data and with what instruments (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). Therefore, in trying to follow the data collection procedure, the researcher sought permission to conduct the research from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) as well as the respective college principals of the two colleges selected. After the researcher was given

permission to conduct the research, she then went to the selected colleges and conducted interviews to teacher educators. This was done so as to triangulate the research instruments and increase the data quality of the data elicited. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews among teacher educators were conducted on different days. Semi-structured interview guides were used by the researchers because of their flexibility (Patton, 2002). In addition, they allow depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expend interviewees' responses.

A voice recorder was used to record the conversations and to capture opinions and views of the participants. When this was done, the researcher then categorized the statements and summarized them in a narrative form. Key statements were quoted and thereafter a report was written. While each participant was being interviewed, the conversation was recorded using a voice recorder. Thereafter, the researcher wrote a report on each of the 10 individual teacher educators interviewed from the two selected colleges of education in Livingstone District. For student teachers semi-structured interviews were conducted to 16 student teachers (put in groups of 4) from each of the two selected colleges who were purposively selected to take part in the study. Afterwards, their responses were facilitated by structuring appropriate questions that would explore the topic.

3.9 Data Analysis

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013) defines data analysis as a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study so as to uncover the underpinning structures and extracting cardinal variables thereby testing any underlying assumptions. However, the appropriate methods of data analysis are determined by the data type, variables of interest and the number of cases. Therefore, the data collected from the field through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion on teacher educators and student teachers' perceptions regarding the teaching practice in colleges of education was qualitatively analyzed using emerging themes method.

Smith (2006) argue that the themes method is a suitable approach for analyzing qualitative data when one is trying to find out what perceptions individuals have towards a particular situation

they are facing, and how they make sense of their personal and social world. The method is especially useful when one is concerned with the complexity, process and novelty of a phenomenon; in this regard teaching practice in the education system. This method of analysis allowed the researcher to categorize the collected raw data and generate themes from it in line with the objectives of the study. Therefore, the analysis of raw data enabled the researcher transform it into meaningful information.

3.10 Ethical Consideration (Appendix No1)

Cohen, et' al. (2000) explained that ethical issues are matters which are highly sensitive to the rights of others. In this regard, ethical issues were upheld in the study. First and foremost, a clearance letter was obtained from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and the researcher sought consent from the University of Zambia ethical committee, District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), college principles from the respective colleges, and participants to find out whether they were willing to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that participation by the teacher educators and student teachers was voluntary. This was done by explaining to them the procedure, relevance and purpose of the study. Participants were assured that data to be collected would be kept confidential and only be used for research purposes. Furthermore, the researcher assured the participants that names and personal details would not be revealed or published and that names of schools and participants were represented by certain codes and this ensured anonymity. Ultimately, the researcher had to take full responsibility for the study and any unforeseen consequences it could attract. All the mentioned activities were done in order to ensure that the rights of the participants were respected and their dignity as human beings was safeguarded.

3.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodology employed in this study. Under methodology, the following items have been captured: the research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical issues. Having presented the above, the next chapter presents the findings of this study from the two sampled colleges of education

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study in line with the research questions. The research questions were as follows:

1. How do student teachers and teacher educators perceive teaching practice at colleges of education?
2. What are the perceived benefits of teaching practices by student teachers and teacher educators in colleges of education?
3. What are the perceived challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators during teaching practices in colleges of education?

4.2 Perceptions of Student Teachers and Teacher Educators in Colleges of Education

The researcher took time to interact with the participants through one-to-one semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect data related to their personal perceptions of the teaching practices in colleges of education. In doing so, prominent themes that came out during data analysis were used to guide the presentation of findings. In view of this, student teachers' perceptions in terms of findings are presented first and teacher educators later as follows.

4.2.1 How do Student Teachers perceive Teaching Practice

Student teachers participate in teaching practice in colleges of education. Their participation in this study was very imperative because their perception towards the teaching practices in the colleges of education and in schools was the center of the study.

Student teachers were asked to give their perceptions on teaching practices in colleges of education. The findings of the study revealed that student teachers indicated that teaching practice was very important in the teaching career of every teacher as it facilitated the understanding of imparting knowledge and skills in the learners. One student teacher commented during a Focus group discussion that:

Teaching practice is key as far as teaching is concerned because it is a path through which each and every teacher has to go through in order to understand teaching and be able to deliver a lesson diligently in the classroom , at college most of us didn't have a chance to do peer teaching because of the huge number of students, so only few has a chance, so I learnt most things from here, the class teacher, since I teach English assisted me on how to make lesson plans and teach and even discipline learners (Student Teacher A, College 1, 2017).

Another student teacher stated that:

For me.....my view about teaching practice and the training at college is a little different when we come in schools dealing with pupils as the learners is difficult. when we are doing peer teaching at college, everyone is behaving mature but here you have the young ones and you don't know how to make them understand what you are teaching and even how to teach it....so our college needs to start exposing us to a lot of micro-teaching during training...otherwise the content part at college is not bad on my part, it is just that us students don't realize that teaching practice is an engine for teaching as it prepares teachers for future challenges of teaching. Otherwise its very interesting to be exposed to classroom teaching and just having the real feel of it ... (Student Teacher J, College 1, 2017).

The findings of the study further revealed that, student teachers indicated that through teaching practice, a novice teacher is exposed to teaching experiences that are required in understanding the learning abilities of different learners. One student teacher stated that:

Teaching practice is good in our teaching career as it equips us with extraordinary knowledge and skills far beyond just teaching in

understanding our clients in this case...learners who happen to come from different backgrounds. Therefore, it is not easy for them to learn without that teaching skill and knowledge that comes through teaching practice (Student Teacher O, College 2, 2017).

Further, another student teacher echoed that:

Teaching practices is a strategy that has been put in place to prepare and equip novice teachers with the necessities of the teaching and learning process. With teaching practice at our dispose, we feel privileged because it makes things easier and straight forward for us during our lifelong teaching practicing in the service (Student Teacher D, College 2, 2017).

Accordingly, the study findings show that teaching practice was helpful as it availed student teachers with the necessary knowledge of interpreting the school curriculum content which is very vital in the teaching fraternity. One student teacher reiterated that:

Having the knowledge and skills of the school curriculum's content is not a joke. This requires one to be trained on how to go about it and this is a product of teaching practice that bakes and makes a teacher to have a general understanding of what it entails to have a curriculum in schools without which it will be very difficult to teach (Student Teacher H, College 1, 2017).

The study further revealed that student teachers indicated that teaching practice in colleges of education acted as a channel of instituting student teacher's courage and experience into the real world of teaching and learning. This showed that teaching practice provides student teachers with hands-on teaching techniques as they practice their teaching skills and knowledge in schools through the preparation of school syllabi. This finding was supported by the verbatim reported by one student teacher who stated that:

Most of us teachers were nothing without teaching practice and after having been exposed to it we gained courage and teaching experience. This helped us to make necessary adjustments in order to perfect our teaching skills. Today...we teachers are proud of teaching because the process of teaching practice which impacted positively in our teaching career. Therefore, I for one would say teaching practice is good us to be great teachers in our nation (Student Teacher, College 2, 2017).

