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Challenges of the Supported Teaching in Schools (Sts) Programme: A Case of E.P College of Education Amedzofe.

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Abstract

Purpose*:* To identify challenges in the Supported Teaching in School Program at E.P. College of Education Amedzofe, Ghana.

Methodology*:* A case study design was used, involving 329 mentees, 113 mentors, and 41 tutors from the college. Data collection was done through Google Forms and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Findings*:* Key issues included insufficient motivation for tutors and mentors, problematic transportation for mentees to attachment schools, and a lack of adequate teaching resources at these schools.

Unique Contribution to theory, policy and practice: The study recommends that the Ministry of Education allocate sufficient resources, including teachers' manuals and logistics, for the program's success. It recommends the college engage with stakeholders and NGOs for better motivation of tutors and mentors. Additionally, coordinating transportation solutions for mentees is suggested. These insights offer practical strategies for enhancing teacher training programs and inform policy decisions in educational settings

Keywords: *Supported Teaching, Mentees, Mentors, Coaches.*

BACKGROUND

The significance of human capital development in advancing a nation's developmental goals cannot be overstated. One pivotal determinant in this pursuit is the efficacy of education, wherein a key factor is the proficiency of educators. The role of teaching stands as a paramount contributor to the enhancement of education, encompassing both its qualitative and quantitative dimensions (Valdez, Lomoljo, Dumrang, & Didatar, 2015). The etymology of the term "education" traces back to the Latin word "educere," signifying the act of drawing forth. Within various pedagogical paradigms, teachers bear the responsibility of eliciting and molding students' potentials, thereby rendering them capable of addressing societal challenges. The International Task Force on Teachers for Education (TTF) posits that teacher education should be perceived as a practical professional qualification, necessitating aspiring educators to apply concurrently acquired theoretical concepts and strategies within real-world settings (Transforming Teacher Education and Learning, 2017, p. 3). When striving to enhance the scholastic performance of a populace, no nation can afford to disregard the classroom practices of its educators (Stigler & Hiebert, 2010; Stigler & Hiebert, 2004; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stegler, 2002). With these heightened expectations, teachers are held accountable for student achievements, even as the demands they face may deviate from their formal training in educational institutions (Ntim, 2017). A study conducted by Parker, Osei-Himah, and Asare (2018) advocates for frequent workshops and continuous in-service training for teachers as vital components of their ongoing professional development. Kadingdi (2004), in a separate investigation, emphasizes the significance of supporting teachers in comprehending the desired transformations in their pedagogical practices. This entails fostering independent learning among students and introducing reforms in teacher training, support, and the nature of their professional development. Historically, various educational policies and initiatives have been introduced in Ghana's Colleges of Education with the aim of revolutionizing education. The On-Campus Teaching Practice (OCTP) within the Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) program preceded the STS (Students Teaching Students) program, integrated into the recently launched Bachelor in Basic Education (B.Ed) curriculum. A study by Adu-Yeboah and Kwaah (2018) unveils that on-campus experiences empower teacher trainees to refine their general pedagogical skills, encompassing aspects like lesson planning, articulation of appropriate learning objectives, instructional delivery, activity timing, and utilization of teaching aids. However, the study highlights the absence of documented benchmarks and guidelines governing on-campus practicum, alongside limited interaction opportunities for trainees to engage with supervisors and critically analyze their own practices. The STS program, implemented in 2018 and incorporated into the four-year B.Ed program, aims to enable trainees to apply and enhance the skills, knowledge, and understanding acquired during their college-based education. This process is supported by mentors and link tutors (National Teaching Council, 2018). Nonetheless, akin to numerous educational policies, the STS initiative encounters its own set of challenges, which this study aims to uncover.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine the challenges of the STS Programme at E.P College of Education, Amedzofe. The dimensions studied included challenges faced by Tutors, Mentors and Mentees.

Objectives

1. To identify the key challenges Mentees at E.P College of Education face in the STS component of their Bachelor in Basic Education Programme.
2. To identify challenges that E.P College of Education Tutors (Coaches) face in the implementation of the STS programme.
3. To identify challenges that Mentors in the attachment schools face in the implementation of the STS Programme.

Research Questions

1. What key challenges do E.P College of Education Mentees face in the STS Component of their Bachelor in Basic Education Programme?
2. What key challenges do E.P College of Education Tutors/Coaches face in the implementation of the STS programme?
3. What key challenges do Mentors in attachment schools face in the Supported Teaching in School programme?

Significance of the Study

The study highlighted the problems, and challenges that serve as obstacles to the successful implementation of the STS Programme in E.P College of Education Amedzofe and offered solutions to address same. The study shall serve as relevant literature for future research in the same field. The study is again significant as it could be a useful source of information for policy and decision-makers in the field of teacher education development.

