

Do Specialist Student Teachers Have Opinions? The Worldviews of Geography

Students of E. P. College of Education, Bimbilla

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Abstract

The paper sought the worldviews of student teachers on college education, given the expectation of the job field for beginning teachers. It explored the perceived career experiences of college students in the context cost of sustenance, and academic preparedness as specialist teacher trainees. It adopted questionnaire items to gather the views of 84 student teachers (42 pairs) on the modalities of financing the fees and personal sustenance as well as how they fared in their academic areas of studies. A cross-section of student leadership (4) were also interviewed. It used descriptive statistical tools to analyse the questionnaire items and analysed the content of interview. The paper observed that teacher education entails sets of subtle costs, which contribute to undermine teacher production and teacher quality. Specifically, the results showed that student teachers used semester breaks for short-term jobs, which affected their compliance to reporting dates and served as a critical disincentive to student teachers' readiness, ability, and desire to participate in semester works. It suggests that the institutions should provide realistic students support systems that would mitigate the impacts of all forms of cost on students' academic and professional development.

Keywords: *Teacher Education; Specialism; Worldviews; Student Teacher; Beginning Teacher*

Introduction

Teacher education has recently undergone some chequered curriculum innovations leading to perceived pressure on student teachers. In 2004, the Ministry of Education reformed training colleges that awarded Certificate 'A' into colleges of education as diploma awarding institutions. The colleges of education act (act, 847) gave barking to the transition. As at 2018, a new reform had been rolled out to upgrade colleges of education from diploma awarding institutions into 4-year Bachelor of Education awarding institutions. This reform introduced specialism programs in early childhoods (Asare-danso, 2016; North, 2023), Primary education and Junior high school education. These transformations brought about content, pedagogy and program changes. This

makes it difficult for learners to fully understand the demands of their program areas as well as the job fields. This paper focuses on the experiences of specialist student teachers during the college program in the context of cost of sustenance on campus.

Adu-Djamfi et al., (2016), identified lecture room accommodation, student-lecturer ratio, teacher absenteeism and financing of education as factors that affect education in pre-tertiary and tertiary levels. The situation where teacher trainees on practicum lack adequate schools and classrooms for attachment during practicum insinuates ill-preparation due to inadequate practice. Asare-Danso (2013) examines the contributions of educational policies to teacher education delivery at the colleges of education with a focus on Basel Missionary educational policy. It focused on structure of education, curriculum and management of the college of education. The study adopted methods such as literature reviews, content analysis of documents such as education policies and interviews of key informants. It observed that religious, colonial, nationalist, military and democratic ideologies have had greater influences on curricular of teacher education institutions. It therefore suggests that planners and implementers of educational policies adopt educational policies that mainly promote national interests.

Education gives learners direction in life and shapes their future prospects as well as the provides direction to learners in society. From the viewpoint of Dewey, (1974) education is the development of all the capacities inherent in learners to enable them control their environment and accomplish their opportunities. Education is a tool that empowers learners' minds, give the skills and tame their behaviour. Teacher education in Ghana has traversed a chequered path as it tries to gain roots, as a way to expand access to education to all. One of the earlier attempts included the institution of theological seminary by missionaries in 1942, which failed due to enrolment issues. The Wesley Mission started teacher education college at Aburi in 1918 to train teachers and catechists, but was later moved to Kumasi in 1924. Wesley College of Education in Kumasi is currently training bachelor degree teachers in all programme areas for the basic schools. Similarly, the Breman missionaries establish theological colleges in Amedzofe and Bimbilla to train catechists with basic skills in agriculture to empower them to fend for their families, while performing the roles as evangelists. The two centres metamorphosed into full time teacher education institutions in 1946 and 1962 respectively.

There are about 46 public teacher education colleges in Ghana to lead in expanding access to education to all who seek it. This does not include the efforts from the public universities that serve as mentoring institutions for the public colleges of education. These show how important education is and how the nation yearns to make it available to all citizens of Ghana.

Colleges of education witnessed remarkable transition from a diploma degree awarding to a bachelor degree awarding institution through reforms. The old model of teacher preparation was accused of being overly theoretical, exam oriented preparation and lacks technological integration. In addition, it was accused of lacking touch with differentiated needs of pupils across the basic education levels, with teacher professionalism deficits that leads to negative public perception of the profession. While the new curriculum focused on raising acceptability levels of professionals through national teacher standards, it sought to ensure activity-based learning in democratic classrooms for the purposes of producing engaging teachers for the basic schools. The new teacher education curriculum also introduced specialism programs to cater for the specialized nature of subjects at some levels of the basic schools. For instance, the basic school curriculum in Ghanaian has social studies among other core courses at the Junior High school level, while Our World Our

People (OWOP) is at the primary and early grade level. OWOP provides the basics for the Social Studies at the Junior High School. Social studies and OWOP are integrated courses that derive content extensively from largely humanity disciplines. Some of the integrated contents are derived from geography, political science, history, economics, sociology and anthropology. In view of this, effective teaching of social studies and OWOP at the basic school level requires the engagement of teachers with well-grounded pedagogic and content knowledge in the appropriate disciplines. The review of the curriculum of colleges of education included geography and history to cater for the needs of content knowledge and pedagogy at the basic schools. Unlike the previous curriculum, the current curriculum gives room for exposure of students to in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge as geography, history and social studies specialist. In addition, the students have the opportunity to combine social studies with history, social studies and geography or geography and history as well as social studies and religious and moral education as combined specialist programs. The reforms further allow students to specialize in early grade, primary and junior high starting from the second year of the four-year program. This puts the student teacher on sound pedestal to handle the social studies and OWOP at the basic education level.

