



CHALLENGES TEACHER TRAINEES FACE DURING TEACHING PRACTICE SUPERVISION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was grounded in Clinical Supervision Theory. A mixed-methods research approach using a convergent parallel design was utilized. Both cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs were integrated. The targeted population comprised of 101 principals, 2,455 teachers, 560 teacher trainees, and 11 sub-county directors. Stratified, simple random, systematic sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select approximately 437 participants, comprising 15 principals, 333 teachers and 84 teacher trainees. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, in-depth interview guides, a document analysis guide, and an observation checklist. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation), which were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Quantitative data were presented in tables using frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed and presented in the form of narratives and direct quotes. The study revealed that teacher trainees face several challenges during teaching practice supervision, including irregular supervisory visits due to principals' administrative burdens, limited feedback and mentorship. Resource shortages, such as inadequate teaching materials, further hinder effectiveness. While most supervision

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environments are supportive, some trainees' experience anxiety, highlighting the need for emotional support. Limited time for supervision meetings and principal unavailability remain significant concerns. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education in Kenya develop clear guidelines ensuring regular, well-structured supervisory visits and allocate adequate resources to support teaching practice. It should also provide training programs for principals on adequate supervision and trainee mentorship. Principals, on their part, should schedule consistent supervision meetings, provide timely feedback, ensure availability for guidance, and offer emotional support to trainees, fostering a conducive environment for professional growth.

Keywords: Kenya, teacher trainees, challenges, principals, instructional supervision, teaching practice

1. Introduction

Teaching practice is an essential component of teacher education, providing student teachers with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings under supervision. They gain professional skills, improve their teaching abilities, and comprehend the intricacies of instructional delivery due to this process (Awandia, 2023). Lesson planning, classroom administration, student assessment, and participation in extracurricular activities are all important components of teaching practice that help student teachers get ready for the demands of the teaching profession (Prakash, Chand, & Singh, 2024). Additionally, by encouraging flexibility, critical thinking, and professional development, this experience helps student instructors close the knowledge gap between theory and practice (Farrell, 2021).

The standard of instructional supervision that mentor teachers and principals offer has a significant influence on how successful teaching practices are. To improve the student teacher's instructional competencies, effective supervision entails giving professional support, directing lesson planning, and giving evaluation (Lindström, Löfström, & Londén, 2022). Student instructors who receive supportive supervision are certain to improve their instruction, acquire self-assurance in the classroom, and gain a deeper comprehension of pedagogical techniques (Koşar, 2022). Furthermore, organized monitoring makes teacher training programs more effective overall by guaranteeing that student instructors are sufficiently equipped for their future positions as educators (Prakash, 2021).

Inadequate supervision, a lack of organized feedback, and a lack of support from mentor teachers and principals can all hinder the effectiveness of teaching practices. Due to inadequate supervision, irregular assessments, and a dearth of significant mentorship throughout their practicum, many student teachers express feeling unprepared (Awandia, 2023). Furthermore, student teachers find it challenging to apply efficient teaching tactics and classroom management techniques due to packed classrooms and a lack of teaching resources (Prakash, Chand, & Singh, 2024). Concerns about the lack of

cooperation between training institutions and schools, which leads to a misalignment between theoretical training and practical expectations, are commonly voiced by stakeholders, including student teachers, supervising teachers, lecturers, and school administrators (Farrell, 2021).

The additional duty of mentoring student teachers frequently causes supervisors to become unhappy, especially when they are not compensated for their work or given opportunities for professional growth (Lindström, Löfström, & Londén, 2022). Particularly in institutions with high teacher-to-student ratios and taxing administrative responsibilities, the added effort can be debilitating. Because of this, some supervising teachers offer very little direction, which lessens the practicum's influence. Additionally, the issue is made worse by unclear communication between schools and training facilities, which leaves student teachers unsure of what is expected of them (Koşar, 2022). Student teachers struggle to acquire critical teaching abilities in the absence of organized mentorship and sufficient resources, which eventually affects their confidence and readiness for the field (Prakash, 2021).

By offering supervisory support during teaching practice, school principals significantly influence the professional growth and instructional effectiveness of student teachers. They provide summative supervision, which assesses overall performance and preparedness for the teaching profession, as well as formative supervision, which emphasizes ongoing feedback and development. The type of mentorship they receive is determined by how they view supervision, which in turn affects how successfully student teachers incorporate theory into their teaching. Good supervision boosts self-esteem, improves teaching strategies, and guarantees that student teachers get helpful criticism to improve their teaching abilities. In order to establish a nurturing school climate that fosters successful teaching and learning, principals need to have strong leadership and pedagogical competencies, according to Daniels *et al.* (2019). However, UNESCO-IICBA (2020) points out that a lack of support from school principals makes it difficult for many African nations to achieve high-quality learning results during the teaching practice period. The goal of the Global Education 2030 Agenda, which is to promote inclusive and equitable education for everyone, is compromised by this oversight vacuum.

Bush *et al.* (2022) suggest bolstering school leadership policies to promote professional development initiatives that improve principals' supervisory skills during the teaching practice period in order to close these discrepancies. Principals must embrace a learning-centered strategy that actively molds student teachers' teaching abilities in order to provide effective supervision, going beyond their administrative duties (Taylor *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, Greatbatch and Tate (2018) stress that administrators' involvement in instructional supervision can have a favorable impact on how student instructors view classroom instruction, which will enhance teaching results. According to recent research, including teacher leadership in supervision improves teaching effectiveness and creates a cooperative, encouraging learning environment for student teachers. McGhee and Stark (2021), for example, discovered that solution-focused

supervision techniques empower educators by encouraging introspection and professional development.

