

## Student Teachers' Perceptions of Sources of Teaching Practice-Related Anxieties

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**Abstract:** Teaching practice is a very vital component of teacher programme. This study examined student teacher's perceptions of the source of teaching practice related anxieties. The student teacher's source of anxieties questionnaire (STSAQ) was used for data collection. Two hundred and seventy-seven undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin in their penultimate and final years who were on teaching practice in the 2011/2012 session in secondary schools across the country took part in the study. The findings indicated that student teachers did not differ in their perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties. The results also showed that there were no significant gender, and year in programme (academic level) differences in student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties. These findings indicate that irrespective of gender and year in programme anxiety is a reality student teachers face during teaching practice. There is therefore the need for interventions to address student teachers' teaching practice related anxieties in order to make the teaching practice component of teacher education programme a challenging, relevant and rewarding experience.

**Keywords:** student teachers, perceptions, sources of anxieties, teaching practice, teacher education

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### INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice is a very vital component of teacher education programme. It provides student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003; Marais & Meier, 2004; Perry, 2004). In related literature it is common to find in use such terms as "teaching practice", "practice teaching" and "student teaching" being used interchangeably. These terms refer to students' field experiences while in training. Every student in a teacher education programme is expected to take part in teaching practice, which serves as an initiation into the real life world of school and teaching. In the same vein, Ogonor and Badmus (2006, p.1) define teaching practice as "the period when student teachers are aided to put into practice the theories and principles of education which they have learnt in the classroom as they teach students in the partnership schools." Marais and Meier (2004) assert that teaching practice represents the range of experiences to which student teachers are exposed to when they work in classrooms and schools.

It has been observed that during teaching practice most students are apprehensive of the exercise particular as they are about to apply the entire learned concept successfully or otherwise in real life situations. What are the sources of these teaching practice related anxieties that students face during teaching practice? Can students identify these sources? Several studies in Nigeria have explored major aspects of teaching practice ranging from adequacy of the programme, assessment of student teachers' performance, to the relationship between student teachers and supervisors (Ogonor & Badmus, 2004; Nwanekezi, Okoli &

Mezieobi, 2011). However, a review of literature indicates that relatively very few, if any studies have addressed the issue of student teachers sources of anxieties related to teaching practice particularly among undergraduate students. The present study therefore attempts to assess student-teachers' perceptions of sources of teaching practice related anxieties. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following research objectives. To determine:

1. student-teachers' perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties; and
2. whether there are gender and year in programme differences in student-teachers' perceptions of sources of teaching practice related anxieties.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

The notion of teaching practice is hinged on experience-based learning associated with Dewey (1938), Vygotsky's (1978) social cognitive theory and founded on the premise of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1999). Teaching practice is regarded as the transition between professional practice and the period when students take increasing responsibilities for guiding the learning of others. It offers student teachers the opportunity of assuming major responsibilities for the full range of teaching duties in a real school situation under the guidance of field based supervisors, faculty-based and partnership school principals. The concept of guidance is not new in education; in fact it dates back to the "Middle Ages" when prospective teachers served apprenticeship with a "master teacher". Afe (1990) considers this guidance role in teaching practice as contributing to the development of quality teachers.

### **Teaching Practice Programmes in Nigerian Universities**

Most universities in Nigeria run the concurrent route in teacher education; in this programme students take their higher education courses in a teaching subject concurrently with their education courses. In faculties of education running the concurrent teacher education programme, two approaches to teaching practice engagement are adopted. The first is the six weeks of teaching practice during each of the third and fourth years of the three/four years degree programme in education. This is the approach adopted in the University of Benin, Benin City. The second approach is the 12-week single block type, where the twelve weeks is taken at a stretch, usually during the first semester of the final year of the three/four years degree in education. This approach is the type adopted by Tai – Solarin University of Education, Ijebu –Ode. There have been controversies as to which of the two approaches is better (Ajeyalemi, 2002; Okebukola, 2007). However, it should be noted that whatever approach that is adopted by the different universities in Nigeria, teaching practice is aimed at inducting student teachers more fully into the professional work of teachers (Perry, 2004).