The study found that teaching practice was perceived as a spring board to the actual teaching process as it brings into reality the pertinent issues of scheming and lesson planning in schools. Student teachers who were interviewed indicated that the issues of scheming and lesson planning were key components in the teaching and learning process because they viewed them as drivers in giving an organized direction of teaching and learning to the learners. One student teacher commented that:

Both schemes of work and lesson plan are the backbone of the teaching and learning process as they depict the one's readiness to teach and deliver in class. This knowledge of scheming and lesson planning comes as a result of one being exposed to the teaching practice. As a mandatory case, no teacher would teach without a lesson plan which is born from the scheme of work. So, the two are inseparable in for proper teaching and learning to take place in schools (Student Teacher P, College 1, 2017).

The study also revealed that teaching practice acts as a channel of courage and experience into the real world of teaching and learning. They further reported that teaching practice provides novice teachers with hands on or teaching by doing as they practice their teaching skills and knowledge in schools. This finding was supported by the verbatim reported by one student during a focused group discussion who stated that:

Most of us were nothing before teaching practice but after being exposed to it, we have gained quite some courage, confidence.... And teaching experience It has helped us to make necessary adjustments in order to perfect our teaching skills. Today...we are proud of teaching because the process of teaching practice impacted positively in our teaching career. Therefore, I for one would say teaching practice is good for us if we are to be great teachers (Student K, college 2, 2017).

The study of student teachers' perceptions regarding teaching practice was viewed by some student teachers as a moment of enlightenment. One student teacher stated that:

Now that I know the importance of my own perceptions, I have become acutely aware of the power of knowledge that lies within me which I can add to what I learn from the college and the school environment. The integration of my perceptions with the knowledge acquired from training will be sources of self-motivation in the way I prepare the teaching lessons and undertake the teaching profession. (Student teacher B, college 1, 2017)

Another student however argued that:

In my case it has been difficult to handle this teaching practice well. The class teacher at the school simply handed me the books I will be using without help of how to go about it...he doesn't even come to class to see what is happening in class, so it is difficult to put together what we were told at college and what is on the ground. (Student teacher M, college 2, 2017)

4.2.2 How do Teacher Educators Perceive Teaching Practice

Teacher educators being the facilitators of moulding student teachers in colleges of education play an important role in as far as teaching practice is concerned. They make sure of all the

requisites required in the process of equipping a student teacher with the necessary knowledge and skills is done holistically. Due to this indispensable role played by the teacher educators in colleges of education, they were also asked to state how they perceived the teaching practice in colleges of education. The findings of the study revealed that teaching practice was a cardinal element in the teaching profession as it gives students teachers a chance to be the actual drivers of their own teaching process. One teacher educator commented that:

Having teaching practice in schools for our novice teachers is interesting because student teachers are involved in the actual preparation of their own teaching problems. When they are here we ensure that we help them with the practical knowledge and skills they need in schools. We expose them to peer and micro teaching so that even as they go for their one term school experience they know what to do. I personally inspire them and hope I am a role model to them (Teacher Educator I, College 2, 2017).

The study findings revealed that, teacher educators pointed out that teaching practice was good and encouraged in colleges of education as it prepared student teachers for more complex work in the actual teaching in the world of work. The study also found that teaching practice motivates the student teachers by providing them with opportunities to participate in teaching not until they realized their full potential of becoming great teachers in the future. This finding was supported by one teacher educator who reported that:

Teaching is a noble calling that comes from above and is strengthened through teaching practice that is enshrined in the education system that each and every teacher has to undergo the this process in order to be fully and well-rounded teacher who the nation can depend upon for positive contributions teaching practice actually has no comprise and should be undertaken by everyone. In cases where one misses that particular term, they need to come do the teaching practice the following year...after

all we do a lot to prepare them for a feel of the practical part in the field.(Teacher Educator A, College 1, 2017).

The findings of the study also indicates that teaching practice was key in the teaching and learning process because it helped the student teachers to interact with the more experienced teachers during their teaching practice period to share teaching ideas before one became fully fledged teacher. To support this, one teacher educator stated that:

All of us at one point in time were student teachers but introducing us to the teaching practice, we became better teachers who we are today. In my own words, I can say having teaching practice in school from the colleges of education is a great imitative and should be encouraged and supported by all well-meaning teachers in the system to continue. (Teacher Educator G, College 2, 2017).

Another teacher educator had this to say:

Teaching practice in schools brings good ideas on the table as student teachers work in groups or as a team thereby making teaching much easier and interesting because you are able to share ideas together and you may even learn from others what you did not know.(Teacher Educator D, College 2, 2017).

The study findings revealed that participants were of the view that teaching practice gave the student teachers chances and opportunities to perfect their teaching skills in class as they would be able to get exposed to the real world of teaching and learning. One teacher educator stated that:

Teaching practice enables the student teachers to be able to get exposed to the real teaching and learning and have a concrete experience of the teaching in the classroom where they are learners. This makes our student teachers have courage and zeal to

stand before a crowd to teach in a professional manner. (Teacher Educator C, College 1, 2017).

Additionally, most of the participants in the study were of the view that teaching practice helped student teachers with the know-how of teaching. One teacher educator echoed that “teaching practice makes things perfect.” Many teacher educators indicated that teaching practice introduces student teachers to a variety of teaching methods and allow them to exercise their own choices on which method works better each one of them. Additionally, one of the teacher educators stated that:

Most of our student teachers find the lesson very interesting after given a platform of teaching practicing in their various fields of teaching because it makes them have the skills and knowledge of understanding the curriculum content, syllabus schemes and lesson planning in school. (Teacher Educator F, College 1, 2017).

4.2.3 How do Teachers Educators (Class Teachers) Perceive Teaching Practice

Asked about teachers’ perceptions of teaching practice, one supervisor stated that:

Perceptions of student teachers have had huge influence on the success or failure of the practicum program. Student teachers who held positive perceptions of the program demonstrated a high level of commitment than those who did not. Perceptions have been critical and in some cases decisive components of the success of the practicum program by some students. As a supervisor I found out that student teachers who openly spoke about their positive perceptions of the program turned out to be more successful in classrooms than those who did not”(Class Teacher R, school 1, 2017).