Studies have observed that the cost of college education is similar, though with some minor variations. In attending college, the cost comes in both direct and indirect forms (Sara Giboney posted on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023). The semester or yearly fees that include tuition, library, facility user and utility are referred to as direct fees. On the other hand, students draw budgets for books, course materials, supplies of artefacts of the college and supplies, cost of commuting, food and provisions, personal expenses and student leadership levies constitute indirect cost. In colleges of education, tuition fees are waved off the burden of student teachers. Every student teacher faces the stress of raising monies to finance these cost categories each year and during semester breaks. The stress associated with this need has no regards for the demands of the academic work on the energy and time of the student teachers. Since the two responsibility bother on the student teachers, the preparedness of the beginning teachers will likely suffer if efforts are not made to understand and seek mitigating remedies for the sake of ensuring teacher quality. Most universities around the world categorize the cost of attendance into direct cost charged by the universities and the indirect cost that embodies the living cost determined by the student. The cost of attendance (COA) or student budget serves to guide institutions to determine financial support for students.

Statement of the Problem

The experiences of student teachers span across the entire decision to join teaching profession. Very few studies have considered what it takes to become a teacher. The process starts with a decision to become a teacher, which is activated by a joint act of purchasing an application form and securing admission. The curriculum the teacher education institutions expose the teacher to includes the overt, hidden and extra-curricular. All these constitute the experiences of the teacher, in addition to what awaits at the job field. In view of this, the paper argues that what trainees go through is very critical in determining who the teacher is, and what the teacher can offer as a professional. However, studies have not explicitly engaged the opinions of student teachers to tell their stories.

The admission into the colleges of education, unlike in other tertiary institutions, is exogenously determined and regulated by Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) and the ministry of education, Ghana. The challenges associated with payment of allowances to student teachers in

colleges of education called for restrictions of numbers of students that are allowed into the teacher education institutions, unlike in universities and technical universities. However, it is not clear if the quota system has links with the intentions to downsize enrolment to cater for student-lecturer ratios in colleges of education. Adu-gyamfi et al., (2016) acknowledged the proposition that enrolment in schools and general outcomes or performances of students are jointly affected by equity in access and poor quality entry behaviours of students. Curtailing numbers and increasing the duration of education enhance performances of learners (Adu-gyamfi et al., 2016).

The first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, introduced the policy directive on encouraging intake into the teacher training institutions in 1960. This covered all teacher trainees in the public colleges of education. The intent was to attract as many graduates as possible from the secondary schools and sixth form to enroll to be trained as teachers to fill the gaps of teacher shortage at the primary and secondary schools. When successive governments realized that colleges had become more attractive to applicants and the basic schools had attained adequate teacher availability, a quota system was put in place to control the numbers.

In 2015, the government then reviewed the policy and came to conclusion that more graduates were yearning for admission into the colleges of education, while the quota system attached to the allowance system served as access limitation. Equity also became an issue due to stiff competitions during admission periods. The review advised that revoking the allowance could make resources available for expansion of infrastructure in the colleges to increase the quality of teacher education (Adongo, 2023), while resolving the equity issues. For instance, when the ministry of education revoked the allowance policy, it led to increased enrollment into colleges of education in 2016. Likewise, the former president mentioned the building of facilities that would absorb graduates after training as one other reason for realigning the resources from payment of allowances (mynewsgh.com, Sat. 16 Dec, 2023). The policy of paying students allowance as a bait to attract them was deemed to have outlived its essence, hence the revocation.

Despite the opportunity of open access to college education and the promised expansion in college facility as well as job avenues, the teacher trainees found the cancelation of allowances harsh and demotivating. They feared it might increase their burden on fee payment and cost of living. These irritated the student electorates and secured support for the new government who had pledged to re-instate the policy by 2017. This meant the re-introduction of the quota system that regulated numbers of applicants that each college admitted. Likewise, the entry requirement was revised upward, making aggregate C6 the minimum grade in three core and three elective subjects.

Currently, the colleges of education have become more attractive and competitive to graduates from senior high schools. Each year, closed to two thousand applicants compete for admission in each college of education, against less than four hundred spaces allotted to colleges. Due to the allowance system, backlogs of graduates are piling up behind college gates awaiting subsequent admission notices. This introduces tendencies of coercive measures to securing admissions into colleges, a retrogressive experience to student teachers.

