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Triad Role in Shaping Tanzanian Pre-service Teachers' Experience of Teaching Practice

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Abstract: This study explores the role of the triad relationship in shaping pre-service teachers' experience during teaching practice. The study is descriptive in nature employing a qualitative approach and data from a sample of five pre-service teachers, five college supervisors, five mentor teachers and three Heads of school. The data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that limited triad relationship, limited social and instructional support from mentor teachers and supervisors' limited assessment and feedback provision, negatively impacted pre-service teachers' learning during teaching practice. To achieve a functioning triad the paper suggests that it is important to equally engage supervisors, mentor teachers and Heads of school in formulating appropriate support practices for pre-service teachers. Such practice may include implementing a feedback process where all members of the triad come together.

Introduction

Teaching practice has been widely recognised as an important component of teacher preparation in university and college teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013; Young & MacPhail, 2015; Zeichner, 2010). It is during teaching practice that pre-service teachers are exposed to real classroom contexts where they observe experienced teachers, interact with peers, implement various approaches, strategies and skills with a view to bringing about meaningful learning (Hattie, 2012; Heck & Ambrosetti, 2018). In Tanzania, teaching practice is acknowledged as an important component of teacher preparation in almost all teacher education programs. This paper explores stakeholder roles in shaping pre-service teachers' experience in teaching practice. Specifically, the paper explores ways in which pre-service teachers' experience is enhanced or challenged by the relationship in a stakeholder group: the triad. The term triad in this paper refers to the three key stakeholder groups involved during teaching practice: mentor teachers, college supervisors and pre-service teachers.

Teaching practice is identified in the literature as an activity that is context oriented, yet teaching practice is a common process world-wide and one where pre-service teachers develop solid understandings of what teaching actually entails (Darling-Hammond, Bransford, & Ebook, 2007; Hoth, Kaiser, Dőhrmann, Kőnig, & Blömeke, 2018). As such, there have been various efforts to strengthen teaching practice experience by the Tanzanian Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) and individual universities as well as teacher education colleges. These efforts have included: increasing financing of teaching practice, strengthening partnerships with schools, as well as ongoing training of teacher

educators (Anangisye & Fussy, 2014; Kasuga, 2019; Mosha, 2012). Despite these efforts, there are still concerns about pre-service teachers' preparation for teaching practice. Research studies in Tanzania investigated different aspects of teaching practice and how these findings contribute to the learning of pre-service teachers in teaching practice. For example, Njiku (2016) investigated the impact of professional support of experienced teachers on the development of pre-service teachers' ability to prepare teaching and learning documents such as schemes of work and lesson plans. The findings from Njiku's study revealed that disorganised and limited professional support from the mentor teachers had a negative impact on the pre-service teachers' learning. Similar findings are presented by Mungure (2017) who reported that mentor teachers and supervisors did not adequately support pre-service teachers to deal with various challenges that arose during teaching practice. Ndibalema (2019) explored professional ethics among pre-service teachers during teaching practice and showed that a lack of professional ethics among pre-service teachers not only had a negative repercussion on pre-service teachers' growth but also hindered effective learning among the students they taught. Despite the significant contribution of these research studies, the role of the triad and how it contributes to pre-service teachers' learning in teaching practice has not been extensively investigated in Tanzania. This paper explores the impact of the role of the triad in enhancing and/or challenging pre-service teachers' learning during teaching practice in one selected teacher education college in Tanzania. It seeks to respond to the research question: In what ways are the experiences of pre-service teachers enhanced and/or challenged by the relationships within the stakeholder group.

Literature Review
Understanding the Triad in Teaching Practice

In recent years, there has been growing interest in research into the roles of the members of the triad during teaching practice (e.g. Adams, 2016; Ambrosetti, Dekkers, & Knight, 2017). This is due to the belief that a triad plays a significant role in pre-service teachers' learning during teaching practice (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). The triad concept places the pre-service teacher at the centre and brings together the mentor teachers and supervisors with similar vision, goals, strategies and resources in a bid to successfully support pre-service teacher learning (Chaliès, Escalié, Stefano, & Clarke, 2012; Chen, 2019). However, this has not always been the case, since research often views the role of the members of the triad as a separate rather than a joint venture (Young & MacPhail, 2016). Each member of the triad often expresses different goals and interests. For example, while college supervisors would like to see mentor teachers guiding pre-service teachers according to the teacher education program guidelines (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2017; Merç, 2015); mentor teachers would like to guide pre-service teachers to abide by the school curriculum and achieve the desired academic results of the school (Yuan, 2016). This divergent nature of the goals and interests is said to limit efficiency in supporting pre-service teachers to learn (Young & MacPhail, 2015).