Another supervisor expressed that:

Because of the important role that student teachers' perceptions play in the success or failure of the practicum program, it becomes imperative to integrate them into the teaching practice course at college as well as the practicum program at schools. This will not only benefit trainee teachers in enriching their teaching competences but it will also provide useful insights to the Ministry of General Education in Livingstone District which can be used to include trainee teachers' perceptions among the most important components of teaching practice. (Class Teacher V, school 3, 2017)

When asked about the importance of student teachers' perceptions, one class teacher commented that:

Having supervised student teachers for five years, I have consistently observed that even if student teachers acquire knowledge and positive beliefs regarding teaching practice during their training, and even if the teaching practice is well organized but as long as prospective teachers' perceptions are not addressed the implementation of the skills acquired could still suffer. (Class Teacher J School 3...)

Another Class Teacher added that:

Most student teachers regardless of the training they undergo at college still present some deficiency in the way they plan their lessons and present them, this is the problem we have, so there's a lot of work of helping them with planning. Some are very knowledgeable of the content but they have a problem of delivering the message. They are not well-vested with teaching methods (Class Teacher M,).

The aforementioned were some of the perceptions of student teachers, teacher educators; class teachers concerned the teaching practice in the colleges of education particular in Livingstone District of Southern province.

4.3 What are the Benefits of Teaching Practice among Student Teachers in Colleges of Education?

Research question two sought to investigate the benefits of teaching practices in colleges of education to student teachers in education system. This prompted the researcher to find out the experiences of teacher educators and students teachers on the benefits of teaching practices in colleges of education. Participant interviewed submitted different views.

4.3.1 Student Teachers' Views on the Perceived Benefits of Teaching Practices

When asked to state the views on benefits of teaching practice in the colleges of education, student teachers made the following submissions: They indicated that teaching practice made the methodological know-how possible for student teachers, provided practical opportunities for evaluation, provided teaching platform for student teachers, helps teachers to identify their own teaching weaknesses and strengths and nurtures the student teachers with maturity and sense of responsibility as well as enrich them with teaching experiences. One student teacher commented that:

Teaching practices is a good thing to us students because it enables us to familiarize ourselves with actual classroom situations before we become permanent teachers. We start with peer teaching in classrooms among ourselves in the colleges then we are introduced to schools to go and practice skills taught (Student teacher A, College 1, 2017).

This view was supported by another student teacher who strongly stated that;

The level at which we student teachers in colleges are taught is to acquaint us with the necessary knowledge and skills to help us become well baked teachers. To me teaching practices are okay

because the phobia and fear of standing in front of learner's management starts while on teaching practices. That is why you find that even students teachers who do well during teaching practices also become good teachers when they become permanent teachers. Me I like teaching practice more that even theory (Student teacher E, College 2, 2017).

In response to the same question, another student teacher argued that:

Not quite appropriate and relevant, I think there is a lot of content we really don't need for the purpose of teaching. A lot of mathematics up to fourth year level in terms of effective teaching at secondary school there is a lot of it we don't need. In terms of methods there are a lot that we can do which we don't do; we can do a lot in terms of methods. This concept of mathematical knowledge for teaching, I think we need a better blend between methodology and content (Student teacher G, College 2, 2017).

4.3.2 Perceived Benefits of Teaching Practices by the Teacher Educators

Teacher educators were also asked to give out their position on the perceived benefits of teaching practice in schools. As regards to their perceived benefits, teacher educators reported that teaching practice benefited the student teachers in so many ways, among others the benefits are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Responses of Teacher Educators on the Benefits of Teaching Practice

Benefits Of Teaching Practice	Frequency
Methodological know-how	3
Provides opportunities for practice	2
Provides teaching experiences	3
Provides identification of one's' strengths and weaknesses	1
Imparting a sense of responsibility and maturity	1
Total	10

Source: Field work data (2018)

The findings of the study revealed that, ten (10) teacher educators participated in the study. The study found that, 3 teacher educators reported that teaching practice benefited student teachers by providing them with the methodological know-how; 2 stated that it provided them with opportunities for evaluation; 3 reported that it provided the much needed teaching experiences. Further, teacher educators indicated that teaching practice that 1 reported that it provides identification of one's' strengths and weaknesses; and 1 indicated that it imparts a sense of responsibility and maturity. To support this, one teacher educator made the following remarks;

Teaching practice enriches most of our student teachers with teaching skills which enhances their communication ability to teach during lessons. I mean! It widens the scope of understanding the information communication which is a crucial element in the teaching and learning of learners” (Teacher Educator J, College 2, 2017).

The views of teacher educator J seemed to have been supported by other interviewees. For example, lecturer D commented that;

The advantages of teaching practice are numerous. Infact to me the teaching curriculum was supposed to have more time for practical inform of teaching practice than the theory part because

the teaching experience and competence is more achieved through teaching practice than theory. Me I feel it was going to be better if we had two terms in a year for teaching practice and one term for theory until the academic year ends (Lecturer F, College 1, 2017).

Similarly, teacher educator B commented that;

You see what makes a student teachers in a college of education to become a teacher is teaching practice. The more they are nurture while on teaching practice, the more competent teachers they become. With teaching practice the level of acquiring knowledge and skills on how to teach is too much, I will say the knowledge they use in teaching practices makes them fit well in schools when deployed as permanent teachers (Teacher Educator B, College 1, 2017).

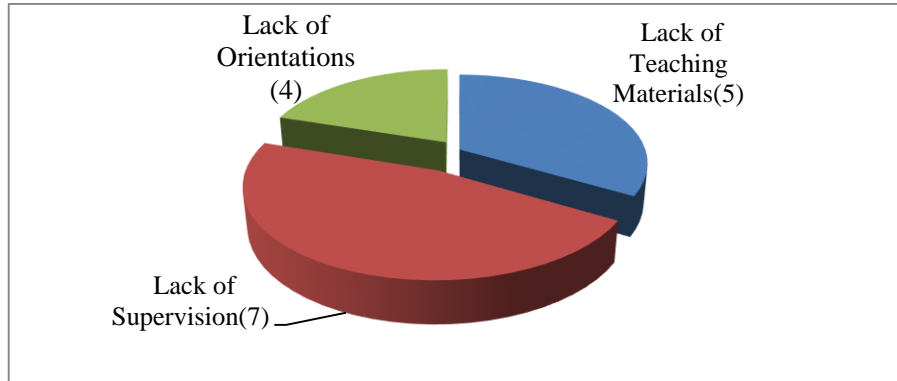
The above objective has been addressed by student teachers, teacher educators and class teachers on the perceived benefits of teaching practice as they submitted the following benefits; making the methodological know-how possible for student teachers, provided practical opportunities for evaluation, provided teaching platform for student teachers, helps teachers to identify their own teaching weaknesses and strengths and nurtures the student teachers with maturity and sense of responsibility as well as enrich them with teaching experiences

4.4 What are the Challenges Faced on Teaching Practice by Student Teachers.

From the third objective, two sub-themes emerged that included: challenges student teachers faced on teaching practice.