### **The Concept of Anxiety**

There appears to be no shortage of definition of the concept 'anxiety', ranging from complex explanations concerning physiological responses, to simple one-word statements, such as; fear, tension or pressure. For this study two definitions will be given, first, Epstein (1972) defined anxiety as unresolved fear. This definition portrays anxiety as an unsettled feeling of fear, which may lead to stress if not resolved. Similarly, Ohman's (1993) definition, presents anxiety in terms of three components: a) a subjective experience consisting of an "ineffable and unpleasant feeling of foreboding" b) perception of bodily responses (e.g. sweating, palpitations, shortness of breath and c) behaviours associated with escape and avoidance. Not only did Ohman's (1993) definition present anxiety as ominous, it in addition lists bodily responses by which anxiety can be identified in an individual and the possible response of the individual to

feelings of anxiety. The emotions of anxiety and fear are often treated collectively in literature (Ohman, 1993).

### **Overview of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

Studies have shown that student teachers find the period of teaching practice very demanding and challenging (Killen & Steyn, 2001; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003; Marais & Meier, 2004). It is not unusual during this period for student teachers to experience a number of worries and anxieties which sometimes result in high levels of stress (Broadhead et al, 1996; Morton, et al, 1997). Perry (2004) asserts that teaching practice can be very exciting and challenging and as a result creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension. He stressed further that this excitement can be twofold; first, student teachers could be excited of being part of a real classroom setting, getting to know students, planning and organizing classroom tasks. Secondly, student teachers could have doubts about their ability to cope with unfamiliar situations such as; controlling and managing learners or establishing a working relationship with field-based and faculty-based supervisor. Such mixed feeling can lead to anxiety as anxiety is a human reaction to any unknown situation. Anxiety is an important consideration in teaching particularly during teaching practice with implication for classroom success. Several studies have highlighted sources of anxieties faced by student teachers during teaching practice (Samina Malik, 2010, Morton, et al, 1997; Murray-Harvey et al 2000; Preece, 1997; Hart, 1987. It is evident from the above that a relatively coherent picture of teaching practice related anxieties have been reported in literature. This study reviews five major areas of concern which have been widely cited in literature.

One major area of concern is evaluation anxiety; this refers to the anxiety induced by being observed by one's lecturer or supervisor while teaching. Capel (1997) reported that the main cause of anxiety for the student teachers during teaching practice was being observed, evaluated and assessed. Closely related to evaluation anxiety is that of anxiety of unsuccessful lesson. A study by Hart (1987) revealed that one of the major sources of anxiety among student teachers was how their supervisors might react to seeing one or more unsuccessful lessons.

Another major area of concern is class control anxiety; this has to do with student teachers feelings of inadequacy in managing and maintaining discipline in the classroom and dealing decisively with the students who misbehaves. Preece (1979) asserted that discipline problems often led to high levels of anxiety during teaching practice. He also found evidence that in some cases, a high level of anxiety by students at the start of their teaching practice actually appeared to be a cause of discipline problems. It has been found that student teachers are not adequately prepared during course work on how to handle discipline in the classroom. Advance management skills essential for effective learning to occur is generally learned through trial and error in the climate of a real classroom. Ngidi and Sibaya (2003) assert that a high level of anxiety among student teachers may be tied to a variety of negative consequences such as class control problems and classroom disruptions. It is believed that problems with regard to controlling a class room can be a huge source of anxiety for both student teachers and teachers alike.