Literature reports that working within a triad is not easy however, the following strategies are identified as vital for developing a successfully functioning triad: each member of the triad should be informed of their role and the goal they are trying to collectively achieve when pursuing those roles (Garza, Reynosa, Werner, Duchaine, & Harter, 2019). This may help to eliminate diverse interpretations of what practice is required or desired from the members of the triad (Klinge, 2015; Sahragard & Mansourzadeh, 2016). Scholars further suggest that strengthening communication between the mentor teachers and the supervisors, is not only important, but also may assist in eliminating the reported disjuncture between the

college of education and school activities (Humberd & Rouse, 2016; Lee, Lee, & Arifah Drajati, 2019). To better understand the functioning of the triad, the following sections discuss the role of each member of the triad.

Pre-service Teacher Role

The importance of the role of the pre-service teachers cannot be ignored when considering the effectiveness of the triad relationship. A wide range of literature reports that despite various roles of other members of the triad said to contribute to pre-service teachers' learning, pre-service teachers are also thought to be impacted by the way they act in their own role during teaching practice (Sosibo, 2013; Torres & Tackett, 2016). Among the diverse roles of pre-service teachers described, the frequently cited roles are; planning the lesson, classroom teaching and reflective journal writing. Literature suggests that all these activities need to be integrated and accomplished in parallel within the lesson in accord with the given curriculum (Tülüce, 2016; Zulu & Lumadi, 2014). However, research reveals that it has not always been easy for many pre-service teachers to implement all these activities during lesson delivery. Studies reported limited abilities of pre-service teachers in accomplishing some of their roles. For example, Vallejo, Estrella, and López-Barajas (2019) revealed that pre-service teachers could not appropriately employ a method of teaching while dealing with students with mixed abilities. Similarly, Gungor (2016) and Hascher and Hagenauer (2016) indicated that in many teaching practice contexts, pre-service teachers struggle with preparing appropriate lesson plans. This was found to be due to the lack of appropriate modelling where pre-service teachers can learn by observation. Scholars stress that pre-service teachers' successful accomplishment of their role is equally dependent on the guidance of mentor teachers and supervisors. In order to successfully support pre-service teachers to accomplish their roles, research literature highlights various mentor teacher and supervisor roles.

Mentoring Role

While it is agreed that the mentoring role is a complex and demanding endeavour (Palmer, 2018; Sosibo, 2013), literature summarised the role of a mentor teacher as offering emotional/social support and instructional support. As a social supporter, mentor teachers are expected to engage in effective socializing, listening, observing, advising, counselling, encouraging and reflecting with pre-service teachers (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Klinge, 2015; Kutchner & Kleschick, 2016). Studies show that social support helps pre-service teachers enhance their self-image, get oriented to practical knowledge of their daily school routines, share their working space with their mentor teachers, develop better relationships, interact and freely communicate their problems (Akhtar, Majeed, & Murtaza, 2013; Izadinia, 2016; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018). In contrast, other studies show that negative social support due to unstable behaviours between mentor teachers and pre-service teachers may result in pre-service teachers feeling isolated and stressed, experiencing difficulty in exploring their teaching practice (Kolman, Roegman, & Goodwin, 2017; Reese, 2016),

Mentor teachers are also expected to provide instructional support through assisting pre-service teachers with planning and implementing the lesson through modelling appropriate teaching behaviours and feedback provision (DeBonis, 2016; Poznanski, Hart, & Cramer, 2018). Studies show that through mentor teachers' positive engagement in assisting pre-service teachers with lesson planning and delivery, pre-service teachers developed awareness of what is to be accomplished during the teaching practice and think in advance about their responsibilities and the timeframe to accomplish their tasks (Chou, 2019;

Grimmett, Forgasz, Williams, & White, 2018). Other studies reported that due to a lack of proper instructional guidance by the mentor teachers, pre-service teachers were challenged by the lesson delivery and classroom management which negatively affected them in learning to teach (Chizhik, Chizhik, Close, & Gallego, 2017; Molotja & Maruma, 2018).

Supervisor Role

As representatives of the teacher college, supervisors are expected to strive to close the gap that is said to exist between what pre-service teachers learn in the college and the reality of the teaching context (Chizhik et al., 2017; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Research suggests that this can be achieved through supervisors' collaborative assessment and feedback provision to their pre-service teachers (Caires, Almeida, & Vieira, 2012). Assessment of pre-service teachers frequently raises questions of fairness and honesty (Gravett, de Beer, Odendaal-Kroon, & Merseth, 2017). Research suggests that the issue of supervisor fairness in pre-service teacher assessment can be addressed by supervisors' ability to employ and practice both subjective and objective assessment (Donovan & Cannon, 2018). While subjective assessment allows context and the assessors' rational thinking to guide decision-making during assessment (Gates, 2017), objective assessment allows for standards and assessment criteria to come into play when making judgment (Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan, & Lin, 2014).

Other scholars argue that supervisors are expected to engage in formative assessment (continuous throughout the teaching practice) and summative assessment (final at the end of the teaching practice) to enable professional growth of pre-service teachers (Barahona, 2019; Fayne, 2007). However, literature shows that in many teaching practice contexts, the assessment process tends to take a form of summative assessment rather than formative, and hence fails to assess the pre-service teachers' learning progress during the teaching practice (Buck, Trauth-Nare, & Kaftan, 2010; Dann, 2018). This is found to be due to the assessment tools employed which are often criteria heavy and difficult to cover during assessment (Endedijk, Donche, & Oosterheert, 2013).

