

An Analysis of a Teacher Education Programme at a Namibian Tertiary Institution

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Abstract

Teacher quality is a crucial element of quality education, and it is dependent on the quality of teacher education. Thus, this study analyses the teacher training programme at a Namibian university to determine its quality. Four quality determining components were analysed: students and teacher educator qualities; curriculum materials; teaching and learning process; and teaching practice. This qualitative study employed a single case study design. Four research instruments were used to collect data: document analysis, focus group interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The sample comprised one hundred and sixty (160) pre-service students, one (1) focus group of fifteen (15) graduates, sixteen (16) teacher educators, and three (3) focus groups with a total of thirty (30) pre-service students. The significant findings of this study were that average students enrol for the teacher education programme because of extrinsic and other motives other than intrinsic and altruistic reasons. In addition, the teacher education curriculum was found to be overcrowded with fragmented modules. Further, the subject matter content was not aligned with the school curriculum; students exit with little subject matter knowledge. The study also found that the assessment of pre-service students lacked authenticity as assessment questions do not test the understanding and application of knowledge. Additionally, the lecture method dominated the pedagogies employed, promoting rote learning. Another factor was poor teaching practices characterised by inadequate time allocation and lack of mentoring support from the school. Thus, a lot is desired from the teacher education programme; hence, the study recommends a longitudinal study to be carried out involving all higher education institutions in Namibia that offer a teacher education programme to see if the findings would be the same.

Keywords

Teacher Training, Curriculum Materials, Teacher Educators' Quality, Student

1. Introduction

The question of what constitutes quality education can have varying attributes, including adequate funding, good governance, leadership, management, good teaching, appropriate curriculum, and desirable student outcomes (Abdullahi & Abdullah, 2014). However, effective teachers are deemed critical in achieving quality education regardless of all these, as effectiveness is an elusive concept to define. Moreover, it involves the complex task of teaching and the contexts in which teachers work (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). As a result, a better understanding of what constitutes teacher effectiveness has significant implications for decision-making regarding the preparation, recruitment, compensation, in-service professional development, and evaluation of teachers. Consequently, a considerable academic debate exists as to whether teacher effectiveness can be based on teacher inputs (e.g., qualifications), the teaching process (e.g., instructional practices), the product of teaching (e.g., effects on student learning), or a combination of the composite of these elements (Stronge et al., 2011).

Darling-Hammond (2000) espoused that the highest-quality teachers, capable of helping their students learn, have a deep mastery of the subject matter and pedagogy. This implies that a teacher is central to the student's success (Momanyi & Muchimuti, 2020). It also implies that a student's failure is always attributed to the teachers' incompetency. Based on this, it can be argued that only well-trained teachers can deliver quality teaching. This has been observed globally, as several education systems have invested in developing high-quality teacher education programmes (Chong & Ho, 2009). As Blömeke, Olsen and Suhl (2016) equally contend that there is a connection between the professional training of teachers and the quality of teaching.

Connell (2013) outlines it this way:

The quality of a teaching force is dependent on more than simply the availability of teacher training; it is also about making sure that the right kind of teacher education is available. The right kind of teacher education today will produce not simply teachers who can teach in the traditional sense of transmitting a prescribed corpus of knowledge to students but who can partner as co-learners with students to help them learn how to learn, to learn how to construct their knowledge, and to learn how to determine for themselves as they grow and mature what is essential for them in their lives ahead (p. 6).

This implies that teachers should be well equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes during training in order to enable them to deliver quality teaching. Therefore, the quality of teacher education is among the crucial determinants of the growth and learning of students.

Abdul and Ahmed (2012) argue that teacher education in all parts of the world is a constant topic of discussion. The World Education Forum (2000) reported that the right to education could only be a reality when schools provide quality education. However, there is a gap in the provision of quality education. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Education International (EI) attribute this gap in quality education to the severe lack of well-trained and well-supported teachers making poor teacher preparation a global issue. There is ample evidence of the need to revisit teacher education through the quality lens in all parts of the world (Kosnik et al., 2016; Tatto et al., 2016; Uleanya et al., 2019).

In the Namibian context, the country was confronted with the issue of how to improve the quality of education immediately after achieving its political independence in 1990. Accordingly, this was to be achieved by establishing a comprehensive teacher education programme, as the various programmes offered before independence were inadequate. These were National Education Certificate (NCE), Higher Diploma Certificate and the Education Certificate Primary (ECP). However, they provided valuable experiences to be drawn upon in developing a new teacher education programme as they all had issues of professionalism and feasibility. Hence a new programme had to be devised, the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD).

The BETD programme was offered at four education colleges across the country to prepare teachers to teach from primary to junior secondary level. In addition, with the inception of the University of Namibia (UNAM) in 1992, a Higher Education Diploma (HED) programme was also offered mainly to prepare teachers to teach in senior secondary schools. However, these programmes were phased out with HED in 1995 and BETD in 2012. They all got replaced with a Bachelor of Education Degree (BED) programme.

Regardless of these initiatives in teacher preparation initiated at independence, Zimba et al. (2013) state that the quality of teachers produced by the colleges of education and UNAM were still questionable. Issues such as lack of content, inappropriate content, lack of appropriate methodologies, poor delivery of the programme and poor response to the needs of the schools have been raised. Although Zimba and others further argue that proper research has not been conducted to ascertain these claims, trends in students' performance in the national examinations in grades 10 and 12 leaves much to be desired.