Closely linked to the anxiety of classroom management is the fear of inadequate professional preparation. This is because student teachers appear to be keenly aware of the disparity between the possibilities which teaching offers as presented by their lecturers and the realities of the conditions they find in schools (Hadley, 1992). In order to guide student's learning, teachers must have sound command of the subject they teach. They must know which concepts and skills, which are central to the subject and those that are peripheral. Similarly, they must understand the internal relationships within the subjects they teach, knowing which concepts and skills that are prerequisite to the understanding of others. In addition teachers must equally be familiar with the correct pedagogical approaches best suited for topics within the subject. Husband (1994) is of the view that one of the most crucial aspects of any teaching practice is student teacher's ability to translate theories into practice. Boger and Boger (2000) reported that student teachers are faced with the problem of meshing theory taught in professional education courses with practice during their field experiences. In essence teaching practice puts students into the "real world" and allows them to

put theory and philosophy into practice (Quick & Sieborger, 2005). There are many challenges in the application of theoretical knowledge gained by student teachers in actual classroom situations. Recent studies have shown that most pre-service teachers are incompetent in the knowledge of subject matter content, pedagogy as well as communication skills (Ajeyalemi, 2002; Okebukola, 2007). It is therefore not unusual that student teachers see this as a source of anxiety as you cannot give what you do not have. Suggestions abound as to how to bridge the gap between theory and practice. One is the use of micro-teaching, where student teachers are made to put into practice, pedagogy and interactive skills they learnt theoretically under mock conditions, where feedback can be provided by their own classmates and lecturers (Bhargava, 2009).

Host school staff relation is another factor that causes anxiety. The host teacher plays a crucial role in shaping student teachers' perception of the practice teaching period in particular and the teaching profession in general. MacDonald (1993) asserts that a good relationship between the host teacher and student teacher is essential during teaching practice. There is however considerable debate about the multifaceted role of the host teacher. There is no doubt among other roles. Ngidi and Sibaya (2003) are of the view that "effective supervision and guidance from subject teachers at their schools of placement can also play an important role in reducing anxiety among student teachers" (p.21)

### **Gender and Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

Women account for the large majority of teachers in primary and lower secondary education in Nigeria (Danner & Uyi-Osaretin, 2010). This predominance of women in the profession has led to the labeling of teaching as a "feminine" profession. Studies have however shown that men are more in school management cadre than women particularly at the secondary school level (Mills et al, 2004). Can this gender dynamics in the school settings affect student teachers' perceptions of sources of teaching practice related anxieties?

Gender differences in anxiety studies have continued to be a focus of interest and majority of these studies reveal that there is a communal belief that women have greater vulnerability for anxiety and phobia (Dilhon, Wolf & Katz, 1985; Fischer, 1993a; Fodor, 1974). One of the most consistent findings in anxiety studies, which unfortunately is also the most controversial, is that women are twice as prone to anxiety as men. While women are indeed more fretful than men on the average, this difference is mostly as a result of socio-cultural forces such as early experiences, biological factors, educational policies and cultural context, which has led to girls becoming unnecessarily nervous adults.

Studies have also revealed that males and females typically report differences in their general emotional experience, such as overall emotional intensity or expressivity (Grossman & Wood, 1993; Johnson & Shulman, 1988) as well as in the experience and expression of specific emotions (Birnbaum et al, 1980; Fabes & Marton, 1991). Studies have equally suggested that women are more verbally and non-verbally expressive of anxiety than men (Allen & Haccoun, 1976). However, studies have not produced consistent sex differences as some studies have not provided empirical supports for gender differences in emotional expression and experience (Brody & Hall, 1993; Fischer, 1993b; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992; Shield, 1991). Morton et al (1997) in their study of student teachers in a faculty of education in a Canadian University found out that females experience higher level of anxiety than males prior to practice teaching. Also both Morton (1997) and Abouserie (1994) found evidence in their studies that female student teachers tended to show more signs of anxiety than males.

### **Year in Programme and Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

Some researchers have conceptualized pre-service teachers as passing through developmental stages of anxiety about becoming a teacher (Fuller, 1969). According to Parsons (1973) it is assumed that anxiety will decrease as knowledge and skills develop during teacher training. Although increase in self-confidence towards teaching has been reported for some pre-service teachers after four to five years of

training, there were also some student teachers who did not exhibit confidence as a teacher even after this period (Ohnogi, 1996; Pigge & Marso, 1987).