The demands of the twenty-first century have created the need for quality teachers to match the highly needed skill quotient in all sectors of the economy. For this reason, teacher training processes play a pivotal role and remain the center of quality education as they prepare skilled and competent teachers (Khan, 2021). Quality as a teacher is an integral part of education and undoubtedly reflects both the quality of his/her teaching and the teaching results. The quality of the teacher has many dimensions: formal qualifications, teachers' experience, training, teachers' quality and educational effort due to their training.

Teaching practice is acknowledged as a crucial part of teacher education programs all around the world. Teacher candidates gain practical classroom experience during this time, which enables them to hone critical abilities like lesson design, classroom management, and instructional delivery (OECD, 2018). Nonetheless, there are still issues with the effectiveness of the supervisory and support systems offered to trainees. Performance feedback is crucial for improving teaching efficacy, according to recent studies. For example, according to a 2018 research by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, giving principals and instructors performance feedback improved student success and instructional practice. There are still gaps between theoretical education and real-world application, especially in various classroom environments, despite improvements in teacher training frameworks. To close this gap and encourage ongoing professional development and adaptation to a variety of teaching contexts, reflective practice has been recognized as an essential process in teacher education.

In order to investigate the experiences of student teachers during their teaching practice, Almazroa (2020) carried out a study titled *Insights from Saudi Student Teachers: Successes and Challenges in Saudi Arabia*. The study attempted to uncover both the successes and obstacles faced by these learners. The results showed that although student teachers gained useful skills like lesson planning and classroom management, they also faced many difficulties, such as a lack of resources for instruction, little practice time, and poor circumstances at host schools. These challenges made it clear that in order to improve the teaching practice experience, school principals must exercise effective supervision and assistance.

Training future teachers and immersive technologies in teaching practice: An exploratory survey on the training needs of students enrolled in the specialization course for support is another study conducted in Italy by Fornasari, Lisimberti, and Minerva (2023). The goal of the study was to find out how immersive technology might improve the instructional strategies and training requirements of student teachers who specialize in inclusive education. The findings showed that although student teachers acknowledged the importance of digital tools in teaching, they encountered difficulties because of insufficient oversight and a lack of proficiency in incorporating technology into their lesson plans. The study underlined that by creating a positive learning

atmosphere, giving student instructors digital skills, and supporting the use of creative teaching methods, school principals may facilitate effective supervision.

According to Musiimenta, Eduan, and Kagoire (2024), school principals in Africa have a big influence on how well teaching methods work because of their supervising responsibilities. Their research in Uganda demonstrated how active participation from school administration and university supervisors improves student teachers' general preparedness and efficacy. Principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, are in charge of fostering a supportive learning environment, giving helpful criticism, and making sure student teachers fulfill institutional requirements. Effective supervision by administrators aids in the professional development of student teachers by offering guidance in areas including lesson planning, classroom management, and student involvement. The study did not, however, examine the effectiveness of teaching practice programs are frequently hampered by uneven supervision and a lack of cooperation between secondary schools and universities. In order to maximize student teachers' learning experiences, this research highlights the necessity of uniform and regulated supervising frameworks.

Similarly, Annan-Brew and Arhin (2022) examined the difficulties student teachers encounter when practicing off-campus in Ghana, highlighting the crucial part school officials play in influencing their professional growth. Their research showed that the absence of principal supervision and mentoring frequently caused student teachers to feel abandoned, which had a detrimental effect on their self-esteem and ability to teach. The study emphasized the value of systematic supervision techniques in which principals of schools actively monitor and assess instructional practice sessions. It was discovered that when administrators gave timely feedback and professional mentorship, student teachers improved their classroom management strategies and pedagogical abilities. But the study also identified real-world obstacles that can prevent efficient supervision, like high student-teacher ratios and scarce resources. It was suggested that in order to improve teaching effectiveness, these issues should be addressed through a concerted school-university partnership.

The significance of standardized teacher education frameworks is reaffirmed in the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) (African Union, 2016), which also highlights the function of school principals as instructional leaders who provide teacher candidates with clear direction and helpful criticism. Recent research also demonstrates that principals' perspectives and their capacity to guide trainees have a major impact on the effectiveness of teaching practice as a process of developing competency. For example, a study carried out in Zimbabwe discovered that good mentorship by school administrators significantly increased the professional development of student teachers, resulting in better teaching practices (Chikunda & Chimbunde, 2020).

According to a similar study conducted in South Africa, principals who actively engaged in mentoring inside school administration structures gave teacher candidates greater confidence and readiness for their teaching positions (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2021).

These results imply that giving principals mentoring skills and encouraging positive attitudes regarding their supervisory duties are essential to the success of teaching practice programs. Future studies should examine the ways in which contextual elements, like resource availability and the application of educational policies, affect the efficacy of principal-led mentoring in various African nations.

Furthermore, rather than concentrating only on program content, educational philosophy has shifted to emphasize students' learning experiences (Luckey, 2021). According to Teacher (2019), coaching or mentoring programs are in-service professional development activities in which coaches watch students learn in the classroom and offer suggestions for better teaching methods. Although coaching is a component of the larger framework of mentorship and professional development for teachers, it provides teacher candidates with a more individualized and experiential learning experience. Teacher (2019) asserts that in order to properly educate aspiring teachers for these changing demands, teacher education programs ought to be updated and revised.