The BETD programme was increasingly criticised for neither providing student teachers with subject knowledge nor the skills needed to promote effective teaching and learning (National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), 2003). In addition, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality SACMEQ II (2004) reported that the low performance of the Namibian learners and teachers in mathematics compared to the same group of learners and teachers in Southern African countries might also be attributed to poor teacher preparation through the BETD programme. However, there has been a positive trajectory as Namibia became the third-best performer in reading

and mathematics among the 13 participating countries (Katukula, 2018; Nangolo Shigwedha et al., 2017).

The Namibian study on Teacher Professional Development indicated the need for strengthening pre-service teacher education (Ankonga, 2018). Kgabi (2012) confirms that teacher capacity building and training were identified as a significant gap affecting the Namibian basic education quality. Therefore, teacher training and in-service capacity building must be reviewed and aligned with the country's skills and competencies gap. The Namibian newspaper columnist Kamwanyah (2015) claims that the Namibian teacher education system is not standardised and that Teachers occupy Namibian schools with fewer education credentials.

Kgabi (2012) recommends a review of the teacher training system in Namibia. To necessitate the revamp of the teacher training system, an analysis of the teacher-training programme is thus a prerequisite, which is the focus of this study. Therefore, this study focuses on ensuring that the teacher education programmes are of quality. It further seeks to analyse the teacher education programme at one of the Universities in Namibia within the context of quality and seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What types of students enrol in the teacher education programme, and who prepares them for teacher training?
- 2) Is the teacher education curriculum relevant in terms of breadth and depth of content coverage and quality assessment?
- 3) How do teacher educators prepare student teachers for quality teaching and learning?
- 4) Does the teacher education programme offer students quality and extensive hands-on experience?

2. Review of Literature

A teacher is the “heart and soul” of any education system. No education system is better than the quality of its teachers. Basaza (2006) states that an education system is as good as its teachers. These assertions call for a close examination of teacher quality. Teacher quality has become a growing concern for most governments worldwide, and a fierce debate has centred on how best to prepare teachers to improve educational quality (Boyd et al., 2008). The quality of teachers is primarily determined by the quality of teacher education (Obama, 2006). Therefore, improving the quality of teacher education translates into improving teacher quality.

This section focuses on reviewing existing research relevant to this study. However, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the quality of teacher education in Namibia. Hence, the reviewed literature in this chapter is from neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and others. The literature review addresses the areas related to the quality of teacher education viz; student and teacher educators' qualities; the teacher education curriculum, teaching

and learning, teaching practice and assessment.

2.1. Teacher Education and Quality of Education

Quality education for all has emerged as one of the most desirable goals for almost every country. Several factors, including curriculum, content delivery, learning environment, supervision, and administration of educational facilities, contribute to the quality of education. However, the central factor is the teacher. According to Dilshad (2010), the quality of school education largely depends on the quality of teachers prepared in teacher education institutions. The education system is as good as its teachers—thus, the teacher is the most critical factor in determining students' achievement (Basaza, 2006; Obama, 2006; Brooks, 2021).

Literature has suggested that the quality of teachers depends on educational qualifications and the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education (Dilshad, 2010). Obama (2006) asserts that the quality of teachers is determined to a more significant extent by the quality of teacher education; hence improving the quality of teacher education translates into improving teacher quality. It is not about the qualifications a teacher holds but the quality of the teacher education that one receives that matters most (Obama, 2006). There is a general understanding that having qualified teachers translates into quality education. We regard such a statement as superficial. Thus, we believe that a country can still have qualified teachers and low-quality education due to teachers' incompetence as a result of poor teacher education. Hence, an analysis of teacher education is a prerequisite for making such judgements.

Darling-Hammond (2000) studied how teacher qualifications and other school inputs are related to student achievement across states. Quantitative analysis of this study indicated that teacher preparation and certification measures are by far the strongest correlates to student achievement. Furthermore, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2006) reports that quality education produces good learning outcomes. Thus, the initial training and preparation of teachers contribute to this aim. Teacher quality cannot be detached from the quality of teacher education (Connell, 2013); thus, it is logical to say quality teacher education results consequently in quality education.

2.2. Quality Indicators in Teacher Education

Like quality of education, quality of teacher education cannot be easily defined, for there are a variety of diverse views on what effective teacher education programmes are. However, several common problems may be indicators of low quality of teacher education programmes across the globe (Dilshad, 2010). Additionally, Stronge et al. (2011) argue that effectiveness is an elusive concept to define as it involves complex teaching tasks. This makes it hard when assessing what determines the effectiveness of teaching. Therefore, factors that stand out include instructional focus, clarity and complexity of learning (Zahorik et al.,

2003); technological application and the learning environment (Liu, 2007); student assessments and their personal qualities (Huang et al., 2011). Based on this, metrics and indicators other than learning can equally define teacher education quality as Darling-Hammond (2006), Hoban (2004), and Tom (1997) perceive ineffective teacher education programmes as characterised by the following features:

- 1) Unclear goals;
- 2) Fragmented curriculum;
- 3) Incoherence between courses from different faculties;
- 4) Disconnected from school practices;
- 5) Low status of teacher educators;
- 6) lack of collaboration between education departments;
- 7) Unclear career path of teachers and their role in practicum supervision;
- 8) Too many stakeholders are involved in teacher education;
- 9) Lack of planning for change strategies;
- 10) Vulnerability of teacher education to one-off reform;
- 11) Lack of communication between universities and schools;
- 12) Poor pedagogy;
- 13) Inadequate practicum.