Aside the experience of access to college of education, student teachers continue to build experiences of curricula, subsistence and moral formation issues of the educational institutions and the surrounding communities. Learners engage in key activities to develop professional knowledge, professional practice and professional values and attitudes in order to qualify and be inducted as beginning teachers. These give the teachers the content knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudes as standardized graduates for the teaching profession. However, it's not clear if

teacher trainees have opinions on what actually goes on in the formation years. Can this also influence teacher quality and readiness for the demands of the profession?

The student teachers are quite aware to the news about teachers in the field, and this informs their mindsets about their future profession. It is not clear if teacher trainees had opinions about that, and if it has impacts on teacher quality after training? Ghanaian education system is currently experiencing a growing incidence of brain drain of trained teachers. In addition, the accommodation conditions at the remote areas of some deprived districts constitute disincentive to teachers who posted to such areas. A Joy News television documentary series in Binduri District in Upper Region of Ghana revealed lots of infrastructural challenges on about 13 basic schools across the district. The documentary showed lack furniture in the classrooms, which makes pupils to sit on bare ground to receive lessons and to take notes.

It also showed inadequate classroom accommodation that led to the options of pairing classes in same classrooms. This affected lesson delivery across the levels. In addition, most of the affected schools were without protective roofs, which makes the teachers to send pupils home anytime it threatens to rain. The school feeding program that was meant to retain pupils in school throughout the learning hours was not operational in the schools. This made the pupils to run home after first break always. The conditions of the schools in such less endowed district affect the morale of teachers and learner academic achievement. The residential accommodation difficulties in such communities further worsen the experiences of newly posted teachers. In some other series of the documentaries, opinion leaders in the deprived districts could not find accommodation spaces for the teachers who want to rent and stay around to work. In effect, teachers who could afford means of transport tend to be those that accepted postings to the communities. While this creates technical teacher shortage in those schools, it constitutes scary job field experience that awaits teacher trainees.

By way of deduction, the processes of teacher production present a collection of experiences which serve to interfere with teacher preparation and teacher quality as well as drain the morales of beginning teacher way ahead of their readiness. However, the platform for them to tell their stories is missing. Literature is robust on processes relating to teacher education except on opportunities for the trainees to be understood from their worldviews regarding the processes of their preparation. Therefore, a gap exists in literature on the perception of student teachers (geography and social studies students) on the conditions of preparation and the observational exercises that inform their professional readiness. The teacher trainee's experience of challenged access to college education meant a lot, aside the cost of accessing the admission. Aside the workload of studentship and cost of sustenance, the uncertainties of the job field awaits the trainees. This paper assesses the perceptions of teacher trainees of the cost of college education on their ability to prepare themselves professionally for the job field. It therefore;

1. Examined the opinions of student teachers on structure of college education
2. Assessed the student approach to financial cost of college education
3. Analysed student opinions on their experiences impact on preparation as beginning teachers

Literature Review

The focus of the study was on student expectations and experiences of college education, which affect their worldviews of the societal expectations and their preparedness as well as professional growth. Financing college education is a noted burden that scholars have examined over the years

in the developed nations but scarcely in developing nations like Ghana. Scholarship, bursaries, student loans and student line of credit are some of the external avenues that support cost of higher education worldwide. In Ghana, parents and government cost-share higher education, despite the other avenues. Very few students receive scholarships to study in colleges of education due to allowance policy. Scholarships and bursaries policies exist in the universities, though with some attendant hitches. While scholarships and bursaries look similar because students are not expected to refund the monies after schooling, they differ in the criteria for selecting the beneficiaries. In the case of scholarship academic excellence is the reason for the support, however, ensuring equity in access to education becomes the criteria for considering beneficiaries of bursaries (Gerald Encabo, posted Dec 4, 2022; accessed January 10, 2024). Student line of credit is offered by the bankers of the student in support of higher education of the student given the student budget. This is not well-known in Ghana as a legitimate mode of financing higher education. However, people in the working class have in place study leave with pay that allows workers to remain on payroll that serves as guarantee for loans (GES, 2021)

There had been uncertainties on what constitute teacher quality. Most stakeholders tried to measure teacher quality based on the results of students that excel academically from the class of the teachers. However, Zhao, (2018) observed a limited predictive power relationships between test scores and students' success in life engagement in economic activities of a nation. Other studies have advised against the use of test scores of students as effective measures of teacher quality with the observation of negative correlations between test score of students and their confidence levels, well-being, extent of engagement and interests in the subjects (Zhao, 2018; & OECD, 2017; cited in Zhao, 2018). Stakeholders are calling for a much broader consideration of educational outcomes, the constituents of teaching and teacher quality (Zhao, 2018). Results from studies supports the collectivity of teaching roles via internet and social media because it makes students to get exposed to broader ranges of teacher interests and expertise, while teachers get the opportunity to work in teams and collaboration with others outside their immediate environment (Sahlberg, 2017; Hattie, 2012; cited in Zhao, 2018).

