Perceptions of English Specialized Student Teachers Towards Teaching Practice

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Abstract

In the present landscape of evolving teacher education programme, it is essential to know the perceptions of English Specialized Student Teachers (ESSTs) about Teaching Practice (TP) in general and university supervision and the role of cooperative schools in particular in making their TP experiences effective. This paper aims to analyze the perceptions of ESSTs to find out the effectiveness of university supervision and the role of cooperating schools in TP. For the study, a quantitative case study was applied as a research methodology. Data were obtained through questionnaires from the ESSTs of three campuses located in Surkhet Nepal. The findings revealed that TP played a pivotal role in developing qualified, trained, and confident teachers. Despite the satisfactory role of university supervision in TP, ESSTs felt stressed and worried due to the heavy workload related to the TP. Moreover, they perceived the important role of cooperative schools where they learnt from their strengths and areas that required improvement during TP. Therefore, university supervision and school administration should make TP flexible and engaging for ESSTs by motivating them to avoid their presupposition that TP is just a time-consuming, rigid, and boring task. In this regard, the study suggests enhancing the current collaboration between schools and universities for the effectiveness of teacher preparation addressing the issues. Moreover, it offers insights to enhance teacher preparation programme and improve the overall quality of education.

Keywords: English specialized student teachers, perception, teaching practice, university supervision, cooperative school

Background

Teaching Practice (TP) is a common activity worldwide in higher education institutions dedicated to producing trained teachers. It is recognized as a decisive rehearsal for preparing teachers

in the field of education. It is typically the final process before becoming qualified as a teacher. It is administered when university graduates complete their theoretical studies in their regular classes. TP is a really important step in executing the theoretical knowledge that the graduates have acquired during the program. During this time, future teachers learn and practice skills in a real classroom. Moreover, they get real-world experience to prepare for their aspired careers. Connecting this issue, many studies (Byler & Byler, 1984; Clarke et al., 2014; Schumann, 1969) have identified the importance and significance of TP in preparing qualified teachers. TP is designed to prepare teachers for planning and delivering instructional activities to suit the level of students and enhance their professional careers. It is a mandatory program for every student in the Department of Education in universities. In other words, TP is a shared preservice professional training of teachers serving as the initial official chance for trainee teachers (Perry, 2004) to engage in real teaching experiences.

TP is a universally accepted academic practice in teacher preparation, encompassing all learning experiences of student teachers (Clarke et al., 2014). It is now regarded as an essential activity for aspiring teachers and a mandatory part of producing teachers in all universities of Nepal. Rubeena (2022) claims that TP is important in training for imminent teachers. It helps produce well-qualified teachers if it is conducted appropriately. The high-quality first-hand training of TP produces teachers who can contribute to the advancement of teaching techniques, methods, resources, and materials (Kadel, 2023). It can help bring educational changes and integrate new developments in curricular and instructional activities. Such educators have the potential to make significant positive changes in society through their inspiring and motivated students.

With the high demand for teachers, educational institutions are exploring innovative programme for producing teachers. TP is one of the significant courses of such teacher education programme. In this regard, it is imperative to study the opportunities, challenges, and experiences faced by ESSTs during this period. Understanding the impact of these experiences can contribute to the improvement of the programme and enhance teacher professional development. Additionally, there is a need to establish ways to support pre-service teachers in transitioning from students to novice teachers (Koross, 2016). There is an increasing demand to create educational plans and modes of delivery that suit the evolving needs of students. In this context, for preparing fully prepared teachers, it is essential to shift from teacher-focused curricula to curricula that focus on student learning (Zeki & Guneyli, 2014) in teacher development programme.

In the TP process, there is a collaborative connection between STs, university supervisors, and cooperative schools. The cooperating school teacher is often the most important person in helping student teachers develop their professional careers because student teachers spend their time teaching under the everyday supervision of cooperating teachers (Clarke et al., 2014; Cong & Jiang, 2021; Deeds et al., 1991; Martin & Yoder, 1985; Rubeena, 2022). Higher education institutions of Nepal related to the producing teachers have the mandatory provision of TP on campus and out of campus at the end of the program. Throughout TP, STs have to conduct teaching sessions and the preparation for teaching to adopt the teaching profession in their lives. This practical experience exposes them to the regulations, discipline, and ethical considerations of the teaching profession (Kunwar et al., 2023) by providing insights into the responsibilities of being a teacher. It also allows them to be acquainted with academic as well as administrative management of the schools.