LITERATURE

Historical Evolution of Teacher Education in Ghana

The inception of Western formal education in what was then known as the Gold Coast occurred in 1471 when Portuguese merchants introduced the concept through "castle schools" (Hilliard F., 1957; McWilliam, 1959). Similarly, other European merchants, such as the Dutch, Danes, and English, established analogous castle schools, which played a crucial role in the formalization of education but remained exclusive to a limited audience. These castle schools, often referred to as missionary schools, were established under the influence of religious groups like the Roman Catholics, Basel, Wesleyan, and Bremen missions. This formal education introduction gave rise to the need for adequately trained educators. During the nascent stages of Ghanaian school development, instructional methods adhered to the "monitorial system," wherein a single teacher

or master oversaw the school, with senior students appointed as monitors to assist in rote teaching and memorization (Hilliard F. H., 1957). The Basel Mission undertook a significant step towards teacher education by inaugurating a teacher-catechist theological seminary in Akropong in 1863, later relocating it to Abetifi. The Roman Catholics also established a teacher training college at Bla in the Trans-Volta region. These institutions were the primary hubs for teacher education in the Gold Coast (Ghana). Subsequently, the British Colonial administration bolstered the efforts of these Christian missions by founding a teacher training school in Accra in 1909. The Methodist Mission established its own training college in Aburi, which was later moved to Kumasi in 1924 and is now recognized as Wesley College of Education. The initial duration of training in these Christian mission training colleges was two years.

In 1923, the Gold Coast expanded its teacher education efforts to address the shortage of certified teachers, resulting in the establishment of a range of training colleges. The Education Committee Report of 1937 advocated for both two-year and four-year training colleges, a recommendation that was implemented. By the close of 1950, the Gold Coast had a total of nineteen teacher training colleges, comprising eight four-year "certificate A" colleges and eleven two-year "certificate B" colleges, collectively producing around 623 teachers annually. By this time, the estimated count of certified teachers had reached 3,989. Despite these efforts, a significant number of untrained teachers still persisted in classrooms. The issue of unqualified teachers persisted until 1957, when Ghana achieved independence from the United Kingdom (Hilliard F. H., 1957). Following independence, the challenge of unqualified educators was accentuated with the introduction of free compulsory basic education, exacerbating the gap between the demand for and supply of professional teachers. From the 1990s onward, consistent efforts have been made to enhance and elevate the quality of teachers. Various educational initiatives and programs have been devised to refine teacher quality and professional growth, with the ongoing Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) program being a prominent example. Given this backdrop, it becomes imperative to investigate whether the STS program, an integral facet of the Bachelor in Education program across various colleges of Education, faces any notable challenges.

Teacher Education Reforms in Ghana

The transformation of teacher education in Ghana has been significantly shaped by socio-political shifts. The quest to equip qualified educators capable of addressing the nation's educational requirements has prompted various political administrations since the country's independence to introduce teacher education reforms. These reforms have yielded diverse categories of teachers holding different types of certificates (Anamuah-Mensah, 2006). The initial offerings from Teacher Training Colleges (TTC), now recognized as Colleges of Education, were the 2-year Post-Middle Certificate "B" programs. This was followed by the introduction of 2-year Post-Secondary Certificate "A" and 4-year Post-Middle Certificate "A" programs. In the 1980s, the 2-year Post-Secondary program was extended to a 3-year duration and coexisted with the 4-year certificate "A" programs until it was eventually discontinued. However, the educational reforms had limited

discernible impact on students' learning outcomes, encompassing academic achievements and the cultivation of vital values like problem-solving, as indicated by the Ministry of Education (2012). Recent times have witnessed the enactment of two consequential pieces of legislation pertaining to teacher preparation, each aiming to revamp the nation's educational landscape. The inaugural legislation, the 2008 Education Act (Act 778), encompasses a pivotal Section 9 that mandates the establishment of a National Teacher Council (NTC). The NTC's responsibilities encompass the formulation of professional benchmarks and ethical directives for educators, in addition to delineating registration and licensing prerequisites for aspiring teachers. Moreover, the Act confers upon the NTC the authority to revoke the licensure of any teacher involved in misconduct or violation of the professional code of ethics governing the teaching vocation in Ghana. Consequently, Act 778 concentrates on the elevation of teaching in Ghana to the status of a profession, marked by explicit codes of ethics and criteria for individuals aspiring to teach in pre-tertiary institutions. The second legislative enactment, the Colleges of Education Act 847, aims to reconfigure Colleges of Education (CoE) into tertiary institutions. This transition has elevated CoEs to four-year establishments conferring degrees instead of three-year diplomas, an alteration that commenced in October 2018. The Ghana Education Service, responsible for pre-tertiary teacher education, previously administered the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) before the passage of Act 847, which designated them as Colleges of Education (CoE). This legislative change signifies a strategic evolution in the educational landscape of Ghana, aligning teacher education institutions with the standards of tertiary education.