In the expert opinion of Zhao, teaching should be about identifying learners' individual strengths and developing learner's social-emotional qualities, fostering creative tendencies and entrepreneurial aspirations of learners. Students have unique strengths and weaknesses which constitute their abilities and interests (Rose, 2016) and the role of teachers are to help them to identify and develop them (Zhao, 2018). These make the opinions and worldviews of students very important when it comes to issues concerning teacher preparation. Teacher trainees wield a plethora of worldviews on structural make of their preparation, the socio-cultural environment and the curricula composition of the training programs. This paper holds that giving them a platform to tell their stories would help to improve the programs and processes of training.

According to Tsybulsky and Levin, (2019) Worldviews assist in understanding and describing human mind and actions. It makes it possible to grasp the processes of human perception and behaviours (Koltko-Rivera, 2004; cited in Tsybulsky & Levin, (2019). According to Herbert, (2008), anthropologists perceive people's worldviews as gateways into their cultures and progress. The assessment and development of new ideas are made possible by the worldviews of a society. Collecting the experiences of a group of persons helps to measure their perceptions and knowledge of what reality is ((Kant, 1987). Proper (1979) categorizes the concept of world in term of the

physical bodies, mental or psychological states or processes (subjective experiences), and the products of human world.

Willber, (1995) posits that worldviews are a constituent of beliefs as in objective, evaluative and subjective world, which are respectively expressed in terms of “it”, “we” and “I”. They are made of terms that guide and shape human behaviours and future aspirations. Naugle, (2002) views worldviews of a people as a system of beliefs that are interrelated and needs to be understood holistically. Flanagan (2020) opines that the worldviews of teachers have the tendency of influencing practice in term of pedagogy, choice of curriculum, and the values they assign to a curriculum. According to Aerts et al., (2007) worldviews allows humans to categorize and integrate the experiences about the world and ourselves into the global picture, which brings to light the reality the surrounds us. Worldviews has been categorised into institutional or organized and individual or personal worldviews (CoRE, 2018; Van der Kooij et al., 2013). While the organized worldviews are codified body of knowledge and referenced to institutions or society, personal or individual worldviews are both conscious and unconscious presuppositions or assumptions that individuals hold about the world (Sire, 1988). The personal worldviews are formed by the individual’s responses to a lived experience.

Tsybulsky and Levin, (2018) conducted a study to gauge the perceptions of science teachers on the contents and structure of digital revolution. The study used in-depth interviews of 30 in-service teachers in the high school. The study revealed that science teacher thought of themselves as outsider observers, cautious participants and conscious participants.

In trying to identify personal worldviews, studies adopted questionnaires tools, written reflections and autobiographical accounts of the respondents (CHen & Huang, 2017; Kyles and Olafson, 2008). However, the results from these tools were criticized for being oversimplified, too vague and reinforce bias rather than revealing personal worldviews (Kyles and Olafson, 2008). On the other hand, some studies have shown that the use of photographs, images, stories and discussions on moral and ethical dilemmas are capable of soliciting subconscious personal worldviews of respondents (Weller and Wolff, 2005; Connor, 1995). In view of this, this paper adopted a combination of interview and questionnaires as well as pairing of the participants.

Methodology and Methods

Study Area

E. P. College of Education is one of the forty-six public colleges of education in Ghana. It is located in Bimbilla, along the Eastern corridor road, along the Bimbilla-Yendi stretch of the road. E. P. CoE, Bimbilla offers programs in the Social Sciences such as Geography, History, Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education among others. The study focuses on the level 400 students from the social sciences department who offer geography and social studies as specialism areas. The levels 300 and 200 students also offer Geography and Social Studies, Social Studies and RME, Social Studies and History. The experiences of students on the processes of preparations for the job field are very pertinent in shaping the perspective of the specialist student on his or her readiness and confidence as a specialist professional. This informs the morale and enthusiasm on the job.

The college also takes its feed from Kpandai, Salaga, Nanumba South, Krachi, Yendi, Saboba, Karaga, Gusheigu, Mion, Tatale, and Zabzugu districts. Recently, its major feed comes from

Nkuranza and some other places in the Bono regions of Ghana. These places the college better in providing a mix of cultural and ethnicity for the selection of students from varied family backgrounds. Coupled with its location at the rural-urban economy of Nanumba north municipality, it offers ground for the selection of samples with varying socioeconomic characteristics.

Study design

The study adopted qualitative descriptive study design and used questionnaire approach to seek the opinions of the participants on the cost of college education and how it related with the preparation. The descriptive survey design is used when study wants to obtained in-depth knowledge of the respondents' worldviews on issues bordering them. it obtained qualitative data on participants' descriptions of the cost of funding their subsistence on college campus, modes of raising income to meet the fees, reporting to college and participating in lessons and examinations as well as the opinions on the results they obtained from the examinations.

The target population for the study is the students of the geography unit of the Social Sciences Department of E. P. College of Education, Bimbilla. There is a total of 240 students offering geography from level 200 to level 400. The study sought to explore the opinions of students on the relationships of cost of college education and learning based on their experiences thus far. The study focused on level 400 students who were about to complete their course of study.