The effectiveness of teaching practice is an integral part of developing competent and resourceful teachers. Therefore, understanding the viewpoints of STs towards TP is crucial for enhancing the educational landscape of teacher development programme. In the TP process, university supervision is the main factor to influences the professional development of STs. Studies have suggested fairness and the absence of discrimination or bias in supervision (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010) during TP. Similarly, the role of cooperative schools in facilitating TP experiences is equally a significant component of teacher preparation. A comprehensive understanding of how STs conceptualize overall TP including the supervision and the role of cooperative schools/institutions is essential for optimizing the collaborative efforts between universities and cooperative schools. During the period of TP, STs come across anxiety, burden, and worry about efficient and proficient teaching and school performance (Caires et al., 2012). In this context, STs want appropriate interventions to overcome their anxieties, uncertainties, and insecurities (Danner, 2014) to motivate them to perform better and enhance their teaching efficacy (Poulou, 2007). While TP involves various activities related to the teaching profession, the perceptions of STs regarding the comprehensiveness of these activities remain underexplored. In light of these challenges, a study to find out the opinions of STs and their insights into the improvements of policies and practices for an effective TP is worth exploring. In this regard, it would be insightful to explore the experiences and perceptions of ESSTs regarding TP and how these experiences influence their views on becoming English language teachers. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the prevailing perceptions among ESSTs concerning the comprehensive activities of TP?
- How do ESSTs experience university supervision of TP?
- In what ways do ESSTs conceptualize the role of the cooperative schools in facilitating their teaching experience?

Review of Literature

The rationale of the study lies in the need to comprehensively explore the experiences and perspectives of ESSTs during TP in the context of three campuses of a university located in Surkhet Nepal. TP serves as a bridge between theoretical learning and practical application (Kadel, 2023) for shaping the development of future teachers. In this context, the study explores ESSTs' perceptions of TP activities such as university supervision and the role of cooperating schools.

ESSTs Perceptions Towards TP, University Supervision and Role of Cooperative Schools

Several studies have discovered the perceptions of STs toward TP. Chireshe and Chireshe (2010) revealed STs' positive response towards university supervision as it provided them with helpful immediate feedback. The study also reflected STs' expectations of more frequent visits of the mentors and supervisors during school teaching to provide them with constant and fair feedback. The researchers claimed that infrequent visits to schools by supervisors hinder the proper execution of responsibilities by STs. Similarly, Poulou (2007) revealed that supervisors' support and guidance provided ease and paved ways forward in STs' overall performance in TP. These studies collectively shed light on the importance of supervisors fulfilling their responsibilities by closely monitoring the activities of STs to effectively attain the goals of TP. Mudavanhu (2015) at the moment, pointed out that the practice of supervision from the supervisors from other disciplines does not help STs because

of their insufficient subject matter knowledge to help the STs.

Similarly, Patricia et al. (2013) studied assessing STs' perceptions of TP in the context of Egerton University, Kenya. The result indicated that the student teachers held positive views regarding the assessment of teaching practice. The results also suggested that there were no differences between their opinions between the STs based on their specialized subjects and the areas of specialization. Their findings can be employed to improve the assessment of TP. Concerning the role of team teaching in TP, De Backer et al. (2023) explored the STs' feelings and opinions. They found that STs possessed various opinions regarding the role of team teaching in TP. Kadel (2023) found that STs received insufficient feedback from their peers and university supervisors at Tribhuvan University and they perceived it as a ritual rather than an intensive teacher-training task. He suggests a radical revision of the TP for better preservice teacher professional growth.

Adapting TP in Changing Contexts

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching-learning practices were shifted from physical to online mode significantly. This situation forced universities to shift TP into online mode. In this context, Fotopoulou (2024) explored the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on undergraduate students who were going to be teachers in future. He collected data through an anonymous questionnaire and analyzed thematically. His study focused on preschool education students who experienced the importance of utilizing new technology to overcome the challenges of the pandemic. His study helps us understand how students see these changes as valuable for their future careers as teachers. Similarly, Fořtová et al. (2021) conducted a study among a group of 63 STs who were studying for a master's Degree and involved in Teaching EFL for Secondary Schools at Masaryk University, Czechia. They reviewed 120 reflection lessons written by student teachers who typically conducted their practice teaching in person but had transitioned to online courses. Their study aimed to understand the student teachers' views on using technology for online teaching during lockdown in teaching practice. The study revealed that student-teachers experienced technology a normal part of teaching and it should be integrated into online TP too.