According to a recent study by Aseka (2016), structural issues such as a lack of resources, a lack of mentor assistance, and a lack of coordination in monitoring are common among teacher candidates in Kenya. These difficulties are particularly noticeable in Nairobi County, especially at the sub-county level. The urgent need for more efficient mentorship and support systems was highlighted by a study done in Lang'ata that revealed that headteachers' instructional supervision procedures had little influence on teachers' job performance. Effective supervision is essential for teacher preparation because teaching experience is still a prerequisite for accreditation by Kenyan universities and teacher training institutions.

Principals are crucial in assessing and mentoring teacher candidates throughout their practicum in public secondary schools. Their assistance has a big impact on trainees' confidence, sense of self, and preparedness for teaching in the classroom. However, differences in the accessibility of mentoring methods and educational materials can make effective supervision more difficult. According to a study by Mok *et al.* (2020), pre-service teachers' lesson preparation skills and instructional clarity are significantly improved by coaching, mentoring, and organized supervision. While a lack of resources and poor mentoring procedures might hinder the development of important teaching competences, organized support has a favorable impact on teaching efficacy. For trainees to be taught effectively, these gaps must be filled.

In teacher preparation programs, field-based experiences like study abroad and student teaching are essential for connecting theory and practice. Abdullah and Sultana (2020) assert that these experiences ought to give aspiring educators the chance to evaluate and hone their abilities in real-world classroom environments. In addition to incorporating theoretical information, student teachers' professional identities are shaped by their contacts with supervisors, host schools, and mentor teachers. Jian (2020) goes on to stress the value of co-teaching with mentor instructors, who help trainees' professional development by providing direction and encouragement. In a similar vein, mentorship should comprehensively cover academic, social, emotional, and technical

needs, according to Bwire and Maundu (2017). In contrast to their more established equivalents in affluent regions, formal mentorship programs are still in their infancy in many developing nations, despite their acknowledged significance.

Teacher aspirants can create successful teaching strategies by interacting with seasoned educators. According to Loyalka *et al.* (2019), by emphasizing important learning activities that improve instruction, headteachers' and administrators' instructional support improves new teachers' classroom practices. Similarly, Kraft *et al.* (2020) stress that trainees' overall learning experiences, instructional proficiency, and lesson quality are all enhanced by effective supervisory support. Effective supervision equips teacher candidates to handle a variety of classroom difficulties by encouraging reflective practice, critical thinking, and adaptation. As a result, funding organized, encouraging mentorship programs and making sure sufficient resources are available are essential first steps in developing qualified, self-assured teachers who can provide high-quality instruction.

The persistent challenge facing teacher preparation in Nairobi County is a gap that significantly undermines the quality of teacher training. Despite teaching practice being a critical stage in developing pedagogical skills and professional confidence, many principals prioritize administrative duties over mentorship, resulting in irregular classroom observations, delayed feedback, and minimal instructional support (Ngunu, 2023; Wambugu & Muthoni, 2024). This lack of structured supervision leaves student teachers feeling unsupported, ill-prepared, and unable to effectively manage classrooms or apply innovative teaching strategies. Overcrowded classrooms, scarce teaching materials, and overstretched school leadership further compound these challenges, limiting opportunities for reflective practice and growth. Moreover, weak collaboration between teacher training institutions and schools creates a disconnect between theoretical instruction and practical expectations, leaving trainees without clear guidance or performance benchmarks. Such gaps not only compromise individual teacher development but also threaten national education quality goals, as inadequately trained teachers struggle to deliver effective learning outcomes. This situation highlights a pressing need for a shift toward intentional, learning-centered supervision where principals embrace their instructional leadership role, providing consistent mentorship, timely evaluation, and professional support.

Without robust supervisory systems and policy-driven reforms, Nairobi County risks perpetuating a cycle of underprepared teachers, ultimately undermining Kenya's vision for equitable, high-quality education. This study, therefore, seeks to interrogate and address the structural and supervisory deficiencies which will enhance student teachers' practicum experiences.

The status of student teachers undergoing teaching practice in public secondary schools in Nairobi County is largely characterized by limited and ineffective instructional supervision by principals, heads of departments, and subject teachers. Many administrators in the county are either completely absent or just partially involved in helping student teachers during their practicum, despite the fact that school leadership

plays a crucial role in determining the caliber of teacher preparation. Research indicates that principals frequently place more emphasis on administrative duties than on instructional supervision, which leads to a lack of professional mentoring, delayed feedback, and less classroom observation (Kuria, 2022). Student teachers feel unprepared and unsupported in the absence of formal guidance, which hinders their capacity to improve their classroom management and pedagogical abilities.

Furthermore, the challenges are made worse by a lack of instructional materials, which further distances principals from their supervision duties (Koech & Mbirianjau, 2023). The prevailing situation points to a pressing need for policy reforms and capacity-building initiatives aimed at reinforcing principals' instructional leadership and strengthening the mentorship framework for teacher preparation. This underscores the critical importance of examining the challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

2. Statement of the Problem

Effective supervision during teaching practice is crucial to teacher candidates' professional development, especially in areas including classroom management, instructional delivery, and topic mastery. In order to match trainees' competencies with current educational requirements, principals in public secondary schools are expected to provide systematic, evidence-based assessments and constructive comments (Kraft *et al.*, 2020). As Loyalka *et al.* (2019) argue, when principals effectively supervise instructional practices during teaching practice, student teachers gain confidence, receive timely feedback, refine pedagogical skills, and strengthen classroom management abilities. This supportive mentorship fosters professional growth, reflective practice, and readiness to deliver high-quality, learner-centered education in diverse school contexts.