Hammerness and Klette (2015) have identified three quality indicators of an effective teacher education programme viz; vision, coherence, and opportunities to enact practice. An effective teacher education programme has a clearly articulated goal or aim of good teaching. Vision helps student teachers to evaluate their practice in the classroom. Finally, coherence implies that different components of the teacher education programme are aligned, i.e., vision informs the design of the programme and what and how student teachers learn (curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment).

This study examined two aspects of teachers, teacher quality and teaching quality. In this study, we refer to teacher quality as the characteristics teachers possess, and teaching quality refers to what teachers do in the classroom to foster students' learning. We also further aligned our thought to Hammerness & Klette's assertion that teacher quality should include teacher professional preparation characteristics and content knowledge. Also, aspects of teaching quality that promote conceptual understanding in subject matters were examined.

An effective teacher education programme should offer student teachers opportunities to put theory into practice by exposing student teachers to real-world work, i.e., the classroom. Mathews (2014) has endorsed five features of an effective teacher education programme that research continued to support. These focus on the content, active learning; coherence; duration and collective participation. Teacher training efforts should concentrate on teaching student teachers the subject matter knowledge they will teach in schools. Teaching methodology should be taught in the context of the subject matter content. Student teachers should not receive knowledge passively through the lecture method.

An effective teacher education programme actively engages students in meaningful learning through discussions, planning and practice. Like in Hammerness and Klette, coherence implies the alignment of teacher training activities. Teacher training activities should be linked to teacher goals. Teachers' roles involve application and reflection, and this requires time. Therefore, an effective teacher training programme requires an extended period of training. Collective participation involves teachers from the same field of study working together, engaging in discussions about their subjects, and sharing experiences. This allows teachers to integrate what they have learned and thus promote active learning.

Kajoro et al. (2013) identified elements of an effective Teacher Education Programme (TEP) of the 21st century viz; Information and Communication Technology (ICT), intensive and extensive hands-on experience, integration of content, pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge, inquiry-based learning, authentic, ongoing assessment, and collaborative and learner-centred approach to learning. Furthermore, effective teacher education programmes should incorporate and emphasise intensive and extensive hands-on experience to allow students to encounter real-life issues that are likely to encounter in their future teaching practises (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Hands-on experience in teacher education refers to teaching practical experience, in a real classroom or simulated environment.

In terms of content, pedagogy, and pedagogical content knowledge, effective teacher education programmes must focus on integrating content, pedagogy, and pedagogical content knowledge. Teaching content and pedagogy as separate units are regarded as inappropriate. The assumption is that a teacher who is well versed with in the subject content finds it easy to integrate theory and practice. Knowledge of subject matter and appropriate instruction is likely to win the learners' confidence and thus impact positively on the learning outcomes (*idem*).

On the other hand, an effective 21st-century teacher education programme should equip prospective teachers with the skills of reflection, critical inquiry, problem solving and educational research. Therefore, an effective Teacher Education Programme (TEP) should encompass authentic ongoing assessment because there is increased emphasis by educationists in the 21st century on the value of learners being able to apply knowledge. Inclusion of authentic ongoing assessment would facilitate the testing of the application of knowledge and, therefore, produce teachers who are knowledgeable and able to apply knowledge in a natural context (*idem*). It is assumed that such teachers are likely to engage their students in the authentic assessment if they have experienced it first. As the saying goes, teachers teach the same way they were taught.

3. Conceptual Framework

This study draws on the conceptual framework of curriculum analysis. One of

the most prominent writers on curriculum analysis is George J. Posner. Posner wrote extensively on curriculum analysis. According to (Posner, 2004): a curriculum analysis is an attempt to tease a curriculum apart into its parts, to examine those parts and the way they fit together to make a whole, to identify the beliefs and ideas to which the developers were committed, and which either explicitly or implicitly shaped the curriculum, and to examine the implications of these commitments and beliefs to the quality of educational experience (p. 5).

Posner's work is based on the analysis of curriculum documents. To understand the anatomy of a curriculum, Posner (2004) organised curriculum analysis into four sets of questions viz curriculum documentation and origins, the curriculum proper, the curriculum in use and critique. Curriculum documentation and origins involve examining the curriculum origins and the reasons behind its development. The curriculum proper comprises examining the curriculum's purposes, content, and organisation. The curriculum in use has to do with the implementation of the curriculum. Finally, critique involves the judgment of the curriculum by the curriculum analyst. However, Posner (2004) warns that a complete and detailed curriculum analysis addressing all sets of questions is rarely required. Jansen and Reedy (n.d.) explain that curriculum analysis unpacks a curriculum into its parts (e.g., learning, teaching, knowledge, society, resources); evaluates how the parts fit together in terms of focus and coherence; checks underlying beliefs and assumptions and seeks justification for curriculum choices and assumptions.