In a similar disposition, Yuan and Stapleton (2020) explored perceptions and experiences of pre-service language teachers regarding the implementation of Critical Thinking (CT) in their TP class. They collected the data from a focus group discussion and interviews of pre-service language teachers. Their study depicted the result that participants faced various challenges to integrate CT in their TP class due to their limited understanding of CT and lack of preparation and support in the implementation of CT in TP. The study recommends fostering a critical mindset among language teachers and developing CT-oriented pedagogies.

Caires et al. (2012) revealed the feelings and thinking of 295 students in Portugal about their TP who were obtaining training to be teachers. Their results showed that STs faced challenges like stress and feeling tired, but they also had positive feelings about gaining knowledge and skills. They felt comfortable, flexible, and spontaneous in their teaching. The STs also felt a sense of accomplishment in being accepted and recognized in the school community, and they appreciated the support from their supervisors. Similarly, Du Plessis (2020) investigated the perception, experience, and challenges related to STs who were fourth-year students pursuing a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. To achieve this, she introduced a curious research strategy and a qualitative research approach

as methodology She concluded that STs face challenges due to insufficient experience and attempts to resolve the problems.

Furthermore, Taskin (2006) explored STs' perceptions and their school experiences in a teacher education program in Turkey. The researcher interviewed student teachers at Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University and used Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory method to analyze the data. The results showed that while the teacher education program focused on practical training, some student teachers did not get enough real teaching experience. The study has recommended that the partnership between schools and universities should be enhanced in teacher education. Similarly, Panthee et al. (2023) proposed bridging the gap between theory and practice through digital and responsive pedagogy, and the incorporation of practical skills in theoretical courses in the teacher education programme. Poudel and Sharma (2019) also recommend reducing if not replacing the excessive use of lectures in ELT classes to train the preservice teachers through modern and student-centred activities so that they feel the benefit of attending the classes regularly during their teacher development degree programme.

After reviewing existing literature, this study was conducted to explore the perceptions of Nepali ESSTs regarding their TP. Additionally, the study aims to find out their perceptions of the role of cooperating teachers and the provision of university supervision during TP.

Methodology

Quantitative and survey research design that represented a case of the Surkhet district was used in this research accompanied by descriptive statistical interpretation. In other words, the study followed a quantitative case study through a survey study. The study surveyed the perceptions and perspectives of ESSTs towards TP. It also took into account the experiences of ESSTs accumulated during the period of TP. In particular, it is a descriptive survey that represents the opinions of the ESSTs for "gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, opinions, behaviour and experiences" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 335) regarding TP that they accomplish at the end of B.Ed. program under the Faculty of Education.

At the time of the study, selected three campuses had sent105 ESSTs to different cooperative schools for TP in the research area. Eighty-four English student teachers from the host campuses, assigned to thirty cooperative schools of the Surkhet district for TP were selected randomly for the study (that represented 80% of the total population). The ESSTs scattered throughout the district in the schools were visited personally by the first author after circulating the notice during the final internal observation. The record of the Departments of Teaching Practice (DTP) of the respective campuses was used to find out how many English student teachers were sent to each of the schools and their cell numbers. The record helped to select the sample from the total student teachers (STs).

A set of questionnaires was prepared at first. Then, it was expertly evaluated, piloted with a small group of ESSTs, improved subsequently each after the expert feedback and piloting, and administered to the respondents for collecting the data. It consisted of three major issues: the overall perception of ESSTs toward TP, the university supervisors assigned to provide feedback and evaluate STs, and the cooperative school and its teachers (Appendix I). The set included Likert Scale type 15 items in each issue altogether 45 consisting of the alternatives: Untrue for me (1), Slightly untrue for me (2), Neutral (3), Slightly true for me (4), or True for me (5) for reflecting their perceptions. To be specific, the items were designed to record the responses on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant

'Untrue for me', 2 meant 'Slightly untrue for me', 3 meant 'Neutral', 4 meant 'Slightly true for me', and 5 meant 'True for me'. Particularly, the questionnaire consisted of the items to collect ESSTs' perceptions regarding overall TP (15 items), university supervisors (15 items), and the cooperative school (15 items).