Kagan (1992) advised that student teachers should become more cognizant of their initial and changing knowledge beliefs about pupils and classroom practices during teaching practice. In this study, student teachers in their 400 level were on their second practice teaching and may have experienced 'the real-time conditions' of teaching and have had opportunities to create and test various 'ad hoc theories' (e.g. methods of instruction) and may have now moved closely to a realistic and 'tested' theory of practice (Argyris & Schon, 1989) unlike their counterparts in 300 level who were going for teaching practice for the first time in most cases except for those on direct admission with the National Certificate in Education (NCE), who have gone on teaching practice before during their NCE programme.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS/ HYPOTHESES**

The following research questions and hypotheses were raised and formed the basis for data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the results.

1. What are student-teachers' perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin?
2. Is there any gender difference in student-teachers' perceptions of sources of teaching practice anxieties?
3. Is there any difference between 300 level and 400 level student-teachers' perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties?

H1 There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students' on the sources of teaching practice related anxieties.

H2 There is no significant differences in the perceptions of 300 level and 400 level students on the sources of teaching practice related anxieties.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

The population of the study was the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin who were in their penultimate and final years on teaching practice in the 2011/2012 session in secondary schools in Nigeria. The researcher requested for the permission and assistance of the Teaching Practice Committee of the Faculty to get participants' consent. Letters of consent were sent out to students who were to take part in the 2011/2012 teaching practice programme through the Teaching Practice Committee. They were informed that their personal information will be kept confidential as their personal identity (name) will not be requested for in the questionnaire. Three hundred and thirty students who returned their signed consent slips two weeks after the teaching practice were given the questionnaire to fill. Three hundred questionnaires were filled and returned, out of which two hundred and seventy-seven (277) copies, representing 83% were usable. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the participants.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N =277)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	131	47.3%
Female	146	52.7%
<b>AGE</b>		
19 – 21 years	92	33.2%
22 – 24 years	125	45%
25 years and Above	60	21.7%
<b>YEAR IN PROGRAMME</b>		
300 Level	157	56.7%
400 Level	120	43.3%
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>		
ADE	25	9%
EPCS	93	33.3%
ESAM	58	20%
HEK	51	18.4%
VTE	50	18%

Note KEY:

ADE – Adult and Non-formal Education

EPCS – Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies

ESAM –Educational Studies and Management

HEK – Health, Environmental and Kinetics

VTE – Vocational and Technical Education

### **Instrument**

The research instrument consisted of two sections covering the aims of the study. Section A consisted of student-teachers' biographical information, namely, gender, age, year in programme and department. Section B consisted of Student-Teachers' Sources of Anxieties Questionnaire (STSAQ). The STSAQ was adapted from Hart (1987) instrument and sought to find out respondents' perception of sources of teaching practice related anxieties. The items in the questionnaire were restructured to reflect local content relevant to the Nigerian context. The instrument is a 20-item four-point scale instrument. The weightings were strongly agree SA = 4, agree A = 3, disagree D =2, strongly disagree SD = 1. Four items per factor (source) of anxiety termed: Evaluation anxiety; Class control anxiety, professional preparation; School staff relations anxiety and unsuccessful lesson anxiety. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument measured by Cronbach's alpha was .79. The average of points for each of the five factors was  $10(4+3+2+1) / 4 = 2.5 * 4 = 10$ . The data from the survey were analyzed by means of the statistical package SPSS 16.0 for windows. The statistical procedures used were percentage/frequency distributions and t –test of independent samples. The threshold of significance was 0.05.