4. Methods

4.1. Participants and Procedure

A sample comprised 160 (70: 44% male; 90: 56% female) pre-service student teachers from two university campuses in Namibia. In addition, about 15 graduate students at this university who graduated between 2005 and 2018 were also part of the study for focus group discussions. 16 (5 males and 11 females) teacher educators responded to the questionnaire. Sampling was voluntary and convenient because the study aimed not to generalise findings but to get a complete picture of the teacher education programme by seeking extensive and in-depth descriptions.

All the 160 pre-service student teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Honours degree programme majoring in secondary school subjects participated in the study. The 160 number was distributed as 40 pre-service student teachers per stream (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year). The researcher recruited one research participant from each stream, administering the questionnaire to other students. 30 of the 160 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year pre-service student teachers, i.e., 10 per stream, were selected with the help of the recruited research participants for a focus group discussion. A teacher educator questionnaire was administered via Google forms; however, to increase the response rate, the researcher also went door to door to remind teacher educators to complete the questionnaire. A snowball ap-

proach was used to source graduate students for a focus group discussion. Snowball sampling involved the researcher identifying research participants with characteristics in which the researcher is interested, the researcher then uses these participants to identify other potential participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The researcher obtained consent from four lecturers to observe their lectures.

4.2. Instruments

Various research instruments viz, questionnaire, focus group interviews, document analysis and observations were used given the many units of analysis. Questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions were used to collect data on teacher educators' qualities and pre-service students. Documents such as professional standards for teachers, course outlines and examination question papers were analysed for fit for purpose. Two focus group interviews were held between 30 pre-service student teachers and 15 graduate teachers to diagnose the potential for problems within the teacher education programme and generate impressions of the programme. Finally, qualitative naturalistic observation was carried out with the role of the researcher as a complete observer to analyse the teaching and learning process.

4.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis and presentation were organised around the research questions. Data were classified into the following categories: students' qualities; quality of teacher educators; the relevance of the teacher education curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; and the quality of teaching practice deduced from the research questions. Demographic data of students and teacher educators were analysed using descriptive statistics using frequency distribution. The remaining data were analysed following systematic qualitative data analysis procedures. First, data were transcribed and coded, significant themes and patterns pulled out, and then detailed, thick descriptions with supporting evidence and quotations were reported.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1. Thick Description Quality of Student Teachers and Teacher Educators

1) Student Teachers' Qualities

An analysis of Ordinary (O' level) and Higher level (H' level) grades of 160 pre-service students revealed that most of the students in the teacher education programme had met the general admission requirements of the University, except for a few who held a D grade or lower in English, see **Table 1**. A critical analysis of the grades revealed that higher-level passes were primarily observed in the mother language. Even though most of the students met the general admission requirements for the University, this research also found out that most

Table 1. Matrix of findings on the quality of student teachers and teacher educators.

	Quality Indicators Analysed	
	Student Teacher Qualities	Teacher Educator Qualities
Features/ Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average students enrol on teacher education programme • Most students enrolled on the teacher education programme due to extrinsic and other motives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher educators hold post-graduate qualifications from different Universities, both local and international • Teacher educators possess a minimum of five years' experience • Teacher educator quality rated poor by students

of them had the lowest pass of “C” grade in at least four (4) or more subjects, see **Table 1**.

This research also found similar findings to those for (Majoni, 2014) that most of the students enrolled in the teacher education programme had the lowest O' level pass of “C” in the critical and compulsory subjects for selection, which are Mathematics and English. In general, most average students enrol in the teacher education programme. Mutemeri (2010) reported that education departments were getting the type of students that are generally “not the cream of the crop”, that is, students that are not accepted in other faculties with minimum requirements.

Figure 1(a) & Figure 1(b) show that 33 females and 20 males enrolled due to intrinsic motivation for teacher training. On the other hand, due to extrinsic motivation, 27 females and 22 males enrolled for teacher training. Moreover, 6 females and 3 males enrolled for teacher training due to altruistic motivation, while 24 females and 25 males enrolled for teacher training due to other factors.

The results presented in **Figure 1(a) & Figure 1(b)** show that more than half of the students who participated in this study chose to teach due to other reasons at the expense of having a passion for teaching and helping the nation for social development intrinsic and altruistic motivation. Students chose teaching because of the benefits of being a teacher, including salary, holidays, availability of teaching jobs, and other factors related to peer/family influence. Thus, the teacher education programme is seen as an easy course, demanding low grades that do not get them a place in their areas of interest; hence teacher education is the last resort. Interviewed graduates also revealed their motivation for enrolling on the teacher education programme. Their motivation ranged from intrinsic to other factors, confirming the pre-service students' results obtained through the questionnaire. One student and a few others reported that “teaching is my passion”. Others echoed that teacher education was their second choice, mainly because of parental influence and role modelling, and the teaching jobs, which are always available. One graduate said, “you do not struggle to get a job when you complete the course”.