After constructing the tools for data collection, the first author went to the cooperative schools in person and met with the ESSTs. The ESSTs from the Department of English Education from the respective campuses were invited to a room and were informed about the study. The set of questionnaires was self-administered in small groups at the cooperative schools where they were assigned and distributed face-to-face to each of them (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 335) after granting their informed consent. Necessary instructions were given to them for completing (filling up) the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected back after the student teachers duly filled them out. The procedure was used to collect data from all thirty cooperative schools.

Collected data were tabulated and frequency and percentage were calculated for each item under each scale. Then, it was analysed following the descriptive statistics and the tables were interpreted under each theme. The raw data have been included in Appendix II.

Results

Collected data were tabulated and compared statistically and descriptively. The responses of the ESSTs were added and the total frequency and percentage were calculated to display it in a large table (Appendix II). The gender-wise percentage of the student teachers in each response was also calculated. However, it is not accounted for in this article since it was not a significant issue in this study. The results of the study of each item/issue enquired are presented below accompanied by a discussion of the findings:

ESSTs' Perceptions Regarding the University Supervision

This section of the survey employed a Likert-type scale, where participants assessed their agreement levels on a scale from 1 (Untrue for me) to 5 (True). Participants expressed their perceptions regarding the efficacy of university supervision within the TP environment. Through the administration of the questionnaire to ESSTs, their responses were quantified and articulated to discern the perspectives on the necessity and effectiveness of university supervision during TP. This section facilitates the identification and analysis of student teachers' perceptions, specifically focusing on their views concerning the role and requirements of university supervision in the context of TP.

Table 1 displays the results of the survey that asked about ESST's perceptions regarding university supervision. The statements in the table reflected different aspects of the supervision process, such as the helpfulness, inspiration, encouragement, responsibility, feedback, grading, contradictions, frequency, and language of the supervisors. The data revealed that most student teachers had positive perceptions about the supervisors from the campus. They found them very helpful (52.38% rated it 'True'), inspiring (61.90%), encouraging (85.71%), responsible (71.42%), constructive (71.42%), and polite and friendly (85.71%) to them. They also appreciated the feedback (66.66%) and guidance and support (66.66%) they received from the supervisors. To their understanding, they felt that the supervisors encouraged them to teach interactively using student-centred methods (85.71%) and solved their queries at any time (66.66%). In the meantime, for the majority of ESSTs (61.90% rated it 'Untrue') TP was not frustrating and they opined that they would not avoid it even if they had a choice.

Table 1

Perceptions Regarding the University Supervision

Statements	Responses				
	1* (%)	2*(%)	3* (%)	4* (%)	5* (%)
Supervisors from the campus are very helpful.	4.76	4.76	9.52	28.57	52.38
Supervisors inspired the student teachers very well.	0	0	14.28	23.80	61.90
The campus and the supervisors create mandates without providing adequate support.	0	28.57	19.04	38.09	14.28
Supervisors encouraged us to teach interactively using student-centred methods very well.	4.76	0	4.76	4.76	85.71
Supervisors feel responsible to suggest and help student teachers during teaching practice.	0	19.04	0	9.5	71.42
Supervisors provide constructive feedback to improve our teaching and prepare reports.	0	4.76	9.52	14.28	71.42
Supervisors do provide the grades (scores) objectively that reflect our work during TP.	4.76	4.76	28.57	28.57	33.33
Internal supervisors visited/observed our classes three times during our TP.	14.28	4.76	9.52	33.33	38.09
Internal supervisors signed my lesson plan outside the school during my TP even if I was regular in the school.	47.61	19.04	4.76	0	28.57
Supervisors are happy to solve any queries raised by the student teachers at any time.	4.76	9.52	9.52	9.52	66.66
TP is very frustrating; if possible, I would avoid it.	61.90	4.76	14.28	14.28	4.76
The contradictions among the supervisors in terms of comments and guidance misguide us.	33.33	4.76	23.80	28.57	9.52
The comments provided by the supervisor were under-standable/ self-explanatory and encouraging.	4.76	4.76	9.52	14.28	66.66
Supervisors use polite and friendly language with the student teachers.	4.76	0	0	9.52	85.71
Supervisors should increase the time for discussion.	0	9.52	9.52	33.33	47.61