## DATA ANALYSIS

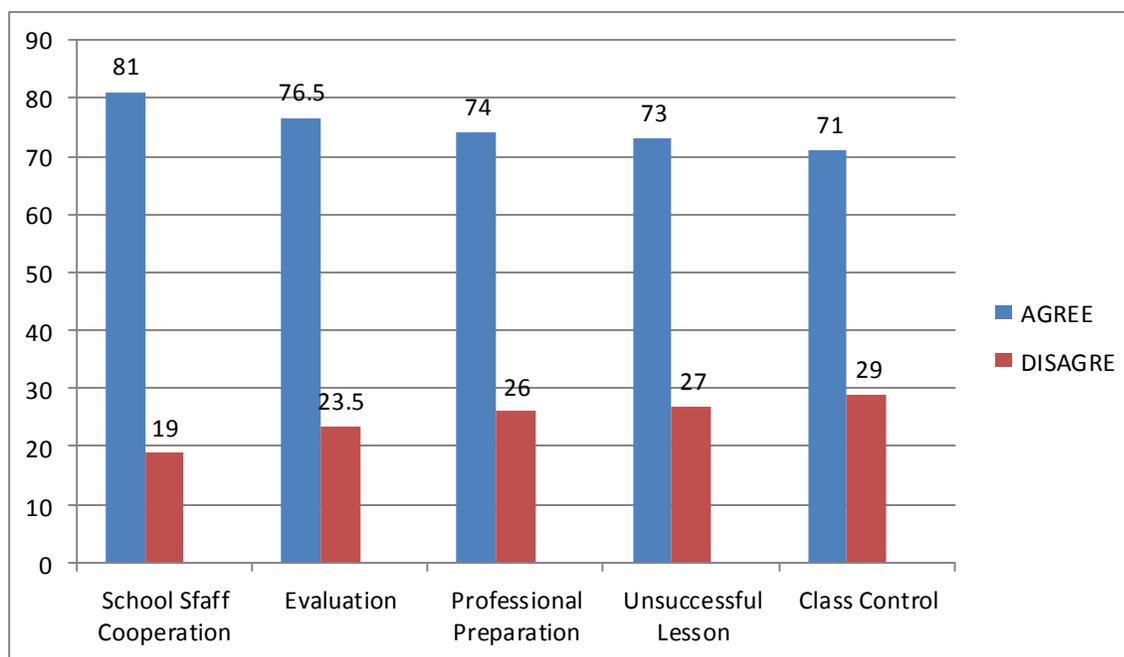
The results of this study are presented in Tables 2 –4 and Figures 1 – 3.

With regard to the first research question on student teachers' perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties, Table 2 shows the means of the five sources, which range from 11.75 to 12.16, thus indicating student teachers' general agreement with most of the statements in the survey questionnaire.

**Table 2: Ranking of Student-Teachers' Perception of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

Sources of Teaching Practice Related Anxiety	Rank (Mean Rank)
School Staff Cooperation	12.61
Evaluation	12.16
Professional Preparation	12.12
Unsuccessful Lesson	11.86
Class Control	11.75

To present a clearer picture of student teachers' perception of sources of teaching practice related anxieties, the frequencies and percentages under strongly agree (SA) and agree (A) were summed up as agree (A), while that of strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D) were summed up as disagree (D). Figure 1 is a graphic representation of this analysis.



**Figure 1: Graphic Representation of Student Teachers' Perceptions of the Sources of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties.**

Figure 1 reveal that student teachers rated school staff cooperation in the first order of the sources of teaching practice related anxiety as 81% of the respondents reported it as the highest source of their anxiety. Evaluation came second, with 76.5% of the respondents reporting being observed by one's supervisor/lecturer as a major source of teaching practice anxiety. Third in the series was professional preparation (74%), fourth, unsuccessful lesson (73%) and class control (71%) was in the fifth order.

With regard to the first hypothesis on gender differences, section B of the questionnaire – STSAQ – was analyzed. The mean differences (see Table 3) show that there are slight differences, so to find out if the