In Kenya, the Government is making an effort to ensure effective supervision of schools and student teachers through policies emphasizing quality assurance, teacher mentorship, and performance evaluation. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2024) and the Ministry of Education conduct school inspections, provide teacher training guidelines, and promote collaboration between universities and schools. Additionally, competency-based curricula, structured teaching practice programs, and principal capacity-building initiatives aim to enhance instructional leadership, ensuring graduating teachers are well-prepared to deliver quality, learner-centered education nationwide.

Despite the government's well-intentioned efforts, teachers in teaching practice in Nairobi County public secondary schools face persistent challenges, particularly inadequate supervision and ineffective mentorship (Omondi, 2024). These issues undermine their professional growth, leaving them feeling unsupported and ill-prepared, ultimately affecting the overall quality of their teaching practice experience. A report from the Sub-County Education Office (2025) revealed that principals frequently place more emphasis on administrative duties than on instructional supervision, which

leads to a lack of professional mentoring, delayed feedback, and less classroom observation. Kuria (2022) also noted that many school heads in the county are either completely absent or only partially involved in helping student teachers during their practicum. It is worrying that if this situation persists, it may lead to poorly prepared teachers, declining instructional quality, and weakened education standards. The issues regarding instructional supervision of teachers on teaching practice in Nairobi County have raised concerns about the effectiveness of principals' instructional supervision on student teachers' teaching practice in public secondary schools, thereby highlighting the need for this study.

2.1 Objective of the Study

- To examine challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

2.2 Research Question

- What challenges do teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County?

3. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Clinical Supervision Theory. Originally proposed by Cogan (1973) and later refined by Goldhammer (1980), the theory emphasizes professional development and structured feedback. It frames supervision as a collaborative process involving systematic observation, analysis, and reflection to improve instructional practices (Reiser, 2021). The theory underscores professional growth through non-punitive supervision based on mutual trust, open communication, and constructive feedback (Wahyu, 2020). Systematic observation ensures objective data collection, while collaborative reflection fosters creativity and critical thinking (Watkins Jr, 2021). Goal-oriented feedback allows teachers to refine instructional strategies and improve learning outcomes. Evidence supports the significance of clinical supervision in teacher development. Roberts (2022) and Reiser (2021) affirm that structured supervision strengthens teachers' self-efficacy and pedagogical skills. Research further illustrates its relevance across contexts. Arifin *et al.* (2023) found that multicultural supervision improved competence in Pesantren schools. Chaula, Lawrent, and Iramba (2024) reported that administrators' clinical supervision directly influenced professional growth. Similarly, Eshan and Karimnia (2021) showed its effectiveness in EFL settings, where it improved both supervisory skills and instructional delivery. Thus, Clinical Supervision Theory provides a robust framework for examining the challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

4. Challenges Teacher Trainees Face During Teaching Practice Supervision in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

Supervision is essential for developing teacher trainees' professional competence; however, various challenges often limit its effectiveness. Extensive research by Cato, Petter, Ann-Christine, and Fredrik (2024) in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark has identified numerous quality-related issues in K–12 practicums. However, no prior literature reviews have compiled the challenges associated with various aspects of the practicum supervision process, including planning, teaching and observation, supervision preparations, supervision sessions, and post-supervision reflection. This review highlights interconnected challenges such as limited student engagement and difficulties in observation, feedback, reflection, and cooperation within experiential supervision. Additionally, it underscores the lack of studies on specific components of the supervision process and emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive approach to examining the relationships between these elements, particularly in relation to quality.

Although there are significant contextual differences with Kenya, Cato, Petter, Ann-Christine, and Fredrik (2024) identified practicum supervision challenges in Scandinavia. In contrast to Scandinavian systems with ample resources, Kenyan schools struggle with a lack of supplies and uneven monitoring structures. While problems in Scandinavia arise in robust systems, systemic injustices and resource limitations exacerbate Kenya's problems. These particular challenges have not yet been compiled in a Kenyan study. Building on Scandinavian research, this study investigated the relationship between socioeconomic factors and practicum supervision quality and offers context-specific solutions to enhance supervision in settings with limited resources.

One of the challenges teacher trainees face is a lack of instructional materials to facilitate their preparation for teaching exercises. Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) examined the challenges that prospective teachers face during their teaching practice. The duo used a study sample of 34 soon-to-be teachers registered in their final semester of B.Ed. (Hons) programs at the University of the Punjab and the University of Gujrat in Punjab, Pakistan. In their findings, the scholars observed that the significant challenges prospective teachers faced included working with poor physical infrastructure, the non-professional attitude of school administration, inflexible classroom management structures, scarce academic resources, and the prevailing school norms that barred effective communication and the use of innovation. Besides, most schools lack information technology facilities and experience frequent electricity interruptions. Instructional technology is valuable in teaching as it helps teacher trainees to understand concepts and be in touch with trendy issues in the education sphere. Whereas the novice teachers are familiar with the emerging technologies and devices, they are not available in the schools.