1*=Untrue for me, **2***=Slightly Untrue for Me, **3***=Neutral,**4***=Slightly True, and **5***= True

Table 1 also indicates some areas of dissatisfaction and disagreement among the ESSTs. More than half of them felt that the campus and supervisors created mandates without providing adequate support (38.09% rated this 'Slightly true' and 14.28% rated it as 'True') and that there were contradictions among the supervisors in terms of comments and guidance (9.52% rated this 'True' and 28.57% rated it 'Slightly true' while 23.80% were 'Neutral' regarding the issue). However, ESSTs were positive about whether the supervisors provided grades objectively that reflected their work during teaching practice (33.33% rated it 'True', 28.57% rated it 'Slightly true', and 28.57% rated it 'Neutral'). Additionally, some of them reported that the internal supervisors signed their lesson plan outside the school during teaching practice even if they were regular in the school (28.57% rated this "True"),

which suggested a lack of proper supervision from the university supervisors. Moreover, some of them expressed their frustration with teaching practice and wished to avoid it if possible (14.28% rated this 'Slightly true' and 4.76% rated 'True' while 14.28 were 'Neutral' on this issue)

On top of that, Table 1 also suggests revision and improvement in the supervision process. Most student teachers agreed that the supervisors should increase the time for discussion (47.61% rated this "True" and 33.33% rated it "Slightly true"), which implied that they wanted more feedback and interaction with the supervisors. Furthermore, the table showed that the frequency of internal supervisors' visits was not consistent, as the responses were quite distributed (14.28% rated it 'Untrue', 4.76% rated it 'Slightly untrue', 9.52% rated it 'Neutral', 33.33% rated it 'Slightly true', and 38.09% rated it 'True'). This implied that the supervision process could be more standardized, consistent, and regular. It can be inferred from Table 1 that ESSTs possessed both positive reflection and aspired for some improvement in the university supervision during TP as it reveals a range of perceptions among ESSTs regarding their university supervisors.

ESSTs' Perceptions Regarding the Cooperative Schools

This section of the survey employed a Likert-type scale, where participants assessed their agreement levels on a scale from 1 (Untrue for me) to 5 (True). Participants expressed their perceptions regarding the role of the cooperative school within the TP environment. Through the administration of the questionnaire to ESSTs, their responses were quantified and articulated to discern the perspectives on the role of cooperative schools during TP. This section analyzes the student teachers' perceptions, specifically focusing on their views concerning the role and requirements of cooperation during the TP.

The perceptions regarding the cooperative school, as depicted in Table 2, indicated varied responses from student teachers. Initially, when examining the assistance provided by the school staff and administration, a vast majority (80.95%) expressed that they were adequately supported when needed, with only a minimal percentage (4.76%) indicating otherwise. Similarly, concerning the valuation of opinions by school staff, a significant portion (57.14% rated 'True' and 28.57% rated 'Slightly true') felt that their opinions were indeed valued, while a smaller fraction (4.76%) believed otherwise. There was a notable trend of positive interaction between the school staff and student teachers, as evidenced by the substantial percentage (80.95%) indicating friendly feelings between them. However, a considerable proportion of respondents (61.90%) felt that the school did not prioritize the feelings of student teachers, suggesting a potential area for improvement in the school's approach toward the STs. Furthermore, a significant number of participants (57.14%) perceived that cooperating schools attempted to take unfair advantage of student teachers.

Regarding classroom management, a majority (80.95%) acknowledged receiving help from teachers of the cooperative school, alongside respectful treatment and constructive suggestions (66.66%). Additionally, a significant proportion (80.95% rated 'True' and 19.04% rated 'Slightly true') felt that students respected them akin to their regular teachers, demonstrating a positive dynamic within the classroom setting during TP. They also found the students fully (47.61%) or slightly (42.85%) attentive, inquisitive, and interactive as well as totally (66.66%) or partially (28.56%) interested in learning. However, notable ESSTs experienced slight (28.57%) or extreme (4.76%) disturbances during class due to the noise created by students, indicating a potential issue with classroom discipline.

However, a great majority of ESSTs (76.19%) found the students friendly and cooperative with them while some others (14.28%) found them friendly and cooperative to a certain extent.