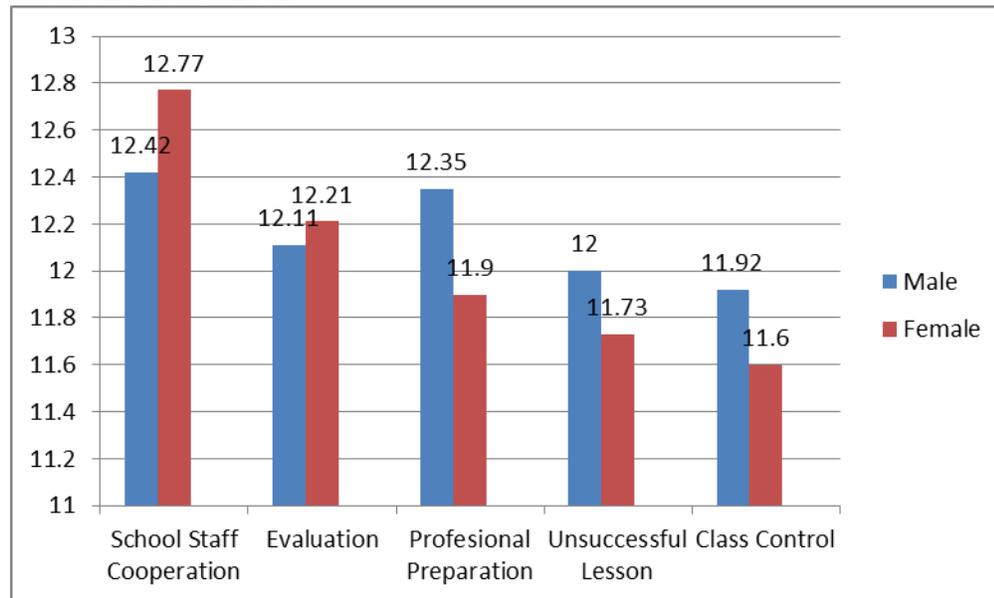
differences were statistically significant, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the means of male and female student-teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: T-test of Difference between Male and Female Student-Teachers' Perceptions of Sources of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

Sources of anxiety	Gender	No	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig
<b>School Staff Cooperation</b>	Male	131	12.42	2.17	-1.391	275	.165
	Female	146	12.77	2.06			
<b>Evaluation</b>	Male	131	12.11	2.38	-.313	275	.755
	Female	146	12.21	2.44			
<b>Professional Preparation</b>	Male	131	12.35	2.21	1.514	275	.131
	Female	146	11.90	2.64			
<b>Unsuccessful Lesson</b>	Male	131	12.00	2.06	1.047	275	.296
	Female	146	11.73	2.07			
<b>Class Control</b>	Male	131	11.92	2.62	1.101	275	.272
	Female	146	11.60	2.77			

Table 3 indicates that male and female student teachers have the following t-test values for the sources of teaching practice related anxieties: School staff cooperation (t-1.391)  $p > .165$ ; Evaluation (t-.313)  $p > .755$ ; Professional preparation (t-1.514)  $p > .131$ ; Unsuccessful lesson (t-1.047)  $p > .296$ ; Class control (t-1.101)  $p > .272$ . These figures indicate that although there are differences in means of male and female student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties, the differences are not statistically significant at the level of 0.05. This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is hereby retained.

A clearer picture of the differences in gender means is presented in Figure 2. Figure 2 revealed that female student teachers' means were higher in school staff cooperation and evaluation than that of the males. On the other hand the means of male student teachers were higher in professional preparation, unsuccessful lesson and class control.



**Figure 2: Differences in Means of Male and Female Student Teachers' Perceptions of Sources of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

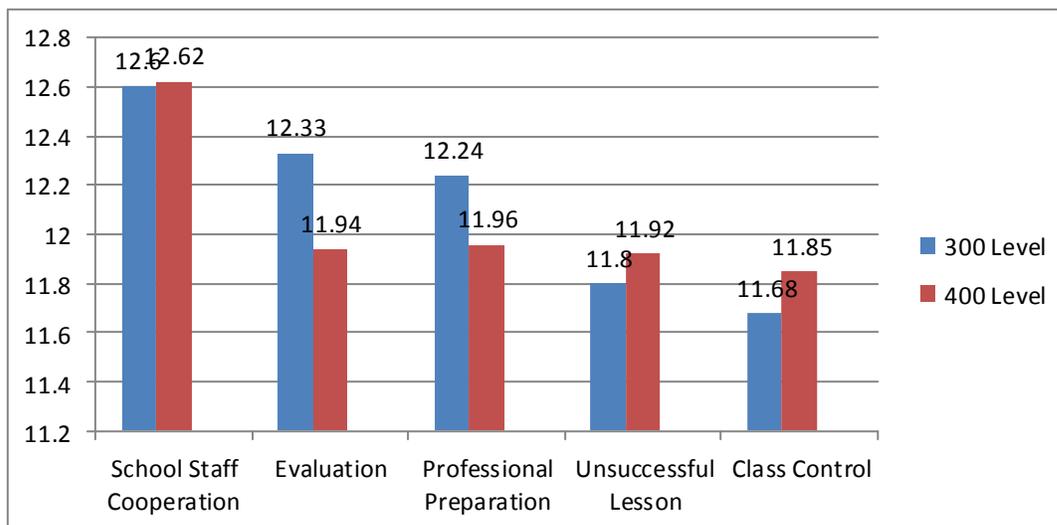
With regard to hypothesis 2 on year in programme differences, the analysis of Section B of the questionnaire – STSAQ – was also used. The mean differences (see Table 4) show that student teachers in 300 and 400 levels have similar perceptions about sources of teaching practice related anxieties. Although there were mean score differences between the groups, the independent sample t-test that was computed to compare 300 level and 400 level student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties revealed that these differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 4: T-test of difference between 300 and 400 level student Teachers in the Perception of sources of Practice Related Anxieties**