Furthermore, supervisors are expected to engage in interactive feedback provision which stimulates pre-service teachers' thinking (Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017). Studies show that when pre-service teachers are equally engaged in the feedback discussion, they have a greater chance to uncover their misconceptions and learn effectively (Caires et al., 2012; Richardson, Dann, Dann, & O'Neill, 2017). Nonetheless, interactive feedback also helps supervisors to easily identify some hidden barriers to pre-service teacher learning and assist in rectifying the situation (Abas, 2016; Agudo & de Dios, 2016). In contrast, studies also show that when feedback is non-engaging, it creates discomfort, anxiety, and stifles creativity and independent thinking among pre-service teachers (Burns & Badiali, 2016).

Context

In the majority of teacher education programs, schools play an integral role by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to undertake school experience. In the Tanzanian district of Moshi Rural, tutors from the College visit schools to determine which school pre-service teachers will be sent to for their teaching practice. During the visit, tutors identify the number of available places in the school based on the demands of specific subject teachers. One of the reasons for the visit is to avoid placing too many or too few (e.g. one)

pre-service teachers in any school, which may lead to either isolation or resource competition (Mukeredzi & Mandrona, 2013).

Pre-service teachers are in the schools for eight weeks studying and learning about teaching in the classroom. During that time, pre-service teachers are learning to teach under the guidance of their school mentor teacher and they are assessed by their College supervisors. The College normally provides guidelines to the Heads of participating schools regarding assessment of pre-service teachers. However, these guidelines mainly focus on assessing pre-service teachers' overall discipline knowledge and their engagement in school and management activities, rather than their performance in the classroom. Supervisors are normally provided with criteria for assessment as well as documentation regarding the feedback they should provide to pre-service teachers. The supervisor assessment forms are quite different to those of the Heads of School, as they contain a list of specific teaching skills that are to be assessed in the classroom.

Supervisors have a responsibility to visit the students twice during the teaching practice for assessment. After each, it is recommended (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007a) that supervisors be involved in discussion with pre-service teachers about their teaching and provide oral and written feedback reports to pre-service teachers. Copies of the supervisor and Head of school feedback reports are kept on record by the College.

Methodology

This study explored ways in which pre-service teachers' experience of classroom practice is enhanced and/or challenged by the interactions of the roles of the triad. It is guided by social constructivist theory which assumes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and is a result of social processes. The theory was deemed relevant since this study explored the interaction within the triad group as part of the contextual aspects that influence the shaping of pre-service teachers' experience of their teaching practice. To understand the phenomena as it occurs in its natural context, a qualitative approach informed by a case study design was deemed appropriate (Flick, 2013; Yin, 2015).

This study involved participants from one of the Diploma Teachers Colleges and three public secondary schools in Moshi Rural, Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. First, the participation of the secondary schools was confirmed and thereafter, the pre-service teachers placed in those schools were invited to participate in the research. Of the total number of pre-service teachers placed, five (two males and three females) from across all the social science subjects (History, Geography, Swahili, English and Civics) agreed to participate. This configuration of participants allowed for data from diverse subject areas and perspectives to be collected. These pre-service teachers were undertaking a two-year Diploma in Education course and were in their first year of study. Each pre-service teacher was mentored by a subject-specific classroom teacher. Five College supervisors responsible for the assessment of the pre-service teachers were purposively selected. To further enrich the data, the Heads of each school also participated. Therefore, data were collected from a total of 18 participants.

Data were collected during the eight weeks of teaching practice through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. There were three interview sessions for each pre-service teacher conducted at the beginning, middle and at the end of their teaching practice. These different interview sessions helped the authors understand consistency or variations in perceptions, feelings, and actions over the period of their teaching practice. Each mentor teacher, college supervisor and Head of school was interviewed once.

Nonparticipant observation was employed throughout the teaching practice period to help gain an understanding of the duties performed and the relationships within each triad

group. Observation helped to cross-check the self-reported behaviours as described during interviews and focus group discussion (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Observation further helped the authors capture various contextual elements such as availability of teaching and learning materials, number of staffrooms, number of classrooms and classroom size that would have contributed to pre-service teachers' experience. An observational guide (see Appendix 1) was developed based on the various expected actions and behaviours from members of the triad as per the literature reviewed (for example, see Best & Kahn, 2006; Patton, 2002). In particular, the observation guide focused on the nature of the relationships within the triad while giving and receiving assessment of the pre-service teacher, and the type of assessment used for this purpose.

Data were also gathered through focus group discussion, which helped to obtain a collective voice, shared feelings, opinions and suggestions about the phenomenon under study. In this study, there were three one-hour homogeneous focus group discussions involving five participants in each group; one focus group for each of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers and supervisors. The discussions were held after all the individual interviews were completed. The data from focus group discussions were used to understand more issues that were not clearly revealed during individual interviews and observations.