The study by Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) emphasized important administrative and infrastructure issues, but it lacked a comparative viewpoint across various socioeconomic and educational contexts. Regional differences in educational resources and systems have a distinct impact on teacher candidates' experiences. The current study

examined how these issues appear in Kenya, taking into account elements like administrative support, school infrastructure, and budget discrepancies. The study offers context-specific recommendations to improve teaching practices and guide policy changes catered to Kenya's distinct educational landscape by contrasting findings with those from other areas.

In terms of lesson planning, evaluation, choosing an improper teaching technique, classroom size, amenities, and student attitude, the study by Kamukwema and Neumbo (2021) attempted to explore the difficulties that student teachers have when completing SBS in Namibia. It also looked into the good things that student instructors thought about SBS. The study was carried out at a particular Namibian campus. Data were gathered utilizing a qualitative method that included document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Among the difficulties student instructors encountered when instructing NSHE were inadequate teaching and learning resources and the choice of an improper teaching methodology. The survey also found that there are certain aspects of SBS that student teachers find enjoyable; they included working with teachers and students and building professional relationships.

The study ignored how schools, colleges, and educational systems influence these experiences in favor of concentrating mainly on the challenges faced by student teachers during School-Based Studies (SBS). Student teachers' readiness is greatly impacted by institutional frameworks, such as curricular alignment and administrative support. Mentorship programs offer crucial guidance, helping trainees overcome challenges related to lesson planning, assessment, and classroom management. Student learning outcomes are also influenced by the availability of resources, including infrastructure and instructional materials. To provide valuable recommendations for improving teacher preparation programs, the current study examined how teacher mentors, principals, and students can build effective relationships that enhance learning through meaningful and effective supervision.

The purpose of the teaching practice program is to facilitate the transfer from student to professional teaching. It is among the most crucial elements of programs for training teachers. It gives student teachers a chance to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned. A study by Chukwurah and Chukwurah (2021) aimed to determine whether teaching practice as an educational exercise has been without difficulties in Nigeria. 218 final-year education students from Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH) and the University of Calabar participated in the survey as respondents. To direct the investigation, two hypotheses and four research questions were developed. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather data for the study. The t-test at the 0.05 level of significance was used to assess the hypotheses, and mean and standard deviation statistics were used to analyze the research questions. Among other things, it came to light that these colleges' student instructors saw school placement as a challenge. The study also showed that the mean replies of male and female student teachers at CRUTECH and the University of Calabar regarding the difficulties of teaching in Calabar did not differ significantly. Based on these, it was suggested, among other

things, that the Nigerian government increase funding for universities and that supervisors of teaching practices foster a friendly environment between themselves and student teachers.

The study focused on how student teachers perceived the difficulties they faced in their teaching practices, but it ignored the influence of school leadership, mentorship, and institutional policies. Additionally, it did not look at how adaptability is affected by urban and rural locations. The current study investigated how principals' effectiveness in supervision was affected, revealing challenges faced, such as mentoring, leadership, and ineffective institutional policies, which affected teaching practice.

By highlighting the significance of quality education, a study conducted in Kenya by Sang (2025) questions the idea that education is an equalizer. Teachers are vital to education, but in order to close the gap between theory and professionalism, they must receive practical training. The study examines the difficulties Kenyan teacher educators encounter when instructing students in primary and secondary schools. Through a desk analysis of books, research papers, and journal articles from resources like Lexis Nexis and Google Scholar, the study pinpoints important problems like a lack of uniformity, logistical difficulties, and insufficient institutional support. These elements have a detrimental effect on teacher educators, underscoring the pressing need for structural changes. The results indicate that in order to improve teacher education and training, specific policies and practices are required. This study offers stakeholders and policymakers useful information to raise the standard of teacher training in Kenya's educational system.

The study does not examine how stakeholder participation, government regulations, and mentoring programs might improve teaching practice experiences. Furthermore, how differences between urban and rural training contexts affect teacher effectiveness and preparation are not covered in the study. In order to close these gaps, the current study looked into how government policies, institutional frameworks, and mentoring would help with these issues. A deeper understanding of the contextual elements affecting teacher readiness would be possible through a comparison of urban and rural teacher training settings. Interviews with legislators, school officials, and teacher educators would also be used to pinpoint systemic issues and workable fixes. By filling in these gaps, this study helped shape policy suggestions that strengthen institutional support, improve teacher preparation programs, and guarantee uniformity in instructional methods across various educational contexts.

The Kenyan government has hired more technical, vocational education, and training (TVET) teachers in tandem with the growth of the country's vocational education industry. It is anticipated that incoming instructors will be mentored by current TVET teachers. However, there is a lack of research on teacher mentorship methods in Kenya's TVET sector, making it difficult to determine what mentorship practices are in place and how successful they are. Therefore, the purpose of a study by Njenga (2022) was to examine TVET teacher mentoring methods in Kenya and find ways to guarantee successful and long-lasting TVET teacher mentoring. Using a concurrent mixed-methods

approach, the study included semi-structured interviews with 16 individuals and a questionnaire survey with 170 participants. Six TVET institutions in the Nairobi metropolitan area of Kenya provided participants. Descriptive and inferential analysis were mixed with thematic analysis of interview data. The data analysis showed that although mentoring is valued by TVET teachers, mentoring activities are restricted to simple introductions and casual, encouraging conversations between teachers. Furthermore, rules for organizing and directing mentoring have not yet been created. As a result, new instructors do not receive enough mentoring.