The sample was made of all level 400 students of the geography unit of the department of social sciences in E. P. College of Education, Bimbilla. This was a total of 80 students who were used for the study and 4 student leaders. To improve the outcomes of opinions from these students and to avoid hasty responses from student teachers, the study paired the respondents into 40 pairs of participants. In all 31 completed questionnaires were retrieved from the sampled participants.

The study employed census survey technique since it was using all the 84 (42 pairs) students in the fourth year geography class. Census survey technique is appropriate for smaller populations since all the prospective respondents constitute the sampled population. In census survey, the study considers all members of the target population as its sample. in or to obtained unbiased pairing, the study used the class list to pair last student with the first student (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Sample pairings of student participants

The study used frequency tables and simple percentage counts from the cross tabulation tools of the statistical package for social sciences to analyse and display the results. The variables of analysis include the sex of students, main source of funding college education, effects of struggle for fees on learning, preference for efficient student loan, comparing opinions on struggle for fees, extent of relief from the allowance system in fee payment and preference for efficient student loan.

Results and Discussions

Analysis of Gender and Main Source of Funding College Education

This paper explored the main funding of college education and compared across the sexes of student teachers. It observed that all the female students (100%) had their funding from their parents, while that of males were spread across parental support (57%), guardian (14%) and personal arrangements (28%). The paper probed further to understand the specific activities students engaged in to support the cost of living on campus. It revealed that students either rented their labour or worked in owned businesses to raise income to support each semester cost. They own personal farms, offer services as hired labour in regular/irregular businesses in short-term basis or engaged in mining related activities during semester breaks.

Table 1: Gender and Main sources of funding education

Main source of funding Education			Total
Sex of student	Female	Count	7
		% within Sex of student	100.0%
	Male	Count	20
		% within Sex of student	57.1%
Total		Count	27
		% within Sex of student	64.3%
		Parents	Guardian
		0	5
		0.0%	14.3%
		Personal	Personal
		0	10
		0.0%	28.6%
			10
			42
			100.0%

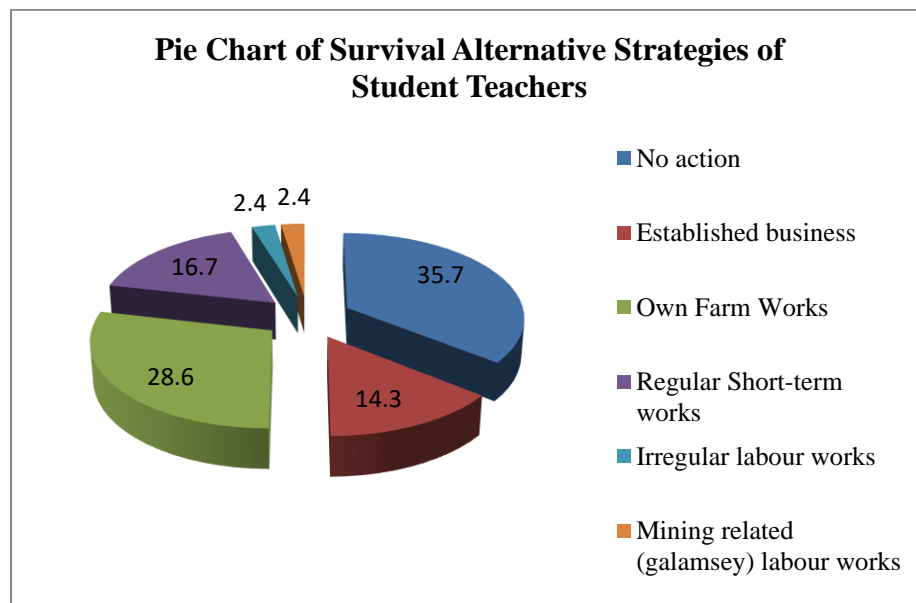


Figure 2: modes students used to fund cost of education

In comparing the gender and choices of jobs, the female student teachers were observed to opt for waiter service personnel in established businesses (42.9%) and regular short-term jobs (28.6%) to

raise income for ensuing semester cost of campus life. On the other hand, the male counterparts were observed to spread their choices across the options. Comparatively and unlike the females, 34.3% of the male student teachers owned and managed established farms, 2.9% engaged in irregular labour works as well as mining related activities (2.9%) during semester breaks (see table 3).

Table 2: The Gender of Personal Mode Choices in Funding College Education

			If personal state how you obtain funds					Total	
			Establis hed business	Own Far m Wor ks	Regu lar Short -term work s	Irregu lar labour works	Mining related (galams ey) labour works		
Sex of stude nt	Fem ale	Cou nt %	2 28.6 %	3 42.9%	0 0.0 %	2 28.6 %	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 100.0 %
	Male	Cou nt %	13 37.1 %	3 8.6%	12 34.3 %	5 14.3 %	1 2.9%	1 2.9%	35 100.0 %
Total		Cou nt %	15 35.7 %	6 14.3%	12 28.6 %	7 16.7 %	1 2.4%	1 2.4%	42 100.0 %

Analysis of gendered Preferences for student efficient loan

This paper further explored student teachers’ preferences for an efficient student loan format. The rationale was to gauge opinions of students on ways of mitigating the stress from meeting cost of living on campus as well as the fees. In addition, the paper tries to ascertain if the preferences has any gender connotations. Overall, 76.2% of student teachers express preference for the student loan. Comparing by sex, 71.4% of the females responded yes to student loan as against 77.1% of the males.