The collected data were thematically analysed. First, data from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed. The transcripts and observational field notes were read several times to gain overall meaning. Three coding cycles were conducted from which a data map was established. Drawing from the data map, various categories were developed from which key themes emerged, including triad professional support; effectiveness of triad support; and barriers to professional support. From these themes, findings were interpreted, discussed, and conclusions and recommendations made.

Findings and Discussions

From the analysis, the findings revealed a limited triad relationship and existence of a two-way relationship between the members of the triad. The two-way relationship involved mentor teachers' support to pre-service teachers and supervisors' support to pre-service teachers.

Limited Triad Relationship

During data collection it was found that a three-way relationship between the mentor teachers, supervisors and pre-service teachers was not common. This was evident especially during supervisors' visits to schools for assessment of the pre-service teachers. Participants reported that there was no communication between the supervisors and the mentor teachers and normally the supervisors communicated with each of the pre-service teachers during their assessment visits. On their arrival at school, supervisors did not seek out the mentor teachers rather, they reported to the Heads of school. One supervisor explained this situation:

> *We normally communicate with our pre-service teachers to let them know the date of the visit and what we expect from them. On our arrival to school, we normally go direct to the office of the Head of School. We sign the guest book, talk a bit about the progress of our pre-service teachers and then they are gathered for them to meet us. With the help of the school's Academic Office, we arrange the lesson that we will assess. (S3, FGD,1)*

In all three schools, mentor teachers confirmed that they never had a discussion with the supervisors when supervisors were in the school for pre-service teacher assessment. When mentor teachers were asked why such interaction did not exist, they had different opinions. Two mentor teachers indicated that a culture of having a meeting to share assessment and feedback about pre-service teachers was not common. These two mentor teachers, however, saw the need to have such a mentor-supervisor-pre-service teacher relationship. One mentor teacher commented:

> *In our school, there has never been such an arrangement to meet them. However, it could be better if three of us could have a meeting. Because we have a lot to say as a feedback about pre-service teachers' progress, but we don't have a place to say. (MT1, FGD, 1)*

Another mentor teacher added that supervisors normally do not have the desire to meet them because they think they have nothing to contribute. He said: "They may think we have nothing to add in their knowledge but in real sense it is not [so]. We need to collaborate" (MT4, I, 1).

Supervisors reported that such an interaction was not possible because, firstly, sometimes supervisors went to a school and the mentor teacher was not there. Secondly, supervisors had limited time to spend in each school while assessing pre-service teachers. However, all supervisors reported that they were given all the feedback from the heads of school. Four supervisors felt that there was no need for them to meet the mentor teachers. In the words of one supervisor:

> *You may go to school and you cannot easily find a mentor teacher even if you want to see him/her. Even the time we are given for assessment is very short, that way you cannot meet every mentor teacher…After all, heads of school are representing all of them. They are the main mentors and we can get all the feedback we want from them. (S4, FG, 1)*

The findings further revealed that as a result of the lack of an effective triad relationship, pre-service teachers had contradictory feedback from their mentor teachers and their supervisors. The following quote highlights this instance.

> *There were some contradictions between what I learned from my mentor teacher and what I received from my supervisor…This left me in dilemma. (M, FGD, 1)*

From these findings it is apparent that the triad relationship was not common during teaching practice. Various situations which contributed to the lack of this relationship can be depicted. First, there was a communication breakdown and an apparent gap between the activities of the College of Teacher Education and practice schools. There was not a shared view on the importance of a three-way meeting. These two entities worked independently such that even during assessment, pre-service teachers were the first to be informed about the supervisors' visits. This finding complements the argument put by Jacobs, Hogarty, and Burns (2017) and Young and MacPhail (2016) that the roles of the members of the triad are viewed separately rather than as a joint venture due to a lack of shared vision. Lack of a shared vision between members of the triad limited the success of helping pre-service teachers learn to teach.

Supervisors held the view that heads of school represented the mentor teachers and therefore, could report on pre-service teachers' progress on behalf of the mentor teachers. However, the information from the heads of school about pre-service teachers' progress was very general since they rarely had direct contact or discussion either with the mentor teachers or pre-service teachers. Therefore, supervisor's reliance on feedback from the heads of school was unreliable and may not accurately portray pre-service teachers' learning progress. This in turn, limited the supervisors taking appropriate action to assist pre-service teachers' learning.

Research shows that mentor teachers have a contribution to make to support pre-service teachers (Alemdag & Simsek, 2017). The lack of opportunity for mentor teachers to meet with the supervisors and discuss the pre-service teachers' learning made them feel inferior and less important than the supervisors. This lowered mentor teachers' motivation and desire to help pre-service teachers. Several other studies reported mentor teacher disappointment in assisting pre-service teachers as a result of limited interaction between mentor teachers and supervisors (e.g.Ali & Khalid, 2015; Duman & Erdamar, 2018).