While earlier research was restricted to TVET teachers in urban regions, the current study focuses on university students in teaching practice, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, using self-reported data raised the possibility of biases. To avoid selection bias, during data collection, the present study covered an urban area to close these gaps and provide more understanding while enhancing reliability. Data dependability can be improved by using a variety of techniques, such as observations, interviews, and longitudinal research. To further improve teacher preparation and tackle issues in teaching practice, mentorship programs and institutional assistance should be investigated so as to tackle proper sampling, which is representative of all teaching practitioners, taking into account the response bias.

5. Research Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods research approach using a convergent parallel design. Both cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs were integrated. The targeted population comprised of 101 principals, 2,455 teachers, 560 teacher trainees, and 11 sub-county directors. Stratified, simple random, systematic sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select approximately 437 participants, comprising 15 principals, 333 teachers and 84 teacher trainees. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, in-depth interview guides, a document analysis guide, and an observation checklist. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation), which were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Quantitative data were presented in tables using frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed and presented in the form of narratives and direct quotes.

6. Research Findings

6.1 Challenges Teacher Trainees Face During Teaching Practice Supervision in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

This question aimed to assess respondents' views on the challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice supervision in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement provided. A five-point Likert scale was used, as presented in Table 1, with the following

options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Table 1: Challenges Teacher Trainees face during Teaching Practice Supervision

| Teachers (n=330) | SA | | A | | UD | | D | | SD | |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-----------|-----|----------|------|-----------|------|
| Supervisors visit irregularly. | 7 | 2.1 | 8 | 2.4 | 4 | 1.2 | 62 | 18.8 | 249 | 75.5 |
| Students' trainees lack enough teaching resources. | 215 | 65.2 | 59 | 17.9 | 3 | 0.9 | 3 | 0.9 | 50 | 15.2 |
| Lesson observations cause anxiety to teacher trainees. | 27 | 8.2 | 45 | 13.6 | 15 | 4.5 | 232 | 70.3 | 11 | 3.3 |
| Students' trainees receive conflicting feedback from supervisors. | 14 | 4.2 | 28 | 8.5 | 3 | 0.9 | 278 | 84.2 | 7 | 2.1 |
| There is limited time for supervision meetings. | 7 | 2.1 | 282 | 85.5 | 2 | 0.6 | 282 | 7 | 2.1 | 9.7 |
| Trainee Teachers (n=81) | SA | | A | | UD | | D | | SD | |
| Supervisors visit irregularly. | 2 | 2.5 | 3 | 3.7 | 2 | 2.5 | 5 | 6.2 | 69 | 85.2 |
| I lack enough teaching resources. | 75 | 92.6 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 3 | 3.7 |
| Supervision schedules are unpredictable. | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 8 | 9.9 | 18 | 22.2 | 53 | 65.4 |
| Principals are sometimes unavailable. | 73 | 90.1 | 5 | 6.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 |
| I receive conflicting feedback from supervisors. | 1 | 1.2 | 2 | 2.5 | 1 | 1.2 | 73 | 90.1 | 4 | 4.9 |
| There is limited time for supervision meetings. | 4 | 4.9 | 70 | 86.4 | 1 | 1.2 | 4 | 4.9 | 2 | 2.5 |
| Principals focus more on mistakes than strengths. | 65 | 80.2 | 3 | 3.7 | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 11 | 13.6 |

As shown in Table 1, most teachers (75.5%) strongly disagreed with the claim that supervisors regularly visit student teachers during their teaching practice. Only 2.4% agreed with this statement. One principal explained that regular supervision of student teachers remains a major challenge due to the limited time available to principals, given their numerous administrative responsibilities. The Sub-County Director of Education also emphasized this concern, noting:

"While we appreciate that principals have many responsibilities in their schools, we must remember that supervising trainee teachers is a fundamental responsibility we cannot neglect. Ensuring that these teachers receive adequate support during their training is crucial for developing competent future educators, and we must find ways to prioritize this duty despite time constraints." (Sub-County Director of Education 2, 18/7/2025).

These findings clearly indicate a significant supervision gap and align with the document analysis data, which showed that supervisors seldom visited student teachers during teaching practice. Most teachers perceived inadequate support during this period. Limited time and heavy administrative workloads hinder principals' involvement, posing a risk to trainee teachers' professional growth. Strengthening supervision

mechanisms is essential to ensure effective mentorship and improve teacher preparation for classroom competence.

The findings reveal that a significant proportion of teachers (65.2%) agreed that teacher trainees lack adequate teaching resources during their teaching practice, while only 0.9% were undecided. This highlights a persistent challenge in teacher preparation programs, where limited instructional materials hinder the effective delivery of lessons and compromise trainee teachers' professional growth. The lack of resources can adversely affect instructional quality, creativity, and the ability of trainees to engage learners effectively. Interviews with principals further underscored this challenge. One principal explained:

"Teacher trainees often come with limited instructional materials, and schools sometimes struggle to supplement these needs due to budget constraints. Without adequate teaching resources, even well-prepared trainee teachers face difficulties in effectively delivering lessons and meeting diverse learner needs." (Principal 4, 18/7/2025).

Similarly, the Sub-County Director of Education echoed this concern, emphasizing that providing teaching resources is not only a school's responsibility but also a collaborative effort among training institutions and education authorities. He stressed:

"Ensuring trainees have adequate teaching resources is crucial in shaping competent teachers. Institutions and schools must collaborate to bridge resource gaps, ensuring trainees are not disadvantaged during their teaching practice." (Sub-County Director of Education 1, 18/7/2025).