Supported Teaching in Schools

The Supported Teaching in School Program mandates Colleges of Education to establish strong affiliations with partner or practice schools for the purpose of teacher preparation. This endeavor entails the provision of specialized training and appropriate incentives to educators within these institutions (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). This necessitates the establishment of an enduring structure for continuous professional development, encompassing mentors, teachers, and other stakeholders, accompanied by suitable recognition mechanisms (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). The effective implementation of the Supported Teaching in School placements, as substantiated by research, hinges on the presence of adequately equipped schools, qualified mentors, and robust interconnections between colleges, universities, and schools, all of which contribute to the alignment with Teachers' Standards (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). Furthermore, Colleges of Education are expected to cultivate amicable relationships with partner schools, ensuring that mentors are aptly trained and equipped with the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills to effectively guide the student teachers under their tutelage. This also involves the provision of continuous professional development opportunities for mentors, lead mentors, link tutors, and other stakeholders, delineating their respective roles and responsibilities. Mentors, in particular, are anticipated to offer unrestricted and accessible support to mentees, adopting a coaching role to assist student teachers in translating their pedagogical training into authentic

classroom contexts (Bani, 2019). Colleges of Education are entrusted with the task of facilitating a robust assessment framework to gauge the teaching progress of student teachers vis-à-vis the Teachers' Standards through the analysis of portfolios, matched to different stages of their training. Moreover, they are tasked with orienting students regarding their responsibilities within the school and community settings, while concurrently developing instructional programs that equip student teachers with the adeptness to utilize appropriate teaching materials within demonstration schools. This includes the submission of comprehensive reports and targeted observation guidelines (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). Upon the culmination of the Supported Teaching in School program, student teachers are expected to exhibit a range of competencies. These encompass their ability to positively influence students' learning and advancement, demonstrate sound content, pedagogical, and curriculum knowledge, leverage the socio-cultural context of students for effective instruction, and employ pedagogical decisions informed by pertinent educational philosophies (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). The National Teachers' Standards outline the minimum proficiency levels that student teachers are required to attain during their pre-service teacher education course in order to fulfill these pivotal roles, with the onus on student teachers to demonstrate their alignment with these standards (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2017). Progressive growth towards the fulfillment of Teachers' Standards is cultivated over years one, two, and three of training through extended and supported teaching experiences. This encompasses a spectrum of activities such as observing, planning, teaching, and assessing student learning progress and well-being. The evaluation process is facilitated through a comprehensive portfolio of evidence against the backdrop of Teachers' Standards, pillars, and Cross-Cutting Issues. Close engagement with mentors, facilitated by link tutors from colleges of education, constitutes a valuable component of this process (Abudulai, 2021, pp. 100-110). In the context of demonstration schools, student teachers are encouraged to engage with students, leverage educational resources, analyze lesson plans, and engage in self-reflective exercises. Additionally, partner schools are entrusted with the responsibility of offering opportunities for student teachers to undertake self-directed activities, including the assessment of school curricula and textbooks to ascertain their appropriateness across diverse student levels. These demonstration schools are poised to provide an enabling environment for the pursuit of such self-guided activities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a case study research design. Compared to other methods, the strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in-depth, a “case” within its “real-life” context (Yin, 2004). According to Shavelson and Lisa (2002, pp. 99-106) “the case study method is pertinent when your research addresses either a descriptive question (*what* happened?) Or an explanatory question (*how* or *why* did something happen?)” Hence this approach was deemed fit to ascertain the challenges of the STS programme of the Bachelor in Education programme at the Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Amedzofe.

Population

The target population of the study comprised all students (mentees), tutors and mentors at E.P College of Education.

Sample Size

To establish the sample size, a combination of stratified and simple random sampling methods was employed to select participants from three distinct groups: mentees, mentors, and tutors. The selection process resulted in the following distribution: a) tutors (41); b) teacher trainees or students (329); and c) mentors (113). This sample size was determined in accordance with statistical principles suitable for quantitative research, including considerations of confidence intervals, confidence level, and population (Creative Research Systems, 2022).

Research Instrument

A four-point likert scale questionnaire constructed by the researcher were separately designed for mentees, mentors, and tutors. Likert-scale questionnaires were intended to provide insight and elicit information from student teachers (mentees), mentors and tutors on the challenges they encounter during the Supported Teaching in School Programme. The first section of the survey, asked for background information about the respondents. This included the gender of respondents. The challenges of the STS programme was elicited in the second section. Some questions asked mentees included: 1) I easily get transportation from College to attachment school and vice versa? 2) Overstretched by inexperience and uncooperative mentor? Some questions asked tutors included: 1) Inadequate training sessions/workshops for tutors? 2) I am adequately incentivized to support mentees? Some questions asked mentors included: 1) The time and days allotted for the programme were inconvenient 2) I am inaccessible (not available) to guide and direct Mentees? Participant's responses were collected using Google Forms.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages and descriptive statistics in the form of mean, minimum, and maximum values and standard deviation. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze data. Views indicating high frequencies and percentages were treated as the emerging opinions on the study. Frequencies and percentages were used because they give a quick visual impression of the issue under study and are also easy to interpret. No one was coerced to participate in the study. When permissions were granted, respondents were sent a Google survey link via WhatsApp and email to record their responses.