4.4.1 Challenges Student Teachers faced on teaching Practice

When asked to state the challenges that student teachers faced during teaching practice in schools, student teachers had their own unique challenges. In as much as they appreciated the benefits of teaching practice in schools, student teachers also identified a number of challenges as presented in the Figure 4.1.



Source: Field work data (2018)

Figure 4.1: *Views of student teachers on challenges faced on the teaching practice*

Findings of the study revealed that student teachers faced challenges on teaching practice. As shown in 4.1, the findings of the study revealed that, four (4) student teachers reported lack of orientation as a challenge in the teaching practice; five (5) student teachers indicated lack of teaching materials; and seven (7) reported lack of supervision from the seasoned teachers. One student teacher stressed on overcrowding and stated that:

Overcrowding is not good because it brings a lot of negative developments which retrogresses both the teaching and learning. This is because some of us are still new in the system hence handling such a big number of learners that poses a challenge in managing the behavioral aspect of the learners. (Student Teacher M, College 2, 2017).

Another student teacher reported that:

The other challenge is that because of overcrowding, in most cases time is always limited to finish our teaching tasks and in most cases we fail to manage them all in their classroom activities due to inadequate time and space” (Student Teacher K, College 1, 2017)

Just like the views of the student teachers who were interviewed to give challenges faced on teaching practices, one student teacher from college 1 commented that;

Teaching practice is a good thing but the problem is that when we students are sent to schools on teaching practice was need the mentorship of the permanent teacher of a class you have been assigned to teach. Now my experience was that when I was on teaching practice the class was left to me and my permanent teacher was just passing through and no mentorship was given to me. In real sense I became the permanent teacher. The support I needed I was just contacting my other colleagues in other classes and other schools. This made my teaching practice to be somehow difficult (Student H, College 1, 2017).

In another vein in trying to find the challenges faced during teaching practice by student teachers, one student teacher interviewed comment that:

My experience with teaching practice was bad. At a school where I did my teaching practice everything was upon the teachers to source them, things like chalk, syllabuses, and other things to use such as ball pens for making. Teaching was not enjoying as most of the materials to use were not available. You ask your permanent teach with reference books and other materials the response was told that just see what you can do.

Therefore most of the things were just ignored and left unattended to (Student F, College 2, 2017).

The responses of student teacher J in an interview were similar to student F from college 2 who echoed that:

The major problem I experienced with teaching practice was lack of materials to use. This made the teaching very difficult as everything as just being improvised. When I reported for teaching practice I was just assigned a class and there was no orientation of any sort up to the time the teaching practice came to any end (Student K, College 2, 2017).

Apart from the views of student teachers on challenges faced on teaching practice student educators were also interviewed separated to get the views on the changed faced on teaching practice.

4.4.2 Views of Teacher Educators on Challenges Faced on the Teaching Practice

When asked to state whether there were challenges faced by the student teachers on the teaching practice in schools, teacher educators indicated different views on the challenges faced by student teachers on the teaching practice. The responses are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Challenges faced in teaching practice as observed by student teachers

Challenges	Frequency
Lack of teaching materials	3
Lack of supervisions	3
Lack of orientation/induction	2
Overcrowded classes	2
Total	10

Source: Field work data (2018)

The findings of the study indicated that teacher educators faced challenges on the teaching practice. The study revealed that three (3) teacher educators indicated lack of teaching materials; three (3) indicated lack of supervision; two (2) reported lack of orientation/induction; and two (2) indicated overcrowded classes. One teacher educator had this to say:

Teaching practice is a challenging exercise to students especially those found teaching practices in schools where there are not teaching and learning materials. The college doesn't provide student teachers with teaching materials. This is the work of schools where student teachers are doing their teaching practice. But you find that most of the school lack materials which pose huge challenges to student to practice their knowledge and skills effectively (Teacher Educator, College 2, 2017).

Other teacher educators interviewed echoed challenges faced on the perceived experiences with teaching practice. For example, one teacher educator from college 2 lamented that:

You see, knowledge gained required reinforcement if it is to be enhanced. Now what usually happens is that when student teachers go on teaching practice there is not mentorship or coaching given to them by schools where they are doing teaching practice. Students lack support and guide to mirror whether what they are doing is right or not. When we go on monitoring exercise we sometimes find students teacher doing wrong things because of working by their own without any guidance by permanent teachers (Teacher Educator, College 1, 2017).

Another teacher educator in a separate interview said that:

Most of the schools are overcrowded such that class management of big classes by student teachers becomes a challenge. This makes student teachers to fail to make written exercise and attending to learners who need some assistance and remedial work. This also

makes management of groups and coordinating group discussion when using learner centered approach (Teacher Educator C, College

2

The overall findings of the study on the challenges faced by student teachers in teaching practice were lack of teaching materials; supervision; orientation/induction; and overcrowded classes.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study in line with the study questions. The findings from the study revealed that both student teachers and teacher educators showed a positive perception towards teaching practice in colleges as they reported that teaching practice was very important in the teaching fraternity because it prepares student teachers for their future teaching career.

As regards the benefits of the teaching practice, the study found that it increased the methodological know-how, opportunities for evaluation, provides teaching, identification of one's weaknesses and strengths and nurtures them with maturity and sense of responsibility as perceived by the student teachers, teacher educators and class teachers.

As for the challenges, in terms of the teaching practices of the student teachers teacher educators were hampered by a considerable number of challenges such as lack of; orientation, supervision, materials, teaching skills, classroom control and management skills overcrowded classes as perceived by the student teachers, teacher educators and class teachers.

This chapter endeavored to present the findings of the study in a coherent manner through qualitative techniques. In the next chapter, some of the foregoing findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the reviewed relevant literature across the Global, Africa and Zambian context.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The present chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion was done under the following sub-headings which have been derived from the research objectives:

1. To explore the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators on teaching practice in colleges of education in Livingstone district.
2. To establish the benefits of teaching practice on student teachers as perceived by student teachers, teacher educators in the teaching practice in colleges of education in Livingstone district.
3. To ascertain challenges faced by student teachers on teaching practice in colleges in Livingstone District.

5.2 Perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators

In relation to the research objective of how they perceived teaching practices in colleges of education, the study revealed that teaching practice was very important in the teaching career of every student teacher as it facilitated the understanding and the imparting of knowledge and skills to the learners. This finding is in line with the findings of Ferron (1978) who argued that, despite the phenomenon of the “born teacher, a good teacher just like good engineers, doctors and lawyers are made, not born thereby advocating for the values of teaching practice as the source of professional competencies in Teacher Education.

Further Murphy, (2003) added stating that the practicum is an important yardstick in teaching as a profession and career pathway and is central to all teacher educational programs. This process starts when the student is gradually introduced into the teaching role for a particular class by a mentor or class teacher. Therefore, teaching practice is key as far as teaching is concerned because it is a path through which each and every teacher has to go through in order to understand teaching and be able to deliver a lesson diligently in the classroom. Teaching practice is an engine for teaching as it prepares teachers for future challenges of teaching. It is very

interesting to be taught to teach and exposed to all the pertinent of classroom arrangements so as to have a feel of what it means to be teacher.