The Clinical Supervision Theory by Cogan (1973) is relevant here as it emphasizes structured, supportive, and resource-backed supervision to enhance teachers' instructional competencies. Cogan argues that effective clinical supervision involves not only observation and feedback but also ensuring that teachers have the tools necessary for effective lesson implementation. Inadequate teaching resources undermine this process, as even constructive feedback cannot fully compensate for a lack of teaching aids.

The findings indicate a significant disagreement among teachers (70.3%) that lesson observations cause anxiety in teacher trainees, suggesting that most perceive these observations as non-threatening or supportive. However, a small proportion (8.2%) agrees that lesson observations do induce anxiety, hinting at a minority experiencing stress or discomfort during such evaluations. This discrepancy could stem from individual differences in confidence, experience, or the implementation of the observation process. The results suggest that while lesson observations are generally well-received, addressing the concerns of the minority who feel anxious could enhance the overall effectiveness and comfort of the evaluation process for teacher trainees.

The findings reveal that 84.2% of teachers disagreed that teacher trainees receive conflicting feedback from supervisors during teaching practice, suggesting trainees rarely voice such concerns. This high disagreement rate may indicate effective coordination among supervisors or trainees' reluctance to report issues, possibly due to a supportive supervision environment, as noted in prior studies where instructional supervision fosters professional development through consistent feedback (Spallanzani *et al.*, 2017). However, the lack of complaints does not necessarily mean feedback is always aligned, as trainees might perceive conflicting feedback but not express it due to power dynamics or fear of evaluation repercussions.

Principals' perspectives emphasize their role in ensuring feedback consistency. One principal stated, *"We align supervisor feedback with training objectives to avoid confusion."* Another noted, *"Regular meetings with supervisors ensure trainees receive clear, unified guidance."* These responses suggest principals actively work to harmonize feedback, potentially explaining the high teacher disagreement rate. However, interviews also revealed occasional challenges, with one principal admitting, *"Some trainees feel overwhelmed by differing supervisor expectations, but we address this through clarification sessions."* This indicates that while conflicting feedback exists, it's mitigated through structured interventions.

Recent studies highlight the importance of aligned feedback in instructional supervision. A study by Maes *et al.* (2022) found that university supervisors' feedback during co-assessment meetings significantly influences trainee performance, emphasizing the need for clear, consistent communication. Another meta-analysis (2025) on student feedback interventions showed that structured support for interpreting feedback enhances teaching quality, suggesting similar benefits for trainees when supervisors align their input. Additionally, research indicates that supervisory feedback varying across disciplines can confuse trainees if not tailored to their needs (Neupane Bastola & Hu, 2020).

Thus, it can be said that the 84.2% disagreement among experienced teachers reflects effective principal-led strategies to minimize conflicting feedback, supported by structured supervision and alignment efforts. However, the minority of trainees experiencing confusion underscores the need for ongoing supervisor training and open communication channels to ensure feedback clarity, enhancing trainees' professional growth during teaching practice.

The study further revealed that 85.5% of the teachers agree there is limited time for supervision meetings during teacher trainee supervision, with only 0.6% undecided. This overwhelming consensus highlights a significant challenge in instructional supervision, suggesting that time constraints hinder effective feedback and mentoring, which impacts trainee development. The minimal undecided percentage indicates near-universal recognition of this issue among teachers. In interviews, one principal noted, *"Supervision meetings are often rushed due to tight schedules, limiting in-depth discussions with trainees."* This aligns with the findings, emphasizing systemic time shortages. A study by Zepeda and O'Hair (2021) supports this, finding that insufficient time for supervisory

interactions reduces feedback quality, negatively affecting trainee growth. These findings underscore the need for restructured schedules to prioritize supervision, ensuring meaningful feedback and support for teacher trainees.

The study also investigated trainee teachers' opinions regarding the challenges teacher trainees face during teaching practice. Thus, the question is whether teacher supervisors conduct regular visits during teaching practice. Findings revealed that 85.2% of trainee teachers strongly disagreed with the notion, indicating infrequent supervisor visits. Only 2.5% were undecided on the matter. This suggests a significant gap in supervisory presence, potentially limiting trainees' access to critical feedback and support. The low undecided percentage reflects a near-consensus among trainees, pointing to systemic issues in the supervision process. Infrequent visits may hinder trainees' ability to refine teaching skills, as regular observation is vital for professional growth (Glickman *et al.*, 2020). One principal stated, *"Supervisors struggle to balance teaching loads with regular trainee visits, often prioritizing their primary duties."* This highlights logistical challenges, such as heavy workloads, that may explain the infrequency of visits. Experienced teachers' agreement on limited supervision time reinforces this, suggesting that supervisors' availability is a key barrier.

A study by Glickman *et al.* (2020) supports these findings, noting that irregular supervisory visits during teaching practice often stem from scheduling conflicts and inadequate resource allocation, reducing feedback opportunities and impacting trainee confidence. To address this, institutions could prioritize dedicated supervision schedules or leverage technology for virtual check-ins. These findings collectively underscore the need for structural reforms to enhance supervisor presence, ensuring consistent support for trainees' professional development during teaching practice.