Table 3: Sex of student and preference for student loan

			Do you prefer student loan that might be regular instead			Total	
			Yes	No	Not sure		
Sex of student	Female	Count %	5 71.4%	2 28.6%	0 0.0%	7 100.0%	
	Male	Count %	27 77.1%	4 11.4%	4 11.4%	35 100.0%	
Total		Count	32	6	4	42	

% within Sex of student **76.2%** **14.3%** **9.5%** **100.0%**

In crosschecking on occupations of the parents of student teachers, a majority of the parents were either entirely in agriculture (54.8%) or in a combination of agriculture and other related jobs (33.3%).

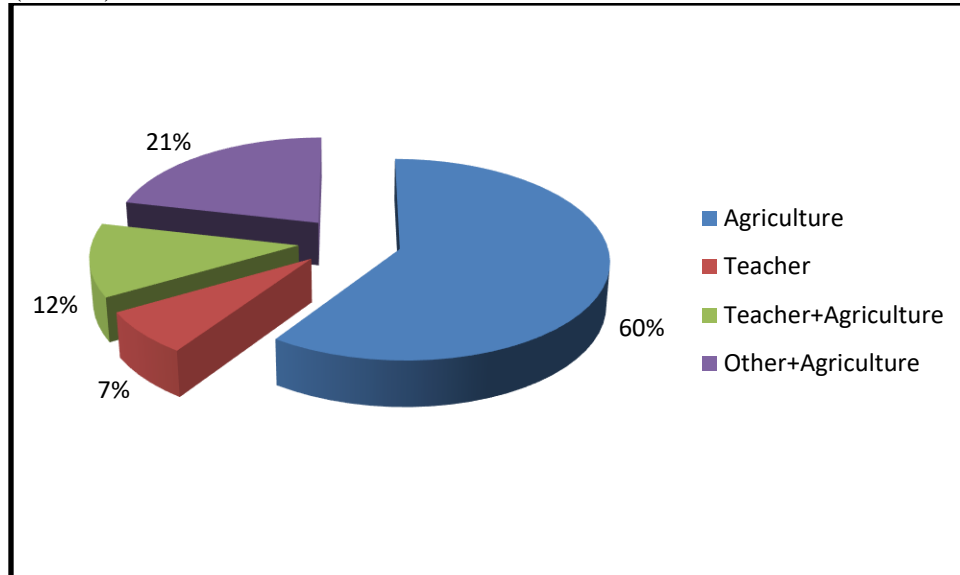


Figure 3: Occupation of parent

Analysis on how the struggle for fees affects student’s learning

The paper also explored the opinions of student teachers on how the struggle for funds relate with reporting, participation in lectures, preparation for exams and the perceived returns from examination. Generally, the feedback indicated that learning was badly affected as opinions spread across normal, (23.8%), badly (40.5%) and very badly (33.3%). Notably, a majority of student teachers who express the views of funding activities affecting learning badly (41.2%) and very badly (35.7%) emanates from those who fund their education from personal farm businesses.

Table 4: Comparing view on struggle for fees and personal modes adopted to fund education

If personal state how you obtain funds		Total							
		EB	OF	RStW	IRStW	MW			
How does the struggle for fees affect learning?		%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Normal	%	50.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	Badly	%	35.3%	5.9%	41.2%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

	Very Badly	%	21.4%	7.1%	35.7%	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		%	35.7%	14.3%	28.6%	16.7%	2.4%	2.4%	100.0%

EB-Established business, OF-own farm, RStW – regular short term works, MW – mining works