The study used a 4-point Likert Scale with the following notations: 4- "Strongly Disagree" 3- "Disagree" 2- "Agree" 1- "Strongly Agree"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data on the views from respondents about the challenges of the STS Programme at E.P College of Education, Amedzofe is presented in this section.

According to Mentee's preliminary data on Gender, the study comprised of 36.5% Females and 63.5% males as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender of Mentees

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	120	36.5	36.5
Male	209	63.5	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0

According to Tutors preliminary data on Gender, respondents comprised of 24.4% females and 75.6% males as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Gender of Tutors

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	10	24.4	24.4
Male	31	75.6	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0

According to Mentor preliminary data on Gender, the study comprised of 33.6% Females and 64.4% males as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender of Mentors

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	38	33.6	33.6
Male	75	66.4	100.0
Total	113	100.0	100.0

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Key challenges E.P College of Education students face in the STS Component of their Bachelor in Basic Education Programme

This research question centred on outlaying key challenges mentees encounter in the STS component of their B.ED programme at E.P college of Education, Amedzofe.

Three Hundred and Twenty-Nine (329) mentees out of an estimated student population of 1000 responded to the likert scale questionnaire and table 4&5 below indicates their shared challenges.

Table 4: Student Challenges with STS

Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I easily get transportation from College to attachment school and vice versa	32(9.7%)	72(21.9%)	102(31.0%)	123(37.4%)
Overstretched by inexperience and uncooperative Mentor	48(14.6%)	67(20.4%)	116(35.3%)	98(29.8%)
Co-mentees are cooperative and offer support	131(39.8%)	102(31.0%)	58(17.6%)	38(11.6%)
Poorly Structured attachment School	81(24.6%)	35(10%)	118(35%)	95(28.9%)
Contrasting advise from Tutors and Mentors	70(21.3%)	164(49.8%)	67(20.4%)	28(8.5%)
Unfavourable Time/Day for STS Programme	65(19.8%)	55(16.7%)	159(48.3%)	50(15.2%)
Attachment school is poorly resourced with teaching Learning materials	92(28.0%)	115(35.0%)	92(28.0%)	30(9.1%)
My Tutor/ Mentor was unfriendly to me	19(5.8%)	49(14.9%)	142(43.2%)	119(36.2%)

The analysis of the data presented in Table (4) reveals notable trends among the respondents. A significant proportion, comprising 123 respondents (37.4%), expressed strong disagreement, while 102 respondents (31%) held a stance of disagreement, indicating that the facilitation of transportation for mentees to their attachment schools and vice versa was challenging. In contrast, a minority of participants, 72 respondents (21.9%), expressed agreement, and an even smaller portion, 32 respondents (9.7%), strongly agreed that transportation arrangements were convenient. A similar pattern emerges with regard to the assertion that mentees felt strained by inexperienced and uncooperative mentors, as 116 respondents (35.5%) expressed disagreement, and 98 respondents (28.9%) registered strong disagreement. Conversely, 67 respondents (20.4%) found agreement, while 48 respondents (14.6%) strongly agreed. The dataset also indicates that a noteworthy portion, encompassing 131 respondents (39.8%), held a strong agreement, while 102 respondents (31%) expressed agreement in asserting that their co-mentees provided substantial support and cooperation. In contrast, 58 respondents (17.6%) disagreed, and 38 respondents (11.6%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, the perception of attachment school structure yielded a significant finding, as 118 respondents (35.9%) disagreed, and 95 respondents (28.9%) strongly disagreed with the notion of poor structuring. On the other hand, 81 respondents (24.6%) found agreement, and 35 respondents (10.6%) expressed disagreement. Additionally, 164 respondents (49.8%) agreed, while 70 respondents (21.3%) strongly agreed that they encountered disparate guidance from their tutors and mentors. Conversely, 67 respondents (20.5%) disagreed, and 28 respondents (8.5%) strongly disagreed regarding conflicting advice from their coaches and

mentors. Furthermore, the allocation of time and days for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program yielded distinct perceptions. Notably, 159 respondents (48.3%) disagreed, and 50 respondents (15.2%) strongly disagreed, asserting that the allotted time and schedule were unfavorable. Conversely, 55 respondents (16.7%) found agreement, and 65 respondents (19.8%) expressed strong agreement. The adequacy of teaching and learning resources at attachment schools was also a subject of inquiry. Responses indicate that 115 respondents (35.0%) agreed, and 92 respondents (28.0%) strongly agreed that the attachment schools were inadequately equipped. However, an opposing viewpoint was held by 92 respondents (28.0%) who disagreed, and 30 respondents (9.1%) who strongly disagreed. Lastly, the relational aspect between participants and their tutors or mentors was explored. The data underscored that 142 respondents (43.2%) disagreed, and 119 respondents (36.2%) strongly disagreed that either their tutor or mentor exhibited unfriendliness. In contrast, 49 respondents (14.9%) agreed, and 19 respondents (5.8%) strongly agreed with encountering a sense of unfriendliness from either their mentor or coach.