The study also showed that student teachers stated that it was through teaching practice that the student teachers are exposed to so many teaching strategies that are required in understanding the learning abilities of different learners. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Clark and cutter (1990) who contended that teaching practice mentors and works well as it encourages the pre-service student to assume greater responsibility in classroom management and instruction as the experience progresses according to the learners' abilities and preferences. Further, Freemyer (2008) supported the finding by stating that teaching practice exposes student teachers to the real world of teaching as it tries to bridge between the theory and practice has always been a matter of discussion in the professional formation of teachers.

Therefore, the pre-service teaching practicum is a fundamental period for every student to acquire massive understanding and different potentials learners have as each is considered an individual. This manner, the student teacher would be made to experience that which makes student teachers face real teaching situations which at the same time can lead them to the commitment or attrition of their professional choice. Teaching practice equipped most student teachers with extraordinary knowledge and skills far beyond just teaching and understanding learners who happened to have come from different backgrounds. Therefore, the knowledge and skills acquired through the teaching practice made it easy to teach and learn the areas of strength and weaknesses of the learners.

According to the study's findings, student teachers reported that teaching practice was helpful as it availed them with the necessary practical knowledge and skills of interpreting the school curriculum content which is very vital in the teaching fraternity. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Lepage, Darling-Hammond, and Akar, (2005) who reported that most of the foreign studies delineate the need for institutions that provide teacher education to provide teacher candidates with the basics and preparedness skills to create classrooms and interpret curriculum content that will alleviate their fears as prospective teachers.

This is so because substantial amount of evidence reveals that teachers who have had more preparation and poses knowledge and skills of understanding the contents of the school curriculum for teaching outweigh in their confidence, preparedness, and success with learners when compared to the ones having had little or no preparation and acquaintance of the curriculum content. A critical argument is that teacher education programs are accused of not preparing student teachers adequately for the realities of the classroom and understanding pertinent issues surrounding the school curriculum. This has been argued out in literature that teacher preparedness has a positive impact on student learning; however there is not much research on how it impacts teacher candidates who are on teaching practice.

The study also revealed that student teachers reported that teaching practice in colleges of education acts as a channel of courage and experience into the real world of teaching and learning. This finding is in support with the findings of Jerome, Hayward and Young (2003) who argued that teaching practice exposed and rooted in student teachers the much required experience and competencies of teaching. This entails that it provided the novice teachers with hands on or teaching by doing as they practiced their teaching skills and knowledge in schools through the preparation of school syllabi.

Even though the responsibility of teacher preparation largely rests on the training institutions, on the other hand, believe that pre-service teachers assume the responsibility for personal professional development. A teacher feels that he or she owes it to himself or herself and the pupils to continually develop professionally. Different skills are needed to be planned for. This means that student teachers are not to blame for their inabilities or inadequacies on the teacher educators, because they can also contribute to self-professional development outside the lecture room based the required and absorbed teaching experiences and competencies in the field of teaching.

The study found that teaching practice was perceived as stepping stone to the actual teaching process as it brings into reality the pertinent issues of scheming and lesson planning in schools. This finding is in congruent with the findings of Kane (1991) in his book entitled 'The first year of teaching', Real world stories from American teachers and discovered that teaching practice is one of the most important undertakings that empowers trainee teachers with well-roundedness of

information concerning the lesson planning, scheming and analysis of the results. He maintained that for the trainee teachers, he does not expect them to start teaching the class straight away but expected them to spend most of their time in the first two weeks observing the class teacher so as to help them achieve the acquaintance levels of teaching.

This implies that the issues of scheming and lesson planning were key components in the teaching and learning process because they were viewed as drivers in giving an organized direction of teaching and learning to the learners. Both schemes of work and lesson plan are the backbone of the teaching and learning process as they depict one's readiness to teach and deliver in class. This knowledge of scheming and lesson planning comes as a result of one being exposed to the teaching practice. Furthermore, many teacher educators were of the view that teaching practice helped student teachers with the know-how of teaching.

The study echoed that teaching practice makes things perfect as it introduces student teachers to a variety of teaching methods and allows them to exercise their own choices on which methods work better for each one of them. Most of our student teachers found the lesson very interesting after given a platform of teaching practice in their various fields of teaching because it helped them acquire the skills and knowledge for understanding the curriculum content, syllabus schemes and lesson planning in the schools. As a mandatory case, no teacher would teach without a lesson plan which is produced from the scheme of work. So, the two are inseparable for proper teaching and learning to take place in schools.

Participants also pointed out that teaching practice is good and encouraging in colleges of education as it prepares student teachers for more complex work in the field. They further indicated that teaching practice motivated the student teachers because even those who were not, so called born-teachers had an opportunity to participate in teaching until they realized their full potential of becoming great teachers in the future. Teaching is a noble calling that comes from above and is strengthened through teaching practice that is enshrined in the education system that each and every teacher has to undergo this process in order to be a fully and well-rounded teacher who the nation can depend upon for positive contributions.

5.3 Benefits of Teaching Practice in Colleges of Education

The current study indicated that teaching practice made the methodological know-how possible for student teachers. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Bekalo and Welford (1999) who revealed that teaching practice empowered student teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and skills. In their study, they cited an example of Ethiopia where student teachers during their practicum considered the importance of being equipped with teaching pedagogies before one could be allowed to handle a class. This helped and enhanced teachers' improvement on methods of teaching. On methods of teaching, they emphasized that it promoted a variety of teaching methods which are full of self-propelled exploration, discovery of new teaching and a spirit of cooperation among the teachers as they shared different experiences and competences in their teaching endeavors.

However, in many other African and Latin American countries, most of the teacher preparation institutions including universities and colleges which offer a certification program do not offer to students the opportunity to experience a period of classroom teaching under supervision. However, this situation in African and Latin American countries is different from the Zambian scenario as teaching practice is seen as an important component to student teacher preparation without which one could not be considered a teacher due to its methodological advantages.

The study also revealed that teaching practice provided opportunities for evaluation to student teachers. This finding is in line with Zeichner and Liston (2013) conducted a study on 'Reflective Teaching' in New York. The findings of the study were that trainee teachers are expected to progress in achieving their professional development and must be aware of the requirements for each placement during school experience.

This is so because the progress made by student teachers towards achievement of the teaching standards needs to be assessed on regular basis. Trainee teachers are expected to place a greater emphasis on the content, the knowledge and skills that pupils are supposed to learn. The majority of the student teachers who were frequently observed, supervised and guided became very competent, efficient and effective and were allowed to work independently within their classrooms. Therefore, evaluation of teaching' performance in the teaching fraternity is very

cardinal as helps in identification of one's areas that need to improve upon and this strengthened and the teachers' concentration in their work of teaching.