Table 2

Perceptions of ESSTs Regarding the Cooperative Schools

Statements	Responses				
	1* (%)	2*(%)	3* (%)	4* (%)	5* (%)
The school staff and administration of the cooperative school helped student teachers when needed.	4.76	0	4.76	9.52	80.95
My opinions were valued by the school staff.	4.76	0	9.52	28.57	57.14
There were friendly feelings between the staff of the school and the student teachers.	4.76	4.76	0	9.52	80.95
The school was not interested in the feelings of the student teachers.	61.90	4.76	9.52	16.04	4.76
Co-operating schools tried to take unfair advantage of the student teachers.	57.14	0	19.04	19.04	4.76
The teachers of the co-operating school helped me in class management.	0	0	4.76	14.28	80.95
They treated me respectfully and provided constructive suggestions.	0	0	14.28	19.04	66.66
The students of the co-operating school respected you like their school teachers.	0	0	0	19.04	80.95
They listened to you carefully and asked questions.	9.52	0	0	42.85	47.61
Students showed interest in learning.	4.76	0	0	28.57	66.66
They disturbed my class making a loud noise.	42.85	0	23.80	28.57	4.76
The students were friendly and cooperative with the student teachers.	4.76	4.76	0	14.28	76.19
The students were lovable and disciplined to the student teachers.	4.76	0	14.28	0	80.95
The school family helped student teachers manage classes and provided information to prepare the school report and the case study.	0	0	0	14.28	85.71
Overall, student teachers were treated like the real teachers in the co-operating school.	0	0	9.52	23.80	66.66

1*=Untrue for me, **2***=Slightly Untrue for Me, **3***=Neutral, **4***=Slightly True, and **5***= True

Despite challenges, an overwhelming majority of ESSTs (80.95%) perceived the students as lovable and disciplined towards them. Moreover, all of them (85.71% rated 'True' and 14.28% rated 'Slightly true') experienced that the school community played a pivotal role in assisting them with class management and providing necessary information. Moreover, most of them (66.66% fully and 23.80% slightly) received positive feedback and support within the cooperative school environment similar to a real teacher. However, there are also concerns about the school's interest in STs' feelings of potential unfair advantages. The data highlights the experiences of ESSTs towards the cooperative school and provides valuable insights for improving the STs and cooperative school's relationship.

ESSTs' Perceptions Regarding Overall Teaching Practice

This section of the survey comprised a Likert-type scale where participants expressed their agreement levels regarding the overall system of teaching practice. Through the administration of a questionnaire to student teachers, responses of them regarding their overall perceptions of teaching practice were collected, calculated, and presented. This section reflects the student teachers' perspectives on the holistic nature of teaching practice based on their responses.

Table 3

General Perceptions of ESSTs Towards TP

Statements	Responses				
	1* (%)	2*(%)	3* (%)	4* (%)	5* (%)
TP is just a part of B. Ed. syllabus, nothing else.	52.38	14.28	9.52	9.52	14.28
TP helps to develop qualified, trained, and confident teachers.	0	0	0	0	100
On-campus activities of pre-TP provided me basic ideas for teaching practice.	0	0	0	9.52	90.47
It would be fantastic to observe the demonstration class (a model) of the supervisor during pre-TP.	0	0	9.52	23.80	66.66
The way TP is conducted seems just a formality.	42.85	19.04	9.52	14.28	14.28
I have built adequate confidence to handle secondary-level English classes after the TP.	0	4.76	4.76	9.52	80.95
I often thought of bumping/ quitting TP in the middle because of the hard and fast rules.	42.85	0	19.04	23.80	14.28
The campus should make it student-teacher friendly to cope with the difficulties of the task to be performed.	14.28	14.28	4.76	23.80	42.85
Overall, I am satisfied with the TP chores because it helped to change my teaching style.	0	0	0	23.80	76.19
I am often expected to do things that are not reasonable/ essential during TP.	19.04	23.80	19.04	19.04	19.04
I think TP is inevitable at B. Ed. Level	47.61	0	28.57	23.80	0
TP is a boring task to be completed.	80.95	0	4.76	9.52	4.76
TP is time time-consuming and rigid task.	57.14	9.52	0	19.04	14.28
TP provides guidelines for real teaching.	9.52	0	0	0	90.47
TP is reliable in comparison to other theoretical courses of B. Ed. Level.	4.76	0	4.76	38.09	52.38