Table 5. ***Descriptive Statistics on Mentee Challenges with STS***

Challenges	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Co-mentees are cooperative	329	1	4	2.01	1.020
Contrasting advice from Tutors & Mentors	329	1	4	2.16	.856
Poorly Resourced attachment School	329	1	4	2.18	.945
Unfavourable Time & Day for STS	329	1	4	2.59	.972
Poorly Structured attachment School	329	1	4	2.69	1.135
Overstretched by inexperience and Mentor	329	1	4	2.80	1.024
Easily get transportation from College to attachment school and vice versa	329	1	4	2.96	.992
Unfriendly Tutor/Mentor	329	1	4	3.10	.857

The examination of data presented in Table 5 reveals specific trends regarding the respondents' viewpoints. The mean (M) score of 2.96 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.992 signifies that the respondents, on average, disagreed with the notion of facile transportation to and from their attachment school. Similarly, respondents exhibited a mean score of 2.80 with an SD of 1.024, suggesting a collective disagreement concerning being overburdened by inexperienced and uncooperative mentors, thereby affecting their lesson delivery. Moreover, the data indicates a pronounced agreement among respondents regarding the cooperative nature of their co-mentees and the ample support they offer, as evidenced by a mean deviation (MD) of 2.01 and an SD of 1.020. In contrast, participants expressed a level of disagreement concerning the structuring of attachment schools, as evidenced by a MD of 2.69 and an SD of 1.135. Notably, the dataset underscores respondents' concurrence in receiving contrasting advice from their coaches and

mentors, as demonstrated by a mean score of 2.16 and an SD of 0.856. Moreover, the analysis of the data table reflects that mentees, on average, held a stance of disagreement regarding the suitability of the allocated time and schedule for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program, with a mean score of 2.59 and an SD of 0.972. Additionally, respondents expressed agreement that their attachment schools were inadequately resourced with teaching and learning materials, as reflected by a mean score of 2.18 and an SD of 0.945. Lastly, the data underscores a collective disagreement among mentees regarding the perception of unfriendliness from either their mentor or coach, with a mean score of 3.10 and an SD of 0.857.

Research Question 2: Key challenges E.P College of Education Tutors (Coaches) face in the implementation of the STS programme.

This research question centered on outlaying key challenges Tutors (Coaches) encounter in the implementation of the STS programme at E.P College of Education, Amedzofe.

41 Tutors/coaches out of an estimated tutor population of 45 responded to the Likert scale questionnaire and Table 6&7 indicates their shared challenges.

Table 6: Tutor challenges on STS

Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Inadequate training sessions/workshops for Tutors	6(14.6%)	23(56.1%)	12(29.3%)	0(0.0%)
I am adequately incentivized to support mentees	3(7.3%)	11(26.8%)	24(58.5%)	3(7.3%)
I have the needed coaching materials to support mentees	3(7.3%)	25(61.0%)	11(26.8%)	2(4.9%)
Mentees were disrespectful and non-cooperative	0.0%	3(7.3%)	20(48.8%)	18(43.9%)
I am overburdened by mentee assessment	0(0.0%)	5(12.2%)	23(56.1%)	13(31.7%)
Time and Days allotted for the STS programme were unfavourable to me	0(0.0%)	6(14.6%)	18(43.9%)	17(41.5%)
Truancy and poor interest in the programme by mentees	0(0.0%)	4(9.8%)	18(43.9%)	19(46.3%)
Truancy and poor interest in the programme by mentees	3(7.3%)	28(68.3%)	7(17.1)	3(7.3%)
I have limited time for post teaching discussion	28(68.3%)	3(7.3%)	7(17.1%)	3(7.3%)