The study further revealed that teaching practice nurtured the novice teachers with maturity and sense of responsibility as well as enriched them with teaching experience. This finding is in line with the findings of Jerome, Hayward and Young (2003) who believed that pre-service teachers should assume the responsibility for personal professional development and some levels of maturity. This entails that teachers should feel that they owe themselves and the pupils to continually develop professionally.

Therefore, different professional development skills need to be planned for and a sense of responsibility inculcated in trainee teachers. This means that student teachers should not blame their inabilities or inadequacies on the teacher educators, because they can also contribute to self-professional development outside the lecture room as they have enormous responsibilities of helping their learners to learn new things through provision of knowledge, demonstrations for them to see, thus changing learners' attitudes in desired directions.

The study further indicated that teaching practice enhanced the communication skills of student teachers. This finding is in agreement with the findings of McIntyre, (1990) who suggested that different forms of professional knowledge should all be used to interrogate each other as well as used to support, guide and communicate with one another in the teaching during teaching practice. This is so because trainee teachers are expected to be systematic in lesson preparation in that practical classroom and training can only be provided by class teachers working together with the students in terms of guidance and communication during preparation as well as in their classroom and schools endeavors and the smooth delivery of the lesson content. This cordial relationship that propelled communication enhances their ability to teach in giving instructions and widens the scope of understanding the information communication which is a crucial and central in as far teaching and learning of learners is concerned.

5.4 Challenges Faced on Teaching Practice by Student Teachers

The study revealed that teaching practice posed student teachers with a challenge of lack of orientation in colleges and schools. This finding is in line with Ben-Perez (1995) who contended

that; Pre-service teacher education varies dramatically around the world in such aspects as institutional context, content areas, time allocation and forms of practical experiences for the students require full orientation before they are introduced to the classroom situation. The study was also in line with the findings of Muzata (2013) who indicated that mostly students lacked information due to lack of orientation before the actual Teaching practice, a situation that requires collective reformation from stakeholders of Teaching practice in colleges and to a larger extent schools. Although many societies consider this preparation to be the only professional preparation teachers receive throughout their careers, the current tendency is to acknowledge that this is merely the first step in a longer process of professional development. During initial training and their first few years in the classroom, many teachers experience difficulties in learning to teach but eventually they would become experts in their own field of specialization if they better prepared in their duties of teaching.

The study also found that teaching practice posed student teachers with lack of materials. This finding is in agreement with Manchishi and Masaiti (2011) in their study at the University of Zambia on the effectiveness of the school teaching experience who noted that the first challenge that student teachers faced in their placements was a lack of teaching and learning materials. Sharing the similar view was Mokoena (2017) study which also reported lack of materials and short period of teaching practice for the student teachers. The same challenge was reported about Vaal University students in South Africa who reported that they were posted too late in the year when most teachers had completed their syllabus and revising for examination.

Additionally, Azeem's (2011) study on problems of prospective teachers during teaching practice revealed that, teaching is an exciting and rewarding activity but like other professions it is demanding and as a consequence, pre-service teachers face a lot of challenges while on teaching practice such as lack of teaching resources, lack of financial support and lack of co-operation between teachers, poor teaching and learning environment. The gap between the realities of teaching and taking on college courses becomes evident from the first practice teaching session undertaken by pre-service teachers, some of the evidence suggested that when making instructional decisions teachers tend to devaluate and in many cases, rarely draw upon the kind of theory that is presented to them in their pre-service training. This makes the teaching of learners promote rote memory because of lack of substance between the theory and practice.

Therefore, for teaching practice to be successful there must be availability of the teaching and learning materials in schools to make work easier for the student teachers to enjoy their profession.

The study revealed that teaching practice posed student teachers with challenges of negative attitudes from serving teachers. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Abo Nimreh, (2003) who identified teaching practice and went further to find out the influence of gender and specialization on them and the findings revealed that there were problems in relating to the supervisors and cooperative teachers. Class teachers' related problems included abandoning trainee teachers when they start practicing teaching, not checking their lesson plan books and being busy with learners in class while trainee teachers are engaged in teaching the class.

On the other hand, cooperative teachers did not offer the trainee teachers any help and were not happy to be observed by the trainee teachers when teaching. This retrogressed the progress on the part of the trainee teachers as they lacked support from their mentors who could have inducted and supervised them thoroughly to an extent of not facing the challenges in the teaching and learning process. This situation is similar with what happened to the visited colleges in the study area and these challenges frustrated student teachers in their duties at a point of performance in delivery of the lessons. Therefore, to avoid a repeat of this scenario in future, the Ministry of General education should place an emphasis on schools to have experienced teachers who would be mentoring the novice teachers for them to appreciate the profession of teaching.

In view of the numerous challenges that surrounded the teaching practice among the student teachers, the study also found that student teachers faced challenges of overcrowding in classrooms. This was because after a deep synthesis of literature, it was clear that no empirical evidence from other studies reported on overcrowding in classes as challenges faced by student teachers during teaching practice in schools as perceived by student teachers, teacher educators and class teachers.

Overcrowding was not conducive because it had a lot of negative developments as most of the teaching and learning proceedings were delayed by having large classes which were fully packed with learners. The overcrowding in classes was coupled with a high teacher-learner ratio because

the classes had more than the required number of learners as opposed to the number of teachers to teach. Furthermore, time factor was also mentioned as a challenge. This was viewed by student teachers as being one of the major barriers in their teaching and learning during the teaching practice because of being overcrowded in classes and that the individualized learning style demanded by the learners was impossible due to limited time and space.

The reviewed challenges do not only inhibit the professional development of a teacher beginning his career but also frustrates them. Githinji (2013) noted that teachers beginning a teaching career experienced difficulties in discipline, classroom control and work overload. If not carefully handled, teaching practice creates stress, uncertainty and frustration. Education systems should work at addressing the challenges facing student teachers preparation in order to enhance quality teacher preparation.

5.5 Strategies to alleviate challenges of teaching practice

Imoji (1990) defined strategies as sequence of decisions purposely undertaken to achieve a goal. In this study, a strategy is a goal directed activity or a pattern of behavior in teaching practice situation. It can also mean teaching and learning events which are designed to optimize student teachers professional competences in teaching practice field experience.

Some scholars have identified strategies which can help to address the challenges associated with teaching practice. Uwameiye (2012) in the Nigerian context emphasized the importance of reflective practice for student teachers and teacher educators. He argued that reflective practice stimulates new ways of mitigating the personal deficiencies of student teachers such as poor and incorrect perceptions towards teaching practice. It achieves this by encouraging student teachers to challenge their own poor or incorrect perceptions in order to replace them with better or positive ones. In this way reflective teaching improves student teachers' motivation, heightens self-efficacy and facilitates personal transition from theory into practice. As a skill development exercise, reflective practice is designed to diagnose and remediate professional teachers' competence deficiencies.