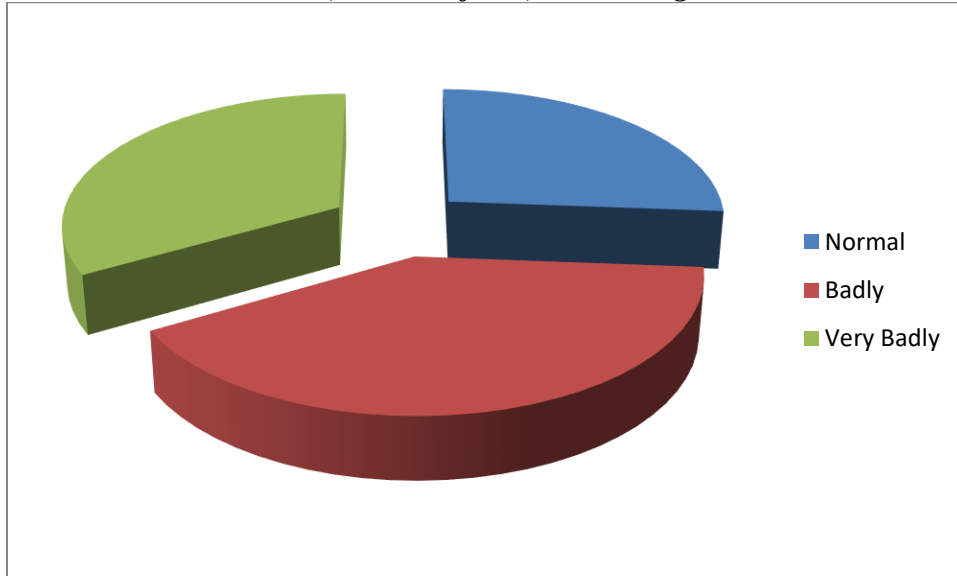


Figure 4: How struggle for funds affect student learning

Examining if the modes students obtained extra income relates with Preference for efficient student loan

In view of the opinions of student teachers on the impacts of cost of education on the learning outcomes, the paper sought the opinions on reverting to efficient student loan system that might make funds available at the times of need. The intent was to examine the relationships between students’ modes of struggle for funding and preference for efficient student loan scheme. The results showed that 76.2% of all respondent preferred efficient and regular student loan system that might provide some relief. Specifically, the students who thought the extra jobs did not impact negatively on their learning constituted the majority (90%), while 71.4% and 70.6% constitute the opinions of those who thought they were affected very badly and badly respectively. A chi-square test of relationships indicates a significant relationship between the two variables (Pearson chi-sq value of 24.832 at 0.002sig). however the gender of the student had no significant relations with the choice of menial job during vacations as well as the with the preference for student loans.

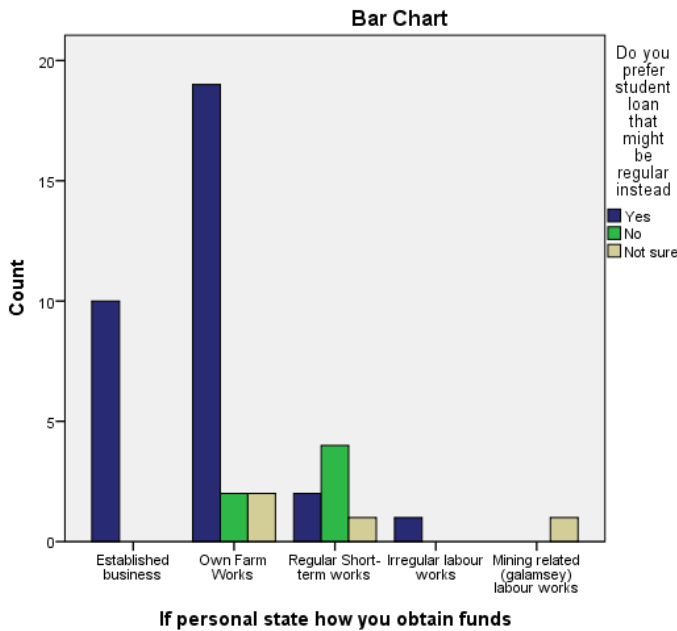


Figure 5: Comparing students' struggle options and preference for effective loan option

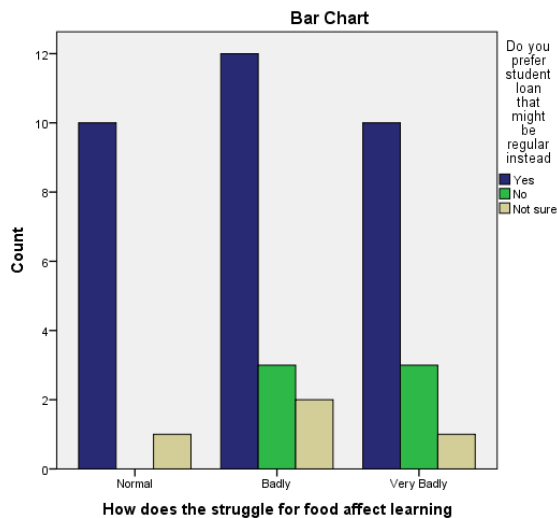


Figure 6: comparing the experiences of students from impacts of extra jogs with preference for loan

Extent of relief from the allowance system in fee payment

The government of Ghana has put allowance system in place to mitigate cost of college education on student learning and achievement. Currently, the government of Ghana pays a total of four hundred Ghana cedis (GHS 400.00) per student per month. Initially, two hundred Ghana cedis apiece is paid to the college for feeding, and to each student teacher. Recently, the proportion for

the student has reduced by twenty Ghana cedis (GHS 20.00), while the feeding fee appreciates by same amount.

The paper sought the opinions of respondents on the extent of relief they derive from allowances paid to them monthly. 59.5% of respondents claimed that the allowance system provides some relief to their struggle to fund college education. However, respondents felt that the news about student allowance in the colleges of education greatly affects (59.5%) parents' willingness to support them at college. In addition, the timing of the payment of student allowances was also another issue. 64.3% of respondents express the opinion that the timing and regularity of teacher trainee allowances exacerbate the burden on student teachers on fee payment. In view of this fact, student teachers were vehement (76.2%) on their preference for student loan system that might address the timing and regularity issues in the flow of funds.