The analysis of data presented in Table (6) provides insights into specific perceptions held by respondents. Notably, a significant proportion, encompassing 23 respondents (56.1%), expressed agreement, and 6 respondents (14.6%) strongly agreed that the training sessions and workshops for Tutors were insufficient. In contrast, 12 respondents (29.3%) disagreed, and no respondents

strongly disagreed with the adequacy of these sessions. Furthermore, the dataset underscores that 24 respondents (58.5%) disagreed, and 3 respondents (7.3%) strongly disagreed concerning the adequacy of incentivization for supporting mentees. Conversely, 11 respondents (26.8%) expressed agreement, and 3 respondents (7.3%) strongly agreed that they were suitably incentivized for this role. The availability of requisite coaching materials emerged as a subject of investigation, with 25 respondents (61.0%) agreeing and 3 respondents (7.3%) strongly agreeing that they possessed the necessary resources. In contrast, 11 respondents (26.8%) disagreed, and 2 respondents (4.9%) strongly disagreed regarding the availability of these materials. Additionally, perceptions regarding mentees' behavior were explored. A notable proportion, encompassing 20 respondents (48.8%), held a stance of disagreement, and 18 respondents (43.9%) strongly disagreed with the notion that mentees displayed disrespect and non-cooperativeness. In contrast, a small portion, consisting of 3 respondents (7.3%), agreed, and none strongly agreed. The perception of being burdened by mentee assessments was examined, revealing that 23 respondents (56.1%) disagreed, and 13 respondents (31.7%) strongly disagreed with this assertion. On the contrary, 5 respondents (12.2%) agreed, and none strongly agreed. The allocation of time and days for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program yielded distinct perceptions, as 18 respondents (43.9%) disagreed, and 17 respondents (41.5%) strongly disagreed, asserting that the allocated time was unfavorable. Conversely, 6 respondents (14.6%) found agreement, and none strongly agreed. Insights into mentees' level of interest in the STS program were also gathered. A significant proportion, comprising 19 respondents (46.3%), strongly disagreed, and 18 respondents (43.9%) disagreed with the notion that mentees lacked interest in the program. Conversely, 4 respondents (9.8%) expressed agreement, and none strongly agreed. Lastly, considerations regarding the availability of time for post-teaching discussions were explored. Notably, 28 respondents (68.3%) strongly agreed, and 3 respondents (7.3%) agreed that they had limited time for such discussions. In contrast, 7 respondents (17.1%) disagreed, and 3 respondents (7.3%) strongly disagreed with this sentiment.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Tutor challenges with STS

Challenges	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Inadequate training workshops for Tutors	41	1	3	2.15	.654
Limited time for post teaching discussions	41	1	4	2.24	.699
I have the needed coaching materials to support mentees	41	1	4	2.29	.680
I am adequately incentivized to support mentees	41	1	4	2.66	.728
I am overburdened by mentee assessment	41	2	4	3.20	.641
Time and Days allotted for the programme were unfavourable to me	41	2	4	3.27	.708
Mentees were disrespectful and non-cooperative	41	2	4	3.27	.623
Truancy and poor interest in the programme by mentees	41	2	4	3.37	.662

The examination of data in Table 7 provides substantive insights into the perspectives held by Tutors/Coaches. Their perceptions regarding the adequacy of training sessions and workshops reveal an average agreement, with a mean (M) score of 2.15 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.654. Conversely, Tutors exhibited a collective disagreement regarding the adequacy of their incentivization to support mentees, as evidenced by an average mean score of 2.66 and an SD of 0.728. Furthermore, the data underscores that Tutors expressed agreement concerning the availability of necessary coaching materials to support mentees, with an average mean score of 2.29 and an SD of 0.680. Additionally, Tutors held a stance of disagreement with regards to mentees' perceived disrespect and non-cooperative behavior, indicated by an average mean score of 3.37 and an SD of 0.623.

The analysis of data further demonstrates that Tutors collectively disagreed regarding the perception of being overburdened by mentee assessments, as reflected by an average mean score of 3.20 and an SD of 0.641. Similarly, Tutors held a perspective of disagreement regarding the suitability of time and days allocated for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program, with an average mean score of 3.27 and an SD of 0.708. Moreover, Tutors strongly disagreed with the assertion of mentees' lack of interest or poor engagement in the STS program, as indicated by an average mean score of 3.37 and an SD of 0.662. Lastly, the data indicates a general agreement among Tutors that they possess limited time for post-teaching discussions, reflected in an average mean score of 2.24 and an SD of 0.699.

Research Question 3: What key challenges do Mentors in the attachment schools face in the Supported Teaching in School Programme?

This research question centred on outlaying key challenges Mentors encounter in the implementation of the STS programme at E.P college of Education, Amedzofe.

113 Mentors out of an estimated Mentor population of 150 responded to the likert scale questionnaire and the table 8&9 below indicates their shared challenges.