It can also be used as a feedback channel between student teachers and teacher educators. One of the challenges student teachers identified was the lack of systematic feedback between lecturers and classroom supervisors and between themselves and the supervisors. This strategy can

therefore improve communication on all levels of trainee teacher training in colleges and schools for field experience. Reflective practice fosters relational trust, quality relationship, connectedness, a culture of supportive collaboration and constructive critical thinking. Young and Edwards (2006) showed that modeling pedagogy, using authentic teaching approaches, probing questions and the perspectives, claims and opinions of those directly involved in the process assist the lessening of the challenges of teaching practice. From the responses of the student teachers and teacher educators the study has demonstrated how they hold their own thinking and contributions in high esteem and so this strategy is shown to be a very important aspect in the process of teacher training.

DeVile (2010) stated that reflection is a learning method which fosters meaningful learning through questioning and investigation. In relation to this discourse, reflective practice means the assessment of the underlying rationale for taking certain decisions in the process of teaching and learning. It also means the critical evaluation of the suitability or otherwise of decisions taken in relation to the effects of such decisions on student learning and teachers professional role expectations. As shown from the study reflective practice can mitigate the gap that can be created in cases where student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions are left out among the indispensable elements of teaching practice.

An adoption of research-based teaching practices can also effectively enhance the success of teaching practice. When information related to the effectiveness of teaching practices is gathered from the researches on particular aspects, it furnishes the policy makers and teacher educators with quality information which can be used to solve some problems emanating from student teachers, policy makers and teacher educators. Research-based data can be critical to bridge the gap between student teachers and teacher educators and also between theory and practice. In a study carried out by Wieman and Gilbert (2014), it demonstrates that research-based approach to teaching practice is an effective way of alleviating the challenges associated with teaching practice which are not usually identified by the developers of the teaching practice course content.

The research-based approaches are critically important in addressing the actual or perceived aspects of teaching practice thereby maximizing the opportunity for the success of teaching practice.

The strategies above therefore create an enabling environment of how the challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators can be effectively addressed. The study has shown that the strategies which are scientifically proven and scholarly recommended are important precedents regarding the potential success of teaching practice. In addition to these, the suggestions, concerns and recommendations from those directly involved in the process such as teaching practice are indispensable pre-requisites for maximizing the chances of the success of teaching practice. It is for these and other reasons that the study emphasizes the incorporation of student teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions into the teaching practice course content. This is seen as a way of alleviating the challenges faced by teachers and teacher educators on one hand and maximizing the very prospects of the success of teaching practice on the other.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the discussion of findings of the study in line with the objectives. The study found out that the teaching practice both student teachers and teacher educators showed a positive perception towards teaching practice in colleges as they reported that teaching practice was very important in the teaching fraternity because it prepares student teachers for their future teaching career.

Regarding to the benefits of the teaching practice, the study found that it increased the methodological know-how, opportunities for evaluation, improves teaching, heightens the identification of one's weaknesses and strengths and nurtures them with maturity and sense of responsibility.

As for the challenges, in terms of the teaching practice of the student teachers, teacher educators were hampered by a considerable number of challenges such as lack of orientation, supervision, materials, teaching skills, classroom control and management skills and overcrowded classes. Therefore, looking across the participants at the colleges of education represented in this study, the researcher gained a broad picture of the importance of perceptions and perspectives as well as the benefits and challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators during teaching practice as indicated above. The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study and puts forward recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The previous chapter discussed the findings. This chapter summarizes the research findings. At this juncture, it must be confirmed that this study endeavored to investigate perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators towards teaching practice in college of education. The study investigated the phenomenon by invoking on the following achievable objectives which included to; investigate the perceptions of student teachers and teachers educators during teaching practice in colleges of education in Livingstone district, establish the benefits teaching practices on students teachers as perceived by student teachers, lecturers and teacher educators in the teaching practice in colleges of education in Livingstone district and ascertain challenges faced by student teachers on teaching practices in colleges in Livingstone district. However, this investigation was confined only to two selected colleges of education in Livingstone District. Furthermore, in this chapter, the conclusion is drawn on the basis of the findings of the study and thereafter recommendations based on the findings of the study are made. Finally, the chapter ends by suggesting areas for further research based on the findings of the study.

6.2 Conclusion

The study found out that both student teachers and teacher educators showed a positive perception towards teaching practice in colleges as they reported that teaching practice was very important in the teaching fraternity because it prepares student teachers for their future teaching career. It was argued that teaching practice provided student teachers with practical opportunities for self-evaluation as they embarked on the noble journey of teaching learners in various aspects of their lives after completing their training programmes

As regards to the benefits of the teaching practice, the study found that exposure to teaching practice increased the methodological know-how, opportunities for evaluation, provides teaching experience, identification of one's weaknesses and strengths and nurtures them with maturity and sense of responsibility thereby resulting in positive perceptions held by the participant. All these attributes are pivotal for a successful teaching practice and teachers that would be translated into

full time and potential teachers who would oversee all the educational activities for the benefit of the nation.

As for the challenges, in terms of the teaching practices of the student teachers teacher educators, the highlighted that teaching practices were hampered by a considerable number of challenges such as lack of; orientation/induction, supervision, materials, teaching skills, classroom control and management skills overcrowded classes. Therefore, looking across the participants at the three colleges of education represented in this study, the researcher gained a broad picture of perceptions and perspectives, benefits and challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators during teaching practice. The study also established that employing strategies such as reflective practice and research-based approaches are important elements of lessening the challenges faced by student teachers and teacher educators.

In true spirit the colleges can produce good teachers through teaching practice, however, the quality of the teaching practice program seem to deteriorate with the increasing number of student teachers who are being enrolled in the colleges, as the enrollment increases, it makes it difficult for the student teachers to do peer teachers and micro teaching within the stipulated time, and for most of them peer teaching is just a formality that they think is not vital and can be ignored. The increase in number also consequently leads to inadequate facilities in the colleges leaving most of them staying outside college. This reduces the control of the student teachers and the relevancy of the teaching practicum as most of the student teachers who stay off-campus miss sessions.