Mentor Teacher Support

Through data analysis, two main categories of mentor teacher support to pre-service teachers were revealed; social support and instructional support.

Social Support

Data showed that pre-service teachers were welcomed by the heads of school and were introduced to their mentor teachers and the classes they were expected to teach. Most of the pre-service teachers' introduction to their classes helped to build their confidence towards teaching. Pre-service teachers were also assigned a working space to use for preparation and planning during the working day. While three of the five pre-service teachers shared a staff room with their mentor teachers and other teachers, two pre-service teachers were given their own staff room: a classroom modified to be an office. This was observed in two out of the three schools visited, where pre-service teachers were placed in their own staff room due to insufficient space in the general staff room.

Pre-service teachers who shared a staff room with other teachers reported to have benefited from the interaction with their mentors and other teachers. One pre-service teacher explained that he was comfortable staying in the pre-service teachers' own staff room while the other one said that staying in a separate staff room denied her the opportunity to continuously learn from her mentor teacher. The following quotes illustrate the situation.

> *When I first arrived in this school, I reported to the Head of school office. Then I was introduced to my mentor teacher, the one I shared the subject... During working hours, we use to stay in the separate staff room which was a classroom designed as an office for us. I was comfortable as I got to meet and learn a lot from my peers [pre-service teachers]. (K, I,1)*

However, another pre-service teacher indicated: "Keeping us in a separate staff room limited our interaction with our mentor teachers. There was not much to learn from each other [pre-service teachers] as we were all new to teaching" (S, I,1). Pre-service teachers who benefited from sharing the staff room with other teachers commented:

> *My fellow pre-service teachers and I stayed in the general staff room. We interacted with other teachers and we were free to ask questions to other staff members especially on the absence of our mentor teachers who were not always available as they left the lessons to us. To be honest, other staff members helped me a lot with some difficulties that I experienced. (R, I,1)*

Other pre-service teachers reported that despite sharing the staff room space with their mentor teachers, the level of interaction was low. Pre-service teachers voiced that this was due to some mentor teachers' unwillingness to support pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers reported that most of the mentor teachers did not demonstrate that they were part of the process of helping pre-service teachers to learn, one pre-service teacher affirmed:

> *He acted like he did not want to deal with me at all, he did not take it as his*
> *responsibility, I could see from his body language. That way I was not always*
> *happy to approach him for assistance. (R, FG, 1)*

However, mentor teachers revealed that they were willing to help the pre-service teachers, but they had many other responsibilities and the mentoring workload did not allow them to offer much assistance to pre-service teachers. "We like to spend much time with them but look, I have five pre-service teachers to mentor from different teacher colleges. It is difficult to divide myself" (MT4, I,1).

From these findings the following can be deduced. Social support is very important when orienting and assisting pre-service teachers in their teaching practice. For example, introducing pre-service teachers to the classroom where they will be teaching helps to build their confidence and morale towards teaching. Similar findings where social support is said to contribute to pre-service teachers' growth in their self-image is reported in the literature (e.g.Eriksson, 2017; Izadinia, 2016; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018).

Moreover, the findings from this research show that assigning pre-service teachers to a working space where they can interact with other teachers and peers helps them in relationship building and continuous learning. Keeping pre-service teachers in isolation can limit their opportunity to interact, learn and benefit from others. The study also depicted that keeping pre-service teachers in their own staff room can be beneficial as pre-service teachers, can freely interact and learn from their peers. The significance of peer support is evident in Gan and Lee's (2016) study, who found that peer support helped pre-service teachers' professional growth through discussions, questions and answers that were held in the same working space. The findings from the study reported in this paper further demonstrate that assigning mentor teachers to a large mentoring load limited their efficiency and interaction with pre-service teachers. Limited interaction might have created difficulty for mentor teachers to understand some barriers faced by pre-service teachers while learning to teach. Similar findings were also revealed by Garza et al. (2019) who reported that as a result of irregular communication with their mentor teachers, pre-service teachers failed to properly prepare their teaching resources.

Instructional Support

Research argues that, instructional support helps pre-service teachers develop awareness of their responsibilities during teaching practice (Grimmett et al., 2018). In this study, various areas of instructional support reported by participants included: lesson plan preparation, monitoring of classroom teaching and classroom management, feedback provision and provision of teaching and learning resources.