Table 8: Mentor challenges with STS

Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The time and days allotted for the programme were inconvenient	9(8.0%)	47(41.6%)	42(37.2%)	15(13.3%)
I am inaccessible (not available) to guide and direct Mentees	6(5.3%)	15(13.3%)	40(35.4%)	52(46.0%)
Mentees were unfriendly and disrespectful	4(3.5%)	11(9.7%)	45(39.8%)	53(46.9%)
I am familiar with the key features of the basic school curriculum	40(35.4%)	55(48.7%)	18(15.9%)	0(0.0%)
I am regular and punctual at school to support Mentees	65(57.5%)	48(42.5%)	0(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
I perform my mentorship role by advising and encouraging Mentees	86(76.1%)	27(23.9%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
I encourage Mentees to practice teaching practically by doing	46(40.7%)	66(58.4%)	1(0.9%)	0(0.0%)
I receive adequate incentive package to support Mentees	2(1.8%)	10(8.8%)	38(33.6%)	63(55.8%)

Based on the analysis of data presented in Table (8), distinct trends in respondents' perceptions emerge. Notably, 47 respondents (41.6%) expressed agreement, and 9 respondents (8.0%) strongly agreed that the time and days allocated for the program were inconvenient. In contrast, a considerable proportion of 42 respondents (37.2%) disagreed, and 15 respondents (13.3%) strongly disagreed, asserting that the time and days were not inconvenient. Furthermore, insights into accessibility for guiding and directing mentees were explored. A minor proportion of 6 respondents (5.3%) strongly agreed, and 15 respondents (13.3%) agreed that they were inaccessible for such guidance. In contrast, a notable majority of 40 respondents (35.4%) disagreed, and a significant number of 50 respondents (46.0%) strongly disagreed, asserting their accessibility for supporting mentees. Perceptions regarding mentees' behavior were also investigated. A limited number of 4 respondents (3.5%) strongly agreed, and 11 respondents (9.7%) agreed that mentees displayed disrespectful behavior. Conversely, a substantial proportion of 45 respondents (39.8%) disagreed, and 56 respondents (43.9%) strongly disagreed that mentees were unfriendly and disrespectful. The data further discloses that 40 respondents (35.4%) strongly agreed, and 55 respondents (48.7%) agreed that they were well-acquainted with the fundamental features of the basic school curriculum. Conversely, 18 respondents (15.9%) expressed

disagreement, indicating a lack of familiarity with these curriculum aspects. In addition, a significant number of 86 respondents (76.1%) strongly agreed, and 27 respondents (23.9%) agreed that they fulfilled their mentorship role through advisory and motivational efforts directed towards mentees. Furthermore, 65 mentors (57.5%) strongly agreed, and 48 mentors (42.5%) agreed that they maintained regular and punctual attendance at school to support mentees. The data also underscores that 46 mentors (40.7%) strongly agreed, and 66 mentors (58.4%) agreed that they actively facilitated mentees' practical teaching experiences. Only 1 respondent (0.9%) expressed disagreement with this assertion. Lastly, considerations regarding the incentivization of mentors were explored. A marginal proportion of 2 mentors (1.8%) strongly agreed, and 10 mentors (8.8%) agreed that they were adequately incentivized for supporting mentees. In contrast, a notable number of 38 mentors (33.6%) disagreed, and a significant majority of 63 mentors (55.8%) strongly disagreed, asserting the inadequacy of their incentivization for this role.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics on Mentors' challenges with STS

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
I receive adequate incentive package to support Mentees	113	1	4	3.43	.730
I encourage Mentees to practice teaching practically by doing	113	1	3	1.60	.510
I perform my mentorship role by advising and encouraging Mentees	113	1	3	1.60	.510
I am regular and punctual at school to support Mentees	113	1	2	1.42	.497
I am familiar with the key features of the basic school curriculum	113	1	3	1.81	.693
Mentees were unfriendly and disrespectful	113	1	4	3.30	.789
I am inaccessible (not available) to guide and direct Mentees	113	1	4	3.22	.874
The time and days allotted for the programme were inconvenient	113	1	4	2.56	.823

The analysis of data depicted in Table 9 illuminates key patterns in the perceptions of mentors. The majority of mentors expressed agreement concerning the perceived inconvenience of the time and days allocated for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program, as evidenced by a mean (M) score of 2.56 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.823. Additionally, the data underscores that mentors strongly disagreed with the notion of their unavailability to support mentees, reflected by a mean (M) score of 3.22 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.874. Furthermore, mentors held a perspective of strong disagreement regarding mentees' perceived unfriendliness and disrespect, evidenced by a mean (M) score of 3.30 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.789. The data further documents that mentors expressed agreement with their familiarity with the attributes of the Basic

School curriculum, as indicated by a mean (M) score of 1.81 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.693. Moreover, mentors strongly agreed with their regular and punctual attendance at school to provide support to mentees, reflected in a mean (M) score of 1.42 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.497. The data also highlights that mentors strongly endorsed their role in offering advice and support to mentees, as evidenced by a mean (M) score of 1.24 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.428. Additionally, mentors held a perspective of agreement in encouraging mentees to engage in practical teaching experiences, with a mean (M) score of 1.60 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.510. Lastly, the data unequivocally conveys that mentors strongly disagreed with the assertion that they were adequately incentivized for supporting mentees, reflected in a mean (M) score of 3.43 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.730

DISCUSSIONS

In this study, the researcher set out to investigate the challenges of mentees, mentors and tutors in the STS Programme at the E.P College of Education Amedzofe.