Discussions of findings

The study sought to understand and explain the plight of student teachers from their worldviews of the experience from meeting the demands of fee payment, securing funds to meet other cost of studentship and getting prepared for the job field as beginning teacher. Parental support and personal efforts at income generation were duly explored and analysed based on gender divide. Results pointed out that a majority of students get support from parents to meet the fee payment. It was however observed that female student teachers dominated in the choice of parent, while male counterpart largely funded their education from personal farm products. The modes of income sources cut across parental support, short-term jobs in established businesses, mining related jobs, and operation of personal farms. These were observed to preoccupy the student teachers during semester break periods. It therefore formed the basis students reported late to school during beginnings of semester works. These are largely structural obstacles and at the same time considered realities among the experiences of student teachers. The deficits in learning from one semester to the other go a long way to compromise the quality of the teachers that are produced for the basic schools (Asare & Nti, 2014; Zhao, 2018).

Likewise, the paper solicited the opinions of student teachers on the grades they obtained in the mid semester quizzes prior to the final examination. The feedback was tied to preparations student teachers made before the quizzes and the possible remedies they intend to put in place. The rationale was to assess the viewpoints of student teachers on teaching and learning. The results showed that a majority of the students (51%) rely largely on study groups to prepare for impending examinations. On the issues of the results obtained, the interviews showed that students either did not like the results they obtained or failed to express any complains, as it merited the inputs during preparations. Further probes revealed that students had misgivings with the split semester structure and the short notices to exams and the quiz timetables. About 45% of the students interviewed expressed sentiment thus *"I did not like the grade I got"*, while about 54% of the remaining remarked thus *"I cannot complain"* (field work, 2023).

On the issue of the semester structure, almost all the respondents (92%) held the view that the split semester format distort learning from being continuous, and causes short notices to assessment timetables, which affect preparations towards examinations and quizzes. According to the results from the interviews, semesters are always shortened by 1 to 3 weeks, which makes completion of course outlines difficult. Staff strikes and engagement in conference marking sessions also came up as setbacks to adequate teaching and learning. The opinions of the students teachers confirm the call to broaden the meaning of teaching and learning and performance beyond face-to-face

lesson delivery and exam results oriented criteria for measuring student achievement (Zhao, 2018). According to Zhao, (2017: 2018) and Florida, (2012) technology could be used to ensure wider engagements of student-student, tutor-tutor and student-tutor as well as exposure to greater course content coverage, unlike the limited face-to-face and tutor-defined content modes of teaching and learning. These notwithstanding, constitute some of the opinions and viewpoints of learning that feed into the preparedness of the beginning teachers for the job field.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

The study observed that teacher education in colleges of education is beset with sets of subtle costs which contribute to undermine teacher production and teacher quality. Though the colleges have student financial support system in place (teacher trainee allowances), its access in terms of timely release, regularity and amount (about GHS 150.00) are is very unpredictable in mitigating the financial and physical challenges student teachers undergo in funding the campus budgets. Stakeholder intervention is highly anticipated in terms of further engagement with the ministry of education. The public must view college education with national interest to improve access and equity in admission, introduce appropriate financial aids to mitigate the levels of disruptions of learning among learners.

Furthermore, the conception of teacher education, assessment and measurement of preparedness remains individualized and narrow. The study pointed to the face-to-face and result oriented criteria of measuring teacher preparation. The viewpoints of student teachers on modes of learning, impromptu assessment and result-oriented criteria for acknowledging learning are recipes for undermining the amount of education that the specialist student teachers acquired. According to Xhao, (2016) teaching should target assisting student teachers to identify their strengths to improve upon them, and not fixing the weaknesses. Further studies on how adult students learn could help suggest learning modes. Rose (2016) posits that the education needs to seek holistic development of the learners, instead of the short-term progress in performance. The study suggests that mentoring universities should liaise with colleges of education to redefine teaching and assessment away from the current result-oriented criteria.

Conclusion

The duration of the semester and continuity of learning emerged a dominant opinions and obstacles to teacher preparation. Contrary to suggestions by Zhao (2018), the viewpoints seem to conclude that learning occurs largely in classrooms and on face-to-face modes. The online modes are capable of allowing collaborative learning and teaching (Chu, 2011). Though indications show that the shift system in the colleges of education will be cancelled to allow full semester durations, baseline data on the structural readiness of teacher education institutions is vital for quality assurance in teacher production. The study suggests that heads of colleges of education should make internet facilities available so that student teachers can adopt online modes of learning.

Finally, the study suggests that stakeholders should expand studies into the challenges facing teacher education to improve the experiences and perceptions of student teachers on the teaching profession.

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Declaration of interest

The authors of this paper declare that there was no third party interest and the authors wield the responsibility as well as ownership of the work. In addition, we declare that we did not allow personal interest into the outcomes of the study, despite being direct stakeholders as tutors in the college. Neutral person was tasked to collect the data from the student who worked in pairs.

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