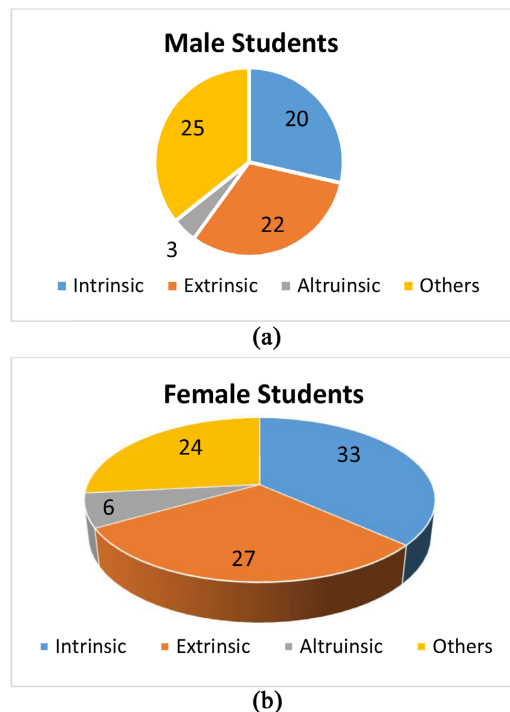


Figure 1. (a) Distribution of male student teachers and their motives; (b) Distribution of female students teachers and their motives.

As presented above, the results of this study are consistent with what (Kana et al., 2013) discovered that extrinsic, altruistic, and intrinsic motivations all played a role when individuals chose teaching as a career. In addition, the results of this study also flow with what (Ngoepe, 2014) found that many students who are unable to gain a place at university to do a first degree in areas of interest see a degree-based teachers' training course as an alternative access to higher education.

2) Teacher Educators' Qualities

Figure 2(a) & Figure 2(b) show that the all 16 teacher educators who participated in this study possess post-graduate qualifications and experience of more than five years as teacher educators. Literature has revealed that teachers are the essential elements influencing student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Therefore, the assumption is a positive relationship between teachers' qualifications, experience and quality of teaching and learning. The results presented in Figure 2(a) & Figure 2(b) show that the institution under study has quality teacher educators based on their qualifications and experience. High-quality teacher educators ensure high-quality experiences for student teachers, resulting in teacher education and general education (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

However, this study interrogated the assumption by asking both graduates and pre-service students who were and those still in the care of these teacher educators to rate the quality of the teacher educators. Interviewees rated the quality of teacher educators as average. The interviewees revealed that some teacher educators are good at demonstrating subject matter mastery; employ teaching strategies that facilitate learning, for example, engaging students in the

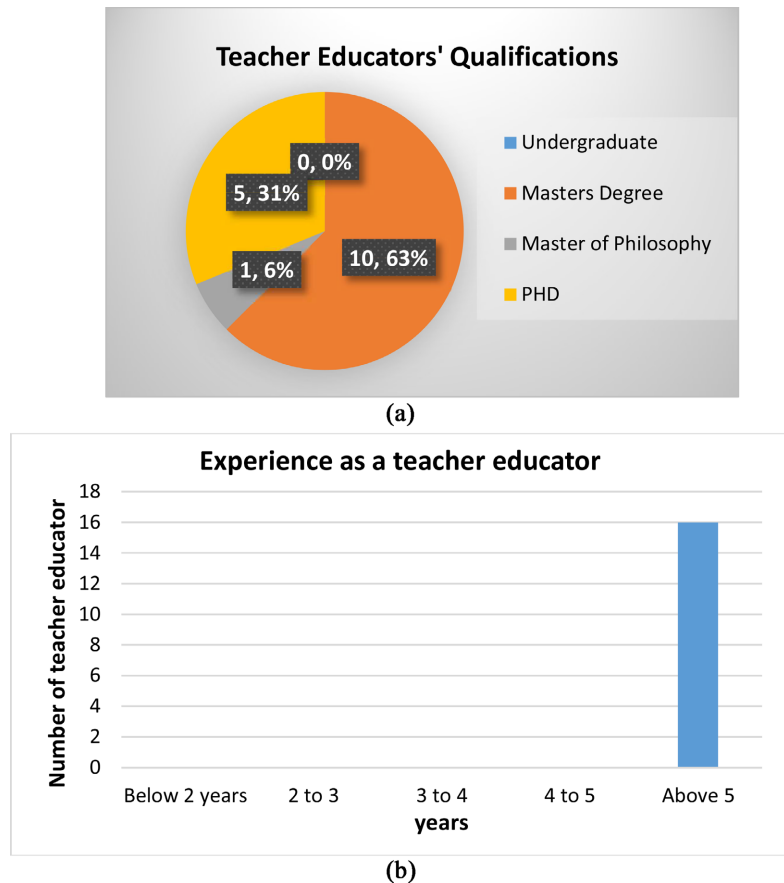


Figure 2. (a) Distribution of teacher educators' qualifications; (b) Distribution of teacher educator's experience.

teaching and learning process. *“There are those you go to their lesson, and you will never be disappointed”*, a graduate student reported. However, some teacher educators do not demonstrate to students that they know the subject. Interviewees also revealed that some teacher educators do not have a passion for their job.

One student said, *“The quality of teacher educators is not up to standard. It seems that some teach subjects they are not qualified to teach, some are not serious as they do not even check students' work seriously”*, thus referring to this research supervision. Another student reported, *“Even when you ask a question, you do not get a satisfying answer, some take long to mark assessment work, and some do not come for lectures”*. Finally, a graduate student reported, *“Some teacher educators give examination scopes because they know they did not do a good job”*.