The findings in Table (4) and (5) indicated that mentees were confronted with a myriad of challenges in the STS programme. The major challenges include; uneasy transportation, contrasting advise from Tutors and Mentors, and poorly resourced attachment school. To commence with, 68% of respondents reported that their greatest challenge with the STS Programme was uneasy transportation to attachment schools and vice versa. This result is in line with findings of Eshun and Ashun (2013), who confirms the perennial challenge of lack of transportation even in the "out"-programme of the "in-in-out policy" of teacher education in Ghana. The finding further aligns with the study of Dankwah, Nyarko, and Mensah (2020) where it was revealed that STS programme saw unnecessary delays and time wasting due to a single bus for conveying students to practice schools. In addition, 71.1% of mentees also reported that another challenge that confronts them during the STS programme was contrasting advice from tutors and mentors. This finding is consistent with Kuyini, Abukari, and Rashid (2022) who noted that initial teacher training mentoring program is saddled with inadequate communication and feedback. Also, 63% of mentees reported that their attachment schools were poorly resourced with teaching learning resources. This corroborates the findings of Iddrisu (2020) where mentees on the out-segment internship where challenged by inadequate teaching and learning materials. Dankwah, Nyarko, and Mensah (2020) further highlighted that insufficient teaching and learning resources is a challenge that confronts mentees in the STS programme.

Findings from table (6) and (7) also revealed that tutors/coaches also have their unique set of challenges in the STS programme. The major challenges include; inadequate training sessions and workshops and also inadequate incentives. To start with, 70.7% of tutors disclosed that training sessions and workshops were inadequate. This aligns with the findings of Owu-Ewie (2008), Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) who emphasized that the development of intellectual capacities of learners begins with teachers, but most pre-service teacher institutions do not prepare

their teachers adequately for this task. Also, 65.8% of tutors disclosed that incentives for the STS programme was inadequate. This is aligns with the study of Amadu and Donkor (2014) who posit that tutors be adequately incentivized. In addition, 75.6 % of tutors also disclosed that they had limited time for post teaching discussion. This aligns with findings of Dankwah, Nyarko and Mensah (2020) that inadequate time and the artificial nature of the STS programme served as a great challenge.

Finally, findings from Table (8) and (9) also indicates the challenges of mentors in the STS programme. The major challenges of mentors include; time constraints and inadequate incentives. Firstly, 49.61 % of mentors disclosed that time and day allotted for the programme were inconvenient for them. This finding also confirms mentor time constraints even in the IN-IN-OUT mentoring programme (Attimu-Eshun, Baah, Donkor, & Anytime, 2022). Also, 89.4 % of mentors further disclosed that they were not adequately incentivized to support mentees. This aligns with the findings of Amadu and Donkor (2014) who contend that adequate incentives should be given to mentors and link tutors to make them motivated.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The study suggests improvements for the Supported Teaching in School Programme, focusing on enhancing transportation for mentees, ensuring mentor support, and improving resource availability at attachment schools. Encouraging cooperation among co-mentees and consistent advising is vital, alongside maintaining the current program schedule. Tutors need regular professional development, appropriate incentives, and should effectively use coaching materials while fostering a respectful and collaborative environment. Mentors are advised to adjust program scheduling collaboratively, provide continuous support, foster a respectful atmosphere, deepen curriculum knowledge, and be adequately incentivized.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.

This study investigated the difficulties faced by mentees, mentors, and tutors participating in the Supported Teaching in Schools Program at E.P College of Education, Amedzofe. The administrative difficulties of the program and the perspectives of other stakeholders and experts (such as principals, GES officials, coordinators, etc.) were not taken into account in this study. More regions and schools could not be included in the study. The researcher advises future researchers to think about including more regions and schools in their work as well as conducting additional research on the perspectives of other stakeholders regarding the Supported Teaching in School Program. Future research should concentrate on investigating methods/strategies to improve to STS program.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the challenges faced by mentees, mentors, and tutors in implementing the Supported Teaching in School (STS) program at E.P. College of Education. It found that tutors

and mentors lacked adequate motivation and incentives, while mentees struggled with transportation to and from their attachment schools. Additionally, there was a notable deficiency in teaching and learning resources at partner schools, impacting the quality of mentorship and practical experience for student teachers. Despite the STS program's potential to significantly enhance teaching and trainee development, these challenges hinder its effectiveness and the attainment of its objectives. Therefore, the study concludes that while the program has transformative potential, its goals may not be fully realized without addressing the issues of motivation, resource allocation, and logistical support. Based on the findings, it appears that the objective of thoroughly understanding the challenges to effectively implement the STS program at E.P College of Education was met.

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