Lesson preparation was one of the areas where pre-service teachers needed support. According to pre-service teachers, lesson preparation included: preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes and teaching aids. Pre-service teachers expected their mentor teachers to model preparing schemes of work and lesson plans. Unfortunately, most of mentor teachers did not prepare such documents for their own teaching. Therefore, pre-service teachers did not have examples to learn from. One pre-service teacher reported:

> I expected that the mentor teacher will have his own scheme of work and
> lesson plan where I can see the example to start with. Unfortunately, he did not
> have lesson plan, and he said he never prepared one because he has enough
> experience and he knows where to start and finish during the lesson. (R, FGD, 1)

Another pre-service teacher in a different school expressed the same concern: "I asked if she (mentor teacher) could give me the documents. She did not give me a scheme of work

or a lesson plan. I had to use the knowledge I acquired at the college to prepare my own" (D, FGD, 1). From the mentor teachers' voices the main reason given for not preparing the teaching and learning documents was their extensive teaching experience, which allowed them to teach without the guide of the planning documents. As one mentor teacher confirmed "I have been teaching for almost ten years now and I don't really need the lesson plan every day to be able to teach" (MT1, I,1). Another mentor teacher revealed that her initial teacher education did not adequately equip her with the skills needed for preparing the scheme of work and lesson plans. From this mentor teacher's point of view, pre-service teacher had better skills in preparing planning documents:

> *The way I was exposed to the techniques of preparing the teaching and learning document was not enough. My initial training did not emphasize on this skill. To be honest, some pre-service teachers demonstrate better skills in preparing lesson plans and we openly share and learn from each other. (MT3, FGD, 1)*

Pre-service teachers also expected the support of mentor teachers during classroom teaching. Four of the five pre-service teachers believed that they received insufficient and inconsistent classroom monitoring and feedback from their mentor teacher. It was revealed that mentor teachers irregularly visited pre-service teachers in the classroom to see how they were undertaking various teaching activities. When they did visit, they did not stay the entire lesson spending only a few minutes before leaving. For example, one pre-service teacher said:

> *In the beginning of my teaching practice, my mentor teacher used to come, watch me while I was teaching for few minutes such as 15 minutes in my single lesson of 40 minutes then he left even before I finished teaching. (K, I, 2)*
> *Moreover, another pre-service teacher added:*

On the first day, she came late, and I already started teaching. She stayed for few minutes like ten minutes then she left … she started with little support when I started my teaching practice but thereafter, she left me and gave me more lessons to teach. (D, FGD,1)

This situation was confirmed by four out of five supervisors who described that they received complaints from the pre-service teachers that they were left alone without any assistance. "Most of the mentor teachers after they hand the subjects to student teachers they disappear" (S1, FGD, 1). Another supervisor added that "We get a lot of information from pre-service teachers that they are left alone" (S2, I, 1). Heads of school were also aware and confirmed three out of five mentor teachers did not follow up with pre-service teachers adequately: "The mentor teacher is supposed to make follow up, however, frankly, I can say not all of them make enough follow up" (H2, I, 1). However, the Head of School did not mention any measure he took against the mentor teachers.

Classroom management was another area where pre-service teachers needed mentor teacher support. Pre-service teachers reported to have experienced classrooms with disruptive students. Some students were making noise during the lesson, some left the class before the end of the lesson, some frequently asked unnecessary questions, and others refused to be disciplined by the pre-service teachers. However, mentor teachers gave pre-service teachers few suggestions for strategies for dealing with disengaged students. For example they advised pre-service teachers to constantly assign tasks to students during the lesson. One pre-service teachers described part of this strategy as given by her mentor teacher:

My mentor teacher gave me the strategy that I should never leave them (students) free of tasks throughout the lesson. My mentor teacher taught me how to ask students questions and organise them in groups for them to discuss and present. She said that was the only way I could maintain the order and silence in my class. (D, I, 2)

Similarly, another pre-service teacher explained that she was advised not to take any disciplinary measures against any stubborn student by herself. Instead, she should take the matter to other teachers to help her devise appropriate disciplinary measures.

> *My mentor teacher insisted that in case any student misbehaved, the best way is to note her/his name and present to other teachers in the staffroom. Then they could organise and devise a proper way of disciplining him/her. (R, I, 1)*

Mentor teachers in all the schools studied confirmed that classroom management was a concern since there were disruptive students and some even refused to be disciplined by the pre-service teacher.

> *Some students refuse to be disciplined by a pre-service teacher, because most pre-service teachers look young. What we normally do, we ask a pre-service teacher to bring to the staff room those students, and then we do organise a disciplinary measure to be accomplished by individual pre-service teacher in collaboration with us. (MT4, I, 1)*

Mentor teachers are regarded by the pre-service teachers as the masters of instructional support and pre-service teachers spend much of their teaching practice time with the mentor teachers (Nguyen, 2017). Further, Islam (2012) and Moosa and Rembach (2018) found that appropriate modelling through observing the lessons of their mentor teachers was a necessary element for enhancing professional learning for pre-service teachers. Similarly, the findings of this study depicted that instructional support was crucial to help pre-service teachers' learning during teaching practice. From this study, it was evident that pre-service teachers had high expectations to learn from their mentor teachers as they believed their mentor teachers had knowledge and experience in planning and teaching. Unfortunately, pre-service teachers were disappointed as there were limited examples of their mentor teachers modelling instructional planning and delivery including lesson plan preparation, classroom teaching and classroom management. Pre-service teachers spent time trying to apply what they learned from the college, but they were uncertain whether they did it correctly. This lack of constructive feedback negatively impacted pre-service teachers' opportunities for professional learning.