Generally, the trainees strongly indicated in the questionnaire that all the preparatory activities were very adequate, and there was the feeling that they were very ready to embark on the field experience exercise. Nevertheless, the interviews which revealed some weaknesses in the activities seems to suggest the trainees' exaggeration of the adequacy of the college-based practical activities, as has been found among teacher trainees in Mali, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (Akyeampong et al., 2013). Related to this point is the fact that in the two colleges studied, there seemed to be varying degrees of importance given to the preparation given prior to teaching practice (TP) the school observation visits, the duration and conduct of teaching practice. The teaching practice which is conducted in the form of microteaching is intended to

deepen the teacher trainees' practical knowledge of teaching through guided, practical, professional learning with their peers in the college classrooms. In demonstrating their experience of teaching practice, they expressed deep knowledge about the processes involved in preparing to teach. Evidently, the fact that one possesses theoretical and/or practical knowledge about teaching does not in itself, guarantee that the one will necessarily be able to teach effectively. Unsurprisingly, in their microteaching, many of the trainees did not take the teaching sessions seriously because they were teaching their peers and also the activity did not count to their final grade. They also did not demonstrate adequate knowledge about the application of a variety of teaching strategies. They all adhered to the procedures of lesson presentation as though the particular approach they adopted could be applied to all types of children in all real classrooms. It was as if simply possessing knowledge of methods, a laid down set of teaching procedures, teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and a convenient selection of certain strategies were all they needed to teach effectively (Adu-Yeboah, 2011; Yan & He,2010). As such, they seemed to underestimate the challenges and difficulties of teaching in real classrooms. Moreover, the timing of the teaching practice and the short duration of the exercise have the tendency of downplaying the significant role of the exercise to fully develop the trainees' reflective and critical teaching skills. Being an after-school activity, the teaching practice may be viewed as a co-curricular activity and therefore may not attract the maximum participation it requires. This may not augur well for the practical component of the pre -service program and may affect the realization of the quality teaching and learning policy agenda (Ministry of Education, 2012) the Ministry of Education envisages to achieve. Finally, the findings suggest that the teaching practice is fulfilling its purpose of exposing trainees to teaching and what they should expect in the field experience: from lesson notes and preparation to lesson notes vetting, lesson delivery, supervision, and post-lesson discussion. Although they first practice teaching on their peers in the college classroom, the experience is rewarding as it trains them to subject their lesson plans and lesson delivery to critique and thus helps calm their anxieties and build their confidence.

Far from gaining valuable experience, student teachers are exposed to depressing conditions in schools where teaching practice is done because the schools are hostile to the methods supported by the colleges. Student teachers find a gap between the content they learn at college and what

they really find on the ground. They are not well trained to skillfully deliver to the learners and in order to build positive attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice in these colleges and be able to reap good results, the following recommendations were proposed.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following key recommendations emerged:

1. The colleges of Education should enhance the provision of adequate pre- practice skills during teacher training programs.
2. Colleges should provide enough orientation to students before teaching practice and provide educational workshops for students and Teacher Educators during the period of training.
3. Teacher training institutions should align their curriculum with the school curricula to avoid disparities in what students train in and what they find in the schools where they are posted for teaching practice.
4. The schools through the Ministry of General Education should consider addressing meeting the basic needs of the students during teaching practice such as shortage of teaching and learning materials besides classroom overcrowding.

6.4 Areas for Further research

Arising from the research findings of this study, some other aspects of this study area may not have been studied and these areas may need to be studied. The areas of the study which may be studied include:

1. Need for a comparative study of teaching practices between public and private institutions.
2. Future research is also needed to questions relationship between the school teaching practices and performance of pupils.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka 10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291 777
Fax: +260-1-290 258/253 952 | Email: director@drgr.unza.zm | Website: www.unza.zm

Approval of Study

11th October, 2018

REF. No. HSSREC: 2018-HSSREC-2018-JUN-23

Dear Ms. Frinah Mweetwa Chidakwa,

RE: "PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHING PRACTICE IN SELECTED COLLEGES IN LIVINGSTONE"

The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee IRB resolved to **approve** this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year **subject** to following corrections:-

- Obtain consent from respective DEBS and colleges involved
- There seems to be two research topics in one title
- No major ethical issues

Review Type	Expedited Review	Approval No. HSSREC: 2018-JUN-023
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 8 th August, 2018	Expiry Date: 7 th August, 2019
Protocol Version and Date	Version- Nil	8 th August, 2018
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	• English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil

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Appendice2: Interview Schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CLASS TEACHER.

A. Bio data

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Subjects being taught
4. How many years have you been in this profession?

B. objective 1: preparedness.

5. What grade are you teaching?
6. What is your highest professional qualification?
7. How many times in a year do you receive student teachers?
8. How many pupils do you have in your class?
9. How do you help the students who come for teaching practice (mentor them).
10. Do you monitor / observe students lessons.

C. objective 2: infrastructure and resource.

11. What material are available for students during their teaching practice (provided by the School).
12. Are they sufficient?
13. Is the infrastructure sufficient and conducive for the student during teaching practice?

D. objective 3. Challenges.

14. How is the attitude of the student teachers towards you as the class teachers?

15. Do they receive your help positively or not?

16. Are there regulations with regards to how many hours they would teach compared to

Yours. If so why?

17. Do you think there are some grades that must be handled by student teachers and not

Others?

18. How do you think student impact on the performance of the learners?

19. What benefits do you see in having student teacher in then school?

20. What changes would you recommend on the teaching practice policy?

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule for Student Teachers

A. bio data.

1. Age

2. Gender

3. Area of study.

4. How many years have you been in the college?

B. objective 1: preparedness.

5. How many years have you been a student in this college.

6. How many times do you go for teaching practice during entire course period?

7. What things are put in place during your training is ensure that you are prepared for your
Teaching practice.

8. Are you stratified with the preparation rendered to for teaching practice?

9. Do you have individual lecturers to take you through the preparation process (mentor)?

C. objective 2: infrastructure and resources.

10. What grade and subject are you teaching?

11. How do you acquire the materials you need for your teaching practice.

12 are the materials sufficient.

13. How is the infrastructure / environment in accordance to the requirements of your
teaching practice?

D. objective 3: challenges

14. What are the attitude of the pupils and the in-service teachers towards you during the Teaching practice.
15. How do you overcome any negative attitudes?
16. How do you help children that seen to generally perform poorly academically.
17. Is there any collaboration with you and the teachers, lecturer during teaching practice?
18. Do you access required materials for the pupils within the school you are doing your Teaching practice from.
19. How often do you receive monitoring from the class teachers or and the lecturers.
20. Do you feel you receive the required help during the teaching practice?

Appendix 4: In Depth Interview for Lecturers.

1. How many years have you worked in this college?
2. What do you hold any other portfolio apart from being a lecturer?
3. What course do you offer?
4. What has been your experience in coordinating teaching practice for the student before and
During teaching practice.
5. Does the college avail adequate material to assist the students?
6. How long do the students go for teaching practice?
7. Do you find the period sufficient to provide them with the necessary hands on experience.
8. How is your selection of schools to which these students go for the teaching practice?
9. What has been your major role in ensuring that the teaching practice component is a success in the college.
10. What benefits do you see in the students having to go out for teaching practice?
11. How often are the students monitored during the period they are on teaching practice?
12. Is the frequency of monitoring sufficient for you?
13. What changes would you recommend?
14. What have been the major challenges?