Sources of anxiety	Academic Level	No	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig
<b>School Staff Cooperation</b>	300	157	12.60	2.17	-.070	275	.945
	400	120	12.62	2.05			
<b>Evaluation</b>	300	157	12.33	2.52	1.334	275	.183
	400	120	11.94	2.24			
<b>Professional Preparation</b>	300	157	12.24	2.53	.930	275	.353
	400	120	11.96	2.36			
<b>Unsuccessful Lesson</b>	300	157	11.80	2.11	-.488	275	.626
	400	120	11.92	2.01			
<b>Class Control</b>	300	157	11.68	2.63	-.545	275	.586
	400	120	11.85	2.43			

Table 4 indicates that 300 and 400 level student teachers have the following t-test values for sources of practice related anxieties: School staff cooperation (t-.070)  $p > .945$ ; Evaluation (t-1.334)  $p > .183$ ; Professional preparation (t-.930)  $p > .353$ ; Unsuccessful lesson (t-.488)  $p > .626$ ; of 300 level and 400 level student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties. Since the differences are not statistically significant, hypothesis 2 is hereby retained.

A clearer picture of the differences in year in programme means is presented in Figure 3. Figure 3 revealed that 300 level student teachers' means were higher in evaluation and professional preparation than that of 400 level student teachers. On the other hand, the means of 400 level student teachers' means were higher in unsuccessful lesson and class control. It is a close call for both 300 and 400 levels student teachers for school staff cooperation (12.60 and 12.62), which incidentally is the highest source of teaching practice related anxiety reported in this study.



**Figure 3: Differences in Means of 300 Level and 400 Level Student Teachers' Perceptions of Sources of Teaching Practice Related Anxieties**

## DISCUSSION

Generally, the respondents in this study were of the view that the five sources of teaching practice related anxieties as identified in literature were sources of teaching practice related anxieties they experienced during their teaching practice. This is in support of arguments by researchers such as Capel (1997) who reported that anxiety was due to evaluation, professional preparation, class control and school staff factors. Hart (1987), similarly, noted that student-teachers' anxiety was tied to such factors as evaluation, professional concerns, and class control. Morton et al's (1997) study also reported that student-teachers' anxieties were related to evaluation, pedagogical preparation, classroom management and staff relation factors. The findings showed that student-teachers rated staff cooperation as the first among the five sources of anxiety followed by evaluation anxiety, with the least being class control.

The second goal of the present study was to examine whether there were gender and year in programme differences in student teachers' perceptions of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties. Although, there was no significant difference in male and female student-teachers' perception of the sources of teaching practice related anxieties, female student-teachers' perception was higher in school staff cooperation and evaluation than the male student-teachers. It is surprising to note that the mean score of females were higher in school staff cooperation than that of the males, one would have expected that since females are in the majority in the teaching profession (Danner & Uyi-Osaretin, 2010), female student teachers would be more at home with the school staff members. Although, these differences were not statistically significant, it suggests that anxiety is experienced by both sexes. A possible explanation for this is that men and women do not actually differ in their emotional responding. Although there are widespread perceptions of gender differences in anxiety, empirical studies have failed to provide clear evidences of such differences (Fischer, 1993; Grossman & Wood, 1993).