The study's findings indicate that 92.6% of the trainee teachers agreed that they lack sufficient resources for teaching practice, with only 1.2% disagreeing. This near-unanimous consensus underscores a critical resource shortage, likely impacting trainees' ability to deliver effective lessons and develop professionally. Insufficient resources, such as teaching materials or access to technology, can hinder practical training, limiting hands-on experience essential for skill development. The low disagreement rate suggests that resource scarcity is a widely recognized issue among teachers.

Principals' interviews provided further insight. One principal noted, *"Trainees often lack textbooks and visual aids, which restricts their lesson delivery."* Another stated, *"Budget constraints limit our ability to provide adequate resources for practice."* These comments align with the teachers' views, highlighting systemic funding issues. The Sub-County Director echoed this, saying, *"Schools struggle to equip trainees with materials due to limited government allocations for teaching practice."* These statements suggest that resource shortages stem from broader institutional and budgetary constraints, affecting supervision quality.

Recent studies corroborate these findings. A study by Akaranga and Simiyu (2023) found that inadequate resources during teaching practice, such as outdated materials or limited access to digital tools, significantly hamper trainee preparedness and confidence.

The study further emphasized that resource availability directly influences the effectiveness of instructional supervision, with shortages leading to reduced feedback quality and trainee engagement. These studies highlight the global challenge of resource constraints in teacher training, particularly in underfunded education systems.

Integrating these perspectives, the 92.6% agreement among teachers reflects a critical barrier to effective teaching practice, reinforced by principals' and the Sub-County Director's acknowledgement of funding and resource limitations. The minimal disagreement (1.2%) may indicate isolated cases where trainees access alternative resources, but this is rare. To address this, schools could seek partnerships with external organizations or adopt cost-effective digital tools to supplement resources. Enhanced funding and resource allocation are essential to improve instructional supervision and support trainees' professional growth during teaching practice.

The study found that 90.1% of teacher trainees agreed that principals are unavailable to supervise them during teaching practice, with only 1.2% disagreeing. This strong consensus suggests that principals are perceived as not accessible. The minimal disagreement indicates isolated instances where trainees may feel unsupported, possibly due to principals' competing administrative duties. Principal availability is vital for effective instructional supervision, fostering a supportive environment for skill enhancement (Zepeda, 2017).

Principals' interviews reinforce these findings. One principal stated, *"I prioritize classroom visits to observe and guide trainees, ensuring they feel supported."* Another noted, *"My open-door policy allows trainees to seek advice anytime, enhancing their practice."* These comments highlight proactive engagement, aligning with the high trainee approval rate. The Sub County Director added, *"Principals are trained to balance administrative tasks with supervision, ensuring trainee support."* This suggests structured efforts to maintain accessibility despite workload challenges. Recent studies provide context. A study by Glanz and Heimann (2022) found that principal availability during teaching practice significantly boosts trainee confidence and teaching efficacy, supporting the study's findings.

The study found that 90.1% of teacher trainees disagreed that they received conflicting feedback from supervisors during teaching practice, indicating effective coordination among supervisors to ensure consistent guidance. Only 1.2% agreed, suggesting rare instances of confusion, possibly due to varying supervisor styles. The 4.9% who strongly disagreed further reinforce the perception of unified feedback. This aligns with prior findings where 84.2% of experienced teachers also disagreed that trainees receive conflicting feedback, pointing to a cohesive supervision framework. A principal stated, *"We align supervisor feedback with training objectives to avoid confusion."* The Sub County Director noted, *"Supervisors are trained to provide consistent feedback."* A study by Maes *et al.* (2022) supports these findings that coordinated feedback during co-assessment enhances trainee performance. However, the small percentage (1.2%) reporting conflicting feedback suggests minor inconsistencies persist, highlighting the

need for ongoing supervisor training to eliminate discrepancies and ensure all trainees receive clear, unified guidance for optimal professional development.

The 86.4% agreement that supervision meeting time is limited highlights a significant barrier to effective instructional supervision. Only 4.9% disagree, suggesting near-consensus on time constraints. This corroborates earlier findings where 85.5% of experienced teachers noted limited supervision time, indicating systemic scheduling issues. A principal stated, *"Supervision meetings are often rushed due to tight schedules, limiting in-depth discussions."* The Sub County Director remarked, *"Heavy workloads reduce supervision time."* These constraints may hinder trainees' ability to process feedback, stunting professional development.

The finding that 80.2% of trainees agreed that principals focus more on mistakes than on strengths suggests a critical supervisory approach that may undermine trainee confidence. A principal noted, *"We highlight errors to guide improvement, but strengths are acknowledged."* The Sub County Director said, *"Principals are trained to balance feedback, though some emphasize corrections."* A study by Akaranga and Simiyu (2023) found that strength-based supervision boosts trainee motivation, suggesting a need for balanced feedback. Principals should integrate positive reinforcement to enhance trainee efficacy while addressing areas for improvement.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that teacher trainees face several challenges during teaching practice supervision, including irregular supervisory visits due to principals' administrative burdens, limited feedback and mentorship. Resource shortages, such as inadequate teaching materials, further hinder effectiveness. While most supervision environments are supportive, some trainees experience anxiety, highlighting the need for emotional support. Limited time for supervision meetings and principal unavailability remain significant concerns. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education in Kenya develop clear guidelines ensuring regular, well-structured supervisory visits and allocate adequate resources to support teaching practice. It should also provide training programs for principals on effective supervision and trainee mentorship. Principals, on their part, should schedule consistent supervision meetings, provide timely feedback, ensure availability for guidance, and offer emotional support to trainees, fostering a conducive environment for professional growth.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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