Interviewees also revealed a distinction between foreign teacher educators and locals (Namibians), rating the quality of foreign teacher educators as high and low quality for the locals. One student said, *“Foreign lecturers are outstanding, well trained, you get a lot from them, very practical. I do not know whether the Namibians teacher educators were not well trained, they do not know how to present the lesson, I think the system under which they were taught has an effect”*. This is corroborated by the data obtained through lecture observation. Out

of the four (4) lectures observed by the researcher, one involved a foreign teacher educator. The foreign teacher educator demonstrated subject matter mastery. The lesson was interactive, practical examples from school settings were presented, and the teacher educator controlled disruptive behaviours well by pausing and reminding the students of how important it is to pay attention.

On the other hand, local (Namibian) teacher educators seemed not to care. They read their notes and failed to establish a link between what they were reading with reality (lack of application of knowledge to the school setting). The study also revealed that all the 16 teacher educator participants obtained their qualifications from different Universities. This implies that teacher educators possess varied experiences from those Universities, which when combined an effective teacher education programme can be planned.

Literature is abundant on the relationship between teacher characteristics and the quality of education. However, the studies produced contradictory results, with some finding a strong positive correlation; marginal—statistically non-significant positive relations and no statistically significant relationship; hence this study can qualitatively say these findings are consistent with studies that found no significant relationship between teacher characteristics (education level and experience) and the quality of education (Akello, 2015; Haider & Hussain, 2014; Holloway, 2007; Kosgei, 2013; Mahlo & Maphoso, 2015).

5.2. Curriculum-Related Quality Indicators Analysed

1) Curriculum Structure and Composition

Document analysis of the teacher education curriculum revealed thirty (30) National Professional Standards for Teachers that outline teacher competencies that form the basis of the teacher education curriculum in Namibia. The standards describe what competent, professional teachers are expected to know and can do. The standards say “what” (in the competence statements and the elements) and how to recognise competent performance (in the performance criteria).

The teacher education modules presented in **Table 2** are drawn from the foundations of education—Philosophical and Historical Foundations (Philosophy of education, educational foundations), Psychological foundations (Human development and learning, Inclusive Education, Guidance and Counselling) and Comparative education. This agrees with the literature from the **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) in India (2009)** that a well-crafted teacher education curriculum comprises three broad curricular areas: 1) Foundations of Education which include courses under three broad rubrics, namely, Learner Studies, Contemporary Studies and Educational Studies; 2) Curriculum and Pedagogy which include courses under two broad rubrics, namely, Curriculum Studies and Pedagogic Studies; and (C) School Internship leading to the development of a broad repertoire of perspectives, professional capacities, teacher sensibilities and skills.

The courses also match to a greater extent with the constituents of the teacher

Table 2. Teacher education curriculum structure.

First-year	Third-year
School Subject	School Subject
Computer literacy	Teaching practice phase 2
English communication and study skills	Teaching methods (specific school subject)
Contemporary social issues	Assessment and Evaluation of learning
English for academic purposes	Educational Research
Educational foundation 1	Guidance and Counselling 1
Human development and learning	Project-based learning
Integrated Media and Technology Education 1	
Second-year	Fourth-year
School Subject	School Subject; Teaching practice phase 3
Teaching practice phase 1	Guidance and Counselling 2
Integrated Media and Technology 2	Comparative Education
English for teachers 1	Educational management; First Aid Education
General teaching methods	Project phase 2
Educational Foundations 2	Professional and Community Development
Inclusive education 1	Philosophy of Education
Curriculum development and practice	Career Specialisation: One Elective
English for teachers 2	Assessment and Evaluation; School Management; Inclusive Education
	Educational Technology
	Curriculum planning and development
	General Education Elective
	Cultural Education (Art, Music, Foreign language, dance etc.); Sport Coaching

education curriculum in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to (Lewin & Stuart, 2003):

- a) Subject content (based on the school curriculum).
- b) Pedagogic content knowledge focuses on teaching and assessment methods for various subject areas.
- c) Professional studies involve how children learn their cognitive psychomotor, affective, and social development and its relevance to teaching and learning.
- d) Teaching practice provides opportunities to practice teaching in a school under supervision with support from mentors.

On the contrary, the courses presented in **Table 2** above represent a fragmented curriculum where the same course or domain is split into chunks, for example, English communication and study skills, English for academic purposes, English for teachers 1, English for teachers 2; General Teaching Methods and Teaching methods for specific school subjects; Educational foundations 1 &

2, Guidance and Counselling 1 & 2. Tom (1997) identified fragmented courses that lack relevance and coherence as indicators of low-quality teacher education as presented also in Table 3.

The analysis of documents went further to check whether the content outlined in the course outlines of the subjects presented in Table 2 matches all stipulated by the teachers' professional standards (30 competencies of teachers). Most courses' content concerns the teacher competencies outlined in the National Professional Standards. However, some courses lack depth (see also Table 3). For example, the teacher education curriculum is silent on the Sociology of Education. Issues of gender and class in education are nowhere to be found in the courses in Table 2. The Contemporary Social Issues module taught in the first year aims at the personal-social development of students. It is a core module for all University students; hence it does not equip student teachers with knowledge and skills about how class, gender and other social issues affect education. Even though the professional standards form the basis of the teacher education curriculum in Namibia, the document analysis also revealed that the standards (competencies) do not fully represent all competencies required in the education field.