Another focus on variations in the perceptions regarding sources of teaching practice related anxieties showed that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of 300 level and 400 level student-teachers' perceptions. This suggests that no matter the year in programme, anxiety exists. This confirms Guillaume and Rudney's (1993) assertion that although students develop over the course of their initial teacher education course, their concerns (anxieties) are not sequential. However, this finding is at variance with some studies which have identified changes in students' anxieties which support the notion of developmental stages (Pigge & Marso 1987; Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985; Richard & Gipe 1987). Despite the fact that there is no significant difference in student teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties based on year in programme, the fact still remains that teaching involves many experiences that simply cannot be replicated in a non-school environment, hence teaching practice provides students with the opportunity to integrate the theory of education with that which they are experiencing at first hand. On this issue also, Perry (2004) points out that although students gain much specialized knowledge by attending lectures and doing assignments, teaching practice adds meaning to this knowledge when a student teacher comes into contact with real classroom situation.

There are a number of limitations to this study. The most significant of them relates to the fact that it is a case study of the teaching practice exercise of the Faculty of Education in the University of Benin, Benin City. Thus, there is the need to extend the study from a case study to a broad-based survey. Another limitation is the fact that only questionnaire on student-teachers' perceptions of sources of teaching practice related anxieties was used for data collection for the study. In essence, there is the need for the use of structured interview and classroom observations for data collection on student-teachers' actual experiences of anxieties. Despite these limitations, the study offers some insights into student-teachers' perceptions of teaching practice related anxieties.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

The findings of the study revealed five main sources of teaching practice related anxieties perceived by student-teachers: school staff cooperation, evaluation, professional preparation, unsuccessful lesson and class control. Students' practical experience is vital to the preparation of qualified professional teachers. The effectiveness of any professional teacher education programme is closely linked to the quality of the practicum component. Sumsion (2002) asserts that there is need to prepare students for the uncertainty of teaching, its 'emotionality', the balancing of their class activities and the communal professional life of the school. The researcher agrees with MacDonald (1992), who asserted that if the concerns of student-teachers are taken into consideration in a teacher education programme, it is quite probable to reach a more meaningful and relevant practicum experience for student-teachers.

The findings of this study have some implications for research in teaching practice and policy implementation. First, this study contributes to research on teaching practice in the area of teaching practice related anxieties, as most studies in Nigeria have focused on other areas such as adequacy of the programme, assessment of student-teachers' performance, relationship between student-teachers and supervisors (Ogonor & Badmus, 2006; Nwanekezi, et al, 2011; Nakpodia, 2011). To date few studies have investigated student-teachers' perception of sources of teaching practice related anxieties worldwide, hence, this study sought to replicate studies that have been carried out in Europe, South Africa and Malaysia. This is with a view to finding out whether pre-service teachers in Nigeria also perceive these as sources of anxiety during teaching practice. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference on sources of teaching practice related anxieties based on year in programme. This is quite interesting as the major goal of teaching practice programme is to provide student teachers with a challenging, relevant and rewarding experience, that will allow them to acquire professional competence. This includes among others the ability to cope with anxieties. pre-service teachers deserve teaching practice programmes that better prepare them for the profession – programmes in which, for example, there is no dispute that there are anxieties, but nevertheless prepare them to cope with the challenges of anxieties as they develop towards independence, changing from the role of student teachers to taking on the roles of the teacher.

Secondly, the study provides evidence that there are indeed sources of teaching practice related anxieties: school staff cooperation, evaluation, professional preparation, unsuccessful lesson and class control. Constable and Norton (1994) have rightly pointed out that pressure on student-teachers to cope with teaching practice can sometimes act as a barrier to their professional development. There is therefore the need to review administrative policies on teaching practice so as to reduce teaching practice related anxieties, as these are likely areas of stress which may discourage student-teachers from pursuing a career in teaching.

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