The data from this research also highlights issues that limited the instructional support provided by mentor teachers, that is, their own perceived knowledge and experience of teaching; inadequate knowledge of lesson preparation, and regard for pre-service teachers as their fellow teachers rather than learners.

Supervisor Support

From the analysis, supervisors were found to support pre-service teachers through assessment and feedback provision. Pre-service teachers described different experiences of the supervisors' quality of assessment and feedback. In this study, the quality of supervisors' assessment and feedback related to frequency, timing and relevance.

Assessment

Assessment by the supervisors was revealed to have characteristics that compromised its quality. For example, it was reported that assessment was conducted only once for the whole period of teaching practice (eight weeks) which was against the recommendation of the College curriculum which requires at least two assessments. This was confirmed by one pre-service teacher who stated, "Supervisor came once and I did not see her again for

assessment, however we were told during College orientation that we will be assessed twice" (S, I, 2). Moreover, assessment was conducted at the very end of the teaching practice (6th and 7th week) as explained by some pre-service teachers: "My supervisor came nearly at the end of the teaching practice. On top of that I did not have a chance to discuss with her my progress because she was in a hurry and she left without giving me feedback" (S, I, 2). Furthermore, since assessment was conducted in a hurry, it became more of a grade-oriented assessment. That meant the focus was not on the details of how pre-service teachers were progressing in learning to teach. This created anxiety for some of the pre-service teachers as reflected in the following quote:

> I am afraid; I don't know which grade I shall be given. I must obtain a good one. My colleague told me there is no formula, I might be good, and I can be given a poor grade. It will all depend on the supervisor. (S, I, 1)

One mentor teacher further added that assessment being carried out by supervisors focused more on giving grades than checking pre-service teachers' learning progress. This view is illustrated in the following quote:

> You see before the assessment pre-service teachers will prepare themselves and the lesson very well. After the assessment none of them will do any of the activities. They become lazy and relaxed. (MT5, 1, 1)

Feedback

Feedback provision was another responsibility of supervisors. Most of the pre-service teachers indicated that they received insufficient and delayed feedback. For example, one pre-service teacher was assessed and left without feedback until one week later as explained. "He assessed and left without giving me feedback. Thereafter a week is when he came back and gave feedback. Honestly, to me the feedback was not productive as I already forgot what I taught" (K, FGD, 1). Another pre-service teacher was assessed and given written feedback. However, this pre-service teacher did not get an opportunity to discuss the comments with the supervisors as she stated: "She came, took some hints from my classroom teaching and gave me feedback in a written form. We did not get some time to discuss those hints" (S, FGD, 2).

It was also reported and observed that during feedback sessions, supervisors were in control and gave all the directions on what was supposed to be done by a pre-service teacher (directive feedback). Pre-service teachers remained passive recipients of the information. However, there were two out of five pre-service teachers who expressed satisfaction with their supervisors' feedback sessions as revealed in the following quote.

> My supervisor helped me indeed especially in setting clear objectives and the learning activities in my lesson plan. His comments were clear in every aspect. I wish he would have come earlier. The feedback would have helped me a lot. (R, FGD, 1)

Supervisors described circumstances that contributed to the level and quality of assessment and feedback. Supervisors reported that funds for teaching practice were not always delivered on time and were insufficient which forced the College to send only a few College tutors for supervision. Therefore, supervisors were sent late to assess many pre-service teachers in schools within a short timeframe. One supervisor said:

> The situation is contributed by the insufficiency and the delay of funds from the Ministry concerned to enhance our supervision activities; hence we are forced to go there late but again only few of us (College supervisors) are involved in supervision. (S2, I, 1)

Another reason for insufficient assessment and feedback was revealed to be the supervisor assessment forms. The forms detailed indicators to be evaluated and commented on while observing the teaching. Therefore, most supervisors concentrated on commenting upon the aspects rather than observing pre-service teachers' teaching. One supervisor affirmed:

> *The assessment forms are so comprehensive. There are so many aspects to be evaluated while observing a pre-service teacher. Most of us, we focus on commenting on those aspects while ignoring the ongoing lesson. Therefore, we miss the important points to comment on. (S2, I, 1)*

From the findings it can be argued that supervisors performed their role of assessment and feedback provision. However, the assessment and feedback had characteristics that gave little opportunity to enhance pre-service teachers' learning. There was a lack of regular formative assessment to check progress during the course of the teaching practice. These features of the assessment process made it difficult for supervisors to identify challenges the pre-service teachers faced and provide guidance on how to overcome these. On the part of pre-service teachers, lack of regular and continuous assessment left them with dilemmas, unresolved problems, worry and frustrations. One pre-service teacher said:

> *My supervisor was supposed to talk and correct me where I faced difficulty soon after assessment. Unfortunately, he assessed me and left… then the following week he came and gave me feedback. (K,1,2)*

This implies that pre-service teachers had limited opportunity to learn from their supervisors.