2) School Subject Matter Content

Both pre-service and graduates considered the subject matter content as poor and irrelevant. For example, one graduate had this to say "*I learned irrelevant content, the content is high; it did not prepare me to teach the subject at school*". Another added, "*The content I learned here is of no use to school content, when I started teaching, I had to go back to my high school notes and read so that I can teach*". In addition, interviewees felt the subject matter content learned is irrelevant to them as teachers because they are taught together with other students from other faculties. For example, student teachers majoring in science are

Table 3. Matrix of findings on curriculum related quality indicators.

	Quality Indicators Analysed				
	Curriculum Structure and Composition	Subject Matter Content	Teaching and Learning	Teaching Practice	Assessment
Features/ Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum comprised 31 compulsory modules 6 Elective modules Fragmented curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrelevant school subject matter No alignment between subject matter taught at university and school subject content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor/ineffective teaching and learning Lecture dominated Poor student attendance Disruptive behaviour during lectures High teacher educator-student ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate time allocated to the practicum Poor support from school mentors Poor communication between the University and schools Poor assessment of teaching practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor assessment Question types not aligned to the learning outcomes

Thick Descriptions on Curriculum Related Quality Indicators.

taught together with those students doing BSc from the Faculty of Science; those majoring in History and Geography are taught together with those students doing BA from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and those majoring in commercials are taught together with students from Faculty of Management Sciences.

One pre-service student said, *“What we do at this institution, I do not see us using it in schools I heard from people who completed their degrees that the institution did not prepare them to teach, what they teach is not what they did, meaning now that the content we learnt here does not match the school content”*. A graduate student emphasised that *“this institution is more of producing graduates but not looking at us to be competent teachers, I feel I have not learned anything”*. This implies that the subject matter contained in the teacher education programme is not tailor-made to the school curriculum; hence these findings are in contradiction with what Lewin and Stuart (2003) discovered about the constituents of the teacher education curriculum in Sub-Saharan Africa that the subject content is based on the school curriculum. For this study, the findings revealed otherwise.

3) Teaching and Learning

Interviewees rated the quality of teaching and learning as very poor. Interviewees identified the method of teaching used by teacher educators as mainly the lecture method, which is teacher-centred. They regarded the teaching and learning process as a talk and listen. Interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the lecture method as it does not help them to learn; *“It did not help us to learn, so we memorised and passed”*; *“I can hardly remember anything I was taught through the lecture method”*; *“If you ask me of things, I did at university I cannot tell you a thing”*.

Furthermore, interviewees pointed out that teacher educators just read the prepared PowerPoint slides uploaded on the student portal. This makes the lesson dull, and students prefer to stay at home because they can also read what the teacher educator reads to them in class. One concerned participant argued, *“It is useless to attend lectures because the lecturer is just there reading”*, *I find it not necessary to come to class because the lecturer reads the notes they gave us, they do not elaborate”*; Another participant said, *“To be honest, there is no need to attend lectures because there is nothing new that the lecturer will be doing apart from reading the same notes uploaded on the portal”*. Interviewees also expressed doubt on whether teacher educators know the content since they only read the notes on the PowerPoint slides. Another participant echoed, *“They just talk and not explain; they do not demonstrate that they know the content”*.

Data collected from lecture observation corroborated with the data from the focus group interview. The researcher observed that the teacher educators excessively use the lecture method. The teacher educator reads the notes on the PowerPoint slides with little explanation. Disruptive behaviour from the students was observed; students made noise, and some were using phones while the

teacher educators read the notes to themselves as students were not concentrating. Only students sitting in the first row were almost concentrating. Chronic bunking was observed as more than half of the students did not attend lectures. Out of more than 300 students, only about 120 attend lectures.

The study also revealed that most teacher educators participated in this study, teaching subjects within their specialisation areas except for a few. As a result, the teacher-student ratio was very high and inappropriate for effective curriculum delivery. For example, there are approximately 400 students per teacher educator, and some teachers have more than 700 students. Moreover, some teacher educators teach more than five (5) subjects.

The above findings are consistent with what Majoni (2014), Mutemeri (2010) and Lewin (2004) reported in their studies. Majoni found that the lecture method was the most extensively used method by lecturers; hence, students used the rote learning approach to learn. Mutemeri reported that most teacher educators relied on the chalk and talk method, which students described as monotonous and disengaging. Lewin also discovered that the lecture method was the most extensively used teaching method in teacher education.

On the contrary, the findings are opposite the contemporary learning theory viz constructivism which emphasises that learners/students construct their knowledge related to their actions and experiences, implying that teaching and learning should be student-centred. For effective learning to occur, students should be involved in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, an effective Teacher Education Programme should incorporate a learner-centred approach to teaching (Kajoro et al., 2013).

4) Teaching Practice

Document analysis revealed that this university's teaching practice is conducted in three phases. Phase 1 is characterised by observation where student teachers are attached to a school for three (3) weeks and are expected to observe many facets of learning, teaching, and management. Phase 2 takes place within three (3) weeks where students are expected to observe and simultaneously engage in the teaching and learning two lessons per subject totalling four (4) lessons. Phase 3 takes place within eight (8) weeks, where students are expected to engage in different facets of learning, teaching, and management. The students are expected to teach fifteen (15) lessons per subject, totalling thirty (30) lessons.