1*=Untrue for me, **2***=Slightly Untrue for Me, **3***=Neutral, **4***=Slightly True, and **5***= True

Table 3 illustrates the results of a survey that asked ESSTs about their general perceptions of TP. The statements in the table reflected different aspects of TP, such as its purpose, usefulness, preparation, satisfaction, expectations, difficulties, validity, and reliability. The table revealed that the majority of ESSTs (52.38% rated 'Untrue' and 14.28% rated it "Slightly untrue') opined it was untrue that TP is just a part of B.Ed. course. Similarly, all ESSTs (100%) agreed that TP helped to develop qualified, trained, and confident teachers. They also found it true that TP provided guidelines for real

teaching (90.47%) and that it was reliable in comparison to other theoretical courses of B. Ed. level (52.38% rated it True' and 38.09% rated it 'Slightly true'). They also expressed their satisfaction with the TP chores because it helped to change their teaching style (76.19% rated it 'True' and 23.80% rated it 'Slightly true').

However, Table 3 also indicated some areas of dissatisfaction and disagreement among the ESSTs. Some of them felt that TP was just a part of the B. Ed. syllabus, nothing else (14.8% rated it 'True' and 9.52% rated it 'Slightly true' or 'Neutral' respectively). They also felt that the way TP was conducted seemed just a formality (14.28% rated it 'True' and 14.28% rated it 'Slightly true'). Moreover, some of them reported that they were often expected to do things that were not reasonable or essential during TP, with an even distribution of responses (19.04% for each rating except 'Sightly untrue (23.80%)). Additionally, some of them expressed their frustration with TP and thought of bumping or quitting it in the middle because of the hard and fast rules (14.28% rated it 'True' and 23.80% rated it 'Slightly true').

Table 3 also suggested some areas for improvement in TP. Most ESSTs agreed that it would be fantastic to observe the demonstration class of the supervisor during pre-TP (66.66% rated it 'True' and 23.80% rated it 'Slightly true'), which implied that they wanted more guidance and modelling from the supervisor. Furthermore, the table showed that some ESSTs felt that the campus should make it student-teacher friendly to cope with the difficulties of the task to be performed (42.85% rated it 'True' and 23.80% rated it 'Slightly true'). This implied that the campus could provide more support and flexibility for the ESSTs. A vast majority of the ESSTs (80.95%) built teaching confidence through TP although 47.61% of them did not opine TP inevitable in B.Ed. level. Overall, it provided a spectrum of ESSTs' opinions and valuable feedback about TP to enhance the better administration and English language teacher professional development through their experiences.

Discussion

As indicated above, the main objective of this study was to explore ESSTs' perceptions of teaching practice. To attain the objective, the study addressed three research questions by analyzing data obtained from questionnaires. Consequently, this section encompasses discussions of the analyzed data collected through the research instruments following the research questions to induce the conclusion and implications of the study.

ESSTs' Perceptions Regarding TP

The findings of the study, in general, indicate ESSTs' positive perceptions of TP including university supervision and cooperative schools. The majority of ESSTs acknowledge the university supervisors who are supportive and inspiring to the students during the TP. Moreover, university supervisors assisted STs in effective communication for better instructional planning, evaluating, learning, using teaching aids and connecting the philosophies related to education in their classroom practice akin to other studies (Sivan & Chan, 2003; Williams & Soares, 2002). Regarding this issue, Sivan and Chan (2003) highlight the importance of teaching practice for the success of student teachers. They mention that "trainees' years of teaching experience is an important factor to be considered when conducting the student's teaching practice" (p. 183). However, a substantial portion of ESSTs expressed that there is imposition of mandates without adequate support. Additionally, the finding reveals challenges in the teaching practice process. ESSTs felt stressed due to the volume of

work associated with TP. They also expressed worries about their teaching proficiency and various contextual factors that impact their performance, such as the timing and quantity of TP sessions (Sivan & Chan, 2003). These responses show the importance of addressing issues to support STs during TP to enhance the effectiveness of university supervision.