Other studies suggest that to achieve pre-service teacher professional growth during teaching practice, supervisors should engage in continuous assessment and feedback provision to pre-service teachers (Dann, 2018; Gravett & Ramsaroop, 2015). Furthermore, grade-oriented assessment was the norm which implied the overall purpose of the assessment was conflicted, which led to fear for some of the pre-service teachers. Both of these issues had a negative impact on their learning.

This current study further depicted a kind of feedback which can be described as limited and directive in nature. Due to the lack of immediate feedback, pre-service teachers did not know where they went wrong or right, and they likely continued to make the same mistakes throughout the teaching practice. Nonetheless, the feedback was one-way (directive) where the supervisors acted as a centre of all information with the pre-service teacher a passive listener. For example, in some cases it was found that feedback relied on written comments and ignored oral (face to face) discussion. This type of feedback constrained pre-service teachers' ability to actively think, ask questions and critique which led to lower motivation and morale towards learning to teach. Similarly, other studies show that when feedback is non-engaging, it creates discomfort, anxiety, stifles creativity and independent thinking among pre-service teachers (Burns & Badiali, 2016; Harris, Jervis-Tracey, & Keogh, 2013 Further research revealed that when pre-service teachers are equally engaged in feedback discussion, they have the opportunity to uncover and dispel their misconceptions and learn effectively (Caires et al., 2012; Richardson et al., 2017).

Despite many pre-service teachers highlighting insufficient and limited feedback processes, two pre-service teachers felt satisfied with their supervisors' support. This signifies that any amount of time and feedback shared between supervisors and pre-service teachers was important to support pre-service teachers' improvement.

Conclusion

The study explored ways that pre-service teachers' experiences during their school placement were enhanced or challenged by the relationships within the triad. Although there is evidence that some pre-service teachers benefited from the relationship with their mentor or their supervisor, the dominant conclusion is that a triad did not exist and therefore could not work to enhance the pre-service teachers' experience.

The limited social and instructional support from mentors and limited assessment and feedback from college supervisors characterized the pre-service teachers' experience. Ideally, formative feedback from the supervisor and the mentor would be shared with the pre-service teacher at a meeting with all present: that is, a meeting of the triad. However, this was not the case with these participants. There was evidence of a two-way relationship, but no evidence of a three-way relationship. At best, the pre-service teacher met with either the mentor or with the supervisor. Consistent with the literature (for example, Dann, 2018), the limited effective formative feedback hindered the potential for skill development during the practice period.

A triad relationship is critical in enhancing pre-service teachers' learning during teaching practice (for example, Chen, 2019). The triad relationship can provide an opportunity for informed and collegial interaction and discussion, sharing responsibilities and feedback, collaboratively identifying the challenges and opportunities in relation to enhancing pre-service teachers' positive experience during teaching practice. Therefore, it is a responsibility of each teacher education stakeholder to ensure that an effective triad relationship is achieved. This study found that to do this, it is necessary to equally engage members of the College of Teacher Education (supervisors) and practice schools (mentor teachers and Heads) in formulating appropriate support practices for pre-service teachers. Implementing a process where all three members of the triad meet, creates the platform for pre-service teachers to receive social and instructional support and feedback on their teaching knowledge and skill. The challenge of funding and cost efficiency faced by teacher education institutions in Tanzania is a barrier to this (see United Republic of Tanzania, 2018). These funding challenges are faced by education institutions in many countries (See Darling-Hammond, Goodwin and Low, 2017).

While the current study involved a small sample, the findings may inform other contexts of teacher education with similar characteristics. The transferability of the experiences and varied success of the stakeholders involved in this study provide the opportunity for evaluation of initial teacher education across programs and countries. The conclusions drawn from this research may be of benefit to teacher educators in their review of organisational processes and practices for pre-service teacher learning during their school experience.

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Appendix 1: Observation Guide

Purpose: The Guide informed observation of the roles and interactions of mentor teachers, pre-service teachers and supervisors. The aim was to develop understanding of how these stakeholders enacted their roles.

Pre-service Teacher	Type of relationship existing between pre-service teacher, mentor teacher and supervisor	Extent of interaction between pre-service teacher, mentor teacher and supervisor	Ways in which pre-service teacher respond to the assessment and feedback from supervisor and mentor teacher	Overall Pre-service Teacher's relationships with mentor teacher and supervisor	Overall interpretation of the pre-service teacher's experience.
Supervisors	The types of assessment activities employed (Diversity and extent of interactivity)	Content and structuring of the assessment activities (Extent of organization)	Extent to which supervisor engage pre-service teachers and mentor teachers in assessment and feedback	Overall supervisor's behavior in supervising	Overall interpretation of the supervisory process
Mentor Teachers	The type of mentor teachers' assessment activities (extent of interactivity)	Structure of activities employed during assessment (Extent of organization)	Extent to which mentor teacher engages pre-service teachers or supervisors in assessment and feedback provision	Overall mentor teacher behaviours in mentoring	Overall interpretation of the mentoring process