Interviewees (both pre-service students and graduates) rated the quality of teaching practice as low. The time allocated for teaching practice phases 1, 2 and 3 is inadequate. "*Time allocated is not enough, we do not learn much, and we do not experience much as per the purpose of teaching practice*", a student reported. Another student supported that "*time was insufficient, I did not gain as much experience as needed as a student-teacher*". "*Time was not enough to gain profound experience*", another student-teacher reported. One student teacher and one graduate justified that "*teaching practice phase 1, 2 and 3 takes place when schools open in January, most schools are busy with admissions, so the*

time for observation and teaching becomes less”.

There is minimal support from qualified teachers (mentors) at school. A graduate had this to say; *“Teaching practice is a failure, schools do not recognise the presence of student teachers, they pay less attention to them, you are of less importance to them, if you are unlucky, you might be assigned to a newly appointed teacher who just joined the teaching field that year, how can a learner learn from a learner?”*. Another graduate recalled; *“I was on my own the whole time, no mentoring, and no support from the teachers at school”*. A pre-service student reported that; *“Teaching practice was a disaster as teachers seemed not to care”*.

There seems to be no communication between the university and schools. Interviewees reported that it seems the university does not provide schools with clear guidelines on what is expected when students are in teaching practice. For example, one student teacher said, *“the institute requires student teachers to teach a certain number of lessons, but you will find out that some teachers give you only one (1) lesson per week”*. A graduate reported, *“you will find that seven (7) student teachers are allocated to one (1) mentor, so this teacher does not have time to give attention to all”*. In the same vein, interviewees expressed dissatisfaction that there is no cooperation between schools and the university that necessitates the achievement of a common goal, which is to produce competent teachers. Another student reported, *“when lecturers come for school visits to assess students, they do not even meet with the principal or teachers to hear more about the general conduct of student teachers”*.

Interviewees revealed that there is no consistency in assessing students on teaching practice. For example, one student said, *“some students finished teaching practice without being assessed”*. Another student also said, *“Lecturers who assess do not have subject matter content for the lesson they observe, so how does one know you are teaching the learners the right things or just cheating”*. *“A person who observes me must know the subject content for fair judgement”*, one student reported.

An effective teacher education programme should incorporate an intensive and extensive hands-on experience to allow students to encounter real-life issues they are likely to encounter in their future teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hammerness & Klette, 2015; Kajoro et al., 2013). However, interviewees felt the time allocated to teaching practice was not sufficient. Hence, these findings are consistent with the findings in Pakistan by Aijaz et al. (2010) and South Africa by Mutemeri (2010), that teaching practice duration is concise, ranging between 4 to 8 weeks in Pakistan and six weeks in a year, which is equivalent to 24 weeks over four years in South Africa. In addition, Mutemeri (2010) and Majoni (2014) found similar results that teaching practice supervision is not real—when non-subject specialists advise on how to teach a particular subject.

5) Assessment

The analysis of examination question papers discovered that there is poor as-

essment. This is evident in the types of questions asked in the examination. Most of the question papers analysed comprised questions that tests simple recall of information i.e. multiple choices, matching, true or false and a list of items to define. These questions do not match the elements spelt out in the professional standards, nor do they test what is demanded by the performance criteria of the teacher competencies. The types of questions do not ask the students to demonstrate what is outlined by the performance criteria of the teacher competencies. In other words, one would regard such types of assessments as unauthentic. The questions asked do not allow students to demonstrate an understanding of concepts. The application of knowledge and such questions promote rote learning. The authentic assessment facilitates the testing of the application of knowledge (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Freeman et al., 2021; Poindexter et al., 2015) and therefore produces teachers who are not only knowledgeable but can apply knowledge in a natural context. The assumption is that such teachers are likely engaging their students in the authentic assessment if they have experienced it first.

6. Conclusion

Teacher quality is a sine qua non to quality education. Teacher quality can only be realised by quality teacher training. This study focused on analysing different elements viz; teacher educator and student teachers' qualities; written curriculum; teaching and learning; teaching practice and assessed curriculum of the teacher education programme at one of the universities in Namibia to determine the quality of the teacher training. Documents analysis, classroom observations, student teachers and graduate perspectives formed the conclusion of the findings. From the findings, the study qualitatively described the quality of the teacher education programme as low. Supporting evidence indicates that average students enrol for the teacher education programme, and most students enrol because of extrinsic and other motives other than intrinsic and altruistic reasons.

The teacher education curriculum was found to be overcrowded with fragmented modules. Subject matter content was irrelevant to the school curriculum; hence students exit with little subject matter knowledge. There is a lack of authentic assessment of pre-service students as assessment questions do not test the understanding and application of knowledge, and assessment is not aligned to the intended learning outcomes. Student teachers were not engaged in active learning as pedagogy was dominated by the lecture method, which facilitates rote learning.

Another factor was the poor teaching practice characterised by inadequate time allocation and lack of support from the school in mentoring. Therefore, the study recommends that prospective student teachers be vetted to avoid students doing teacher education without being intrinsically motivated. Furthermore, the teacher education curriculum must be restructured to allow meaningful learning. Finally, since this was just a cross-sectional study, we recommend a longitu-

dinal study with all the higher education institutions that offer teacher education programmes for proper benchmarking and well-informed conclusions.

The authors, at this moment, acknowledge that this analysis may have left out other components. For instance, the study did not consider the context. However, a comprehensive analytical tool or framework such as Stufflebeam's Context Input Process Product (CIPP) model of curriculum evaluation can be used by future researchers to provide a holistic view of every element.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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