Despite the challenges, a majority of student teachers appreciated the approachability of supervisors in teaching practice. High percentages of respondents acknowledged their availability for queries and the use of polite language. This positive aspect indicates an opportunity for fostering a more supportive relationship between student teachers and their supervisors. In this regard, Cameron and Wilson (1993) conclude that if supervision in TP "is collegial [it] is more likely to facilitate the professional growth of student-teachers and enhance reflective action" (p. 156). Moreover, dynamic rapport among ESSTs and cooperating school teachers is crucial for the overall quality of TP. The attitude and sharing of cooperating school teachers significantly impact STs' learning (Gurl, 2019). Additionally, the findings emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to university supervision that not only recognizes and capitalizes on positive aspects but also addresses the issues to ensure an effective TP.

The perceptions of ESSTs regarding their cooperative school also contribute to understanding the role and impact of these schools on the effectiveness of TP for their prospective teacher professional development. The findings show a comprehensive overview of student teachers' opinions on various aspects related to their cooperative school experiences. The findings depict a positive relationship with the schools. A significant majority of ESSTs acknowledged the school staff and administration for their kind support when they needed it. This finding relates to the study of Albasheer et al. (2008) as their result highlights that cooperative school administration and teachers can significantly contribute to STs during their TP. The headteacher can facilitate STs by organizing meetings and through guidance and support in school (Kunwar et al., 2023). Additionally, cooperative schools can treat STs akin to their formal teachers, monitor their progress through follow-ups, and encourage their active participation in all school activities. This study also explores the positive role of cooperative schools, their administration and teachers in facilitating the SESTs. Additionally, the majority of student teachers expressed a sense of value for their opinions and observed friendly relations between the school administration and teachers. However, concerns emerged as a considerable percentage of respondents felt that the school may not be adequately attentive to their emotions. Williams and Soares (2002) also observed that schools desired to take on increased responsibility for the training of STs. However, the majority of ESSTs did not perceive any potential attempts by the cooperating school to gain unfair advantages over them during TP.

Despite these concerns, student teachers also received assistance from school teachers in class management and students treated them like real teachers in the classroom. These positive elements contribute to the overall positive rapport between STs and their cooperative schools. The study sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of student teachers' perceptions of cooperative schools that reveal both strengths and areas that may be improved to optimize the effectiveness of teaching practice. The finding also offers a comprehensive exploration of STs' perceptions and perspectives on overall TP. The diverse responses unveil a spectrum of opinions on the nature and impact of TP in their teacher education journey. Notably, a significant percentage views TP as a mere formality akin to Kadel

(2023). The finding also emphasizes potential challenges in the current structure of the TP setting. However, the striking contrast is also seen in the finding, which shows that TP plays a pivotal role in developing qualified, trained, and confident teachers. It is a fundamental belief in the transformative potential of this pedagogical experience. Relating to the findings, Anderson et al. (2010) also believe that when pre-service teachers reflect on successful experiences in school, it can create a positive motivational effect on their professional development. These images have the potential to boost self-efficacy (confidence in their abilities) and reduce doubts and fears commonly experienced by teachers during the early days of their professional careers.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this study shed light on the preparatory role of on-campus activities. It showed that on-campus activities contribute to providing basic ideas for teaching practice. Furthermore, the desire to observe a demonstration class during pre-TP is expressed by a substantial number of respondents, which indicates a perceived value in witnessing exemplary teaching practices. Despite concerns regarding the rigidity and time-consuming nature of TP, a noteworthy proportion of respondents expressed overall satisfaction. They attributed TP as a tool to bring positive change in their teaching styles. This dichotomy depicts ESSTs' varied experiences in TP that highlight both the challenges and transformative potential of TP. The study also reveals a need for a student-friendly approach and adjustments to cope with perceived difficulties. It also equally emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement in the design and implementation of TP programme at the B.Ed. level in the context of ELT in Nepal.

The study provides some practical and theoretical suggestions for the effectiveness of TP. Practically, it is recommended that university supervisors should be punctual and responsible to the STs for the effectiveness of TP and to avoid the frustration of ESSTs towards the TP. Similarly, cooperative schools should not take any unfair advantages from the STs during their TP. Accordingly, university administration should make TP flexible and engaging for ESSTs by motivating them to avoid their perception that TP is just a time-consuming, rigid, and boring task. Theoretically, it is recommended to conduct comparable studies in Nepal to assess the overall effectiveness of pre-service teacher education by understanding the perspectives of ESSTs in teacher education programme. Additionally, qualitative studies should be undertaken to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of student teachers with TP. Nepali universities should also conduct comparative studies with the leading international teachers producing programme to access their TP and enhance the quality of teacher education.

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