

Teaching practice experiences of trainee Biology teachers: Challenges and possible panacea

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Abstract

The study examined teaching practice experiences of trainee Biology teachers, challenges and possible panacea in Nigerian Universities with reference to Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), Port Harcourt. Four research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 450 third and final-year students of Biology education for 2022/2023 academic session. Random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 203. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled Trainee Teachers Teaching Practice Experience Questionnaire (TTTPEQ). Reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. Research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation. The findings showed that infrastructural development challenges like lack of chairs, tables, laboratory, teaching equipment, insufficient seats for students, classroom management challenges like difficulty in class control, overcrowded classrooms, uncooperative and disruptive of students in class and the attitude of supervisors (IAUE) like making harsh comment about lesson delivery, being reluctant to visit schools because of its location are the challenges trainee Biology teachers experienced during teaching practice. In conclusion, the findings call for prompt tackling of the obvious challenges to enhance education for sustainable development. Recommendations were made like the government should endeavor to build more classrooms, staffrooms and accommodations for trainee Biology teachers, and university authorities should as a matter of urgency re-orientated supervisors on the need to properly supervise trainee Biology teachers in order to bring out the best in them during teaching practice. Also, the supervisors should go a step further to serve as models that the trainee Biology teachers would copy in order to prepare them well for the future role of nation builders and economic backbones.

Keywords: Teaching practice, Trainee teachers, Panacea, Supervision, Experiences

INTRODUCTION

Biology, chemistry, and physics education in Nigeria has had a lot of problems over the years, such as a lack of necessary facilities like textbooks, labs, and libraries, inadequate training facilities in schools and especially in our higher education institutions, a lack of qualified and well-trained teachers, and classrooms and lesson plans that don't meet the needs of students. The National Policy on Education says that the school curriculum is based on a child-centered teaching and learning method. This is because students need to get the best teaching from skilled teachers in order to do well in school. Nigeria added

science classes to its school curriculum to help the country grow, and the country now has more science-focused policies and programs in schools (Osokoya, 2012).

An important part of education is teaching, which is a job that needs devotion from teachers. In any stage of teacher training, it is seen as the most important thing to do. Aseem (2012) says, it's an exciting and fulfilling job, but it's also very hard because teachers have to know exactly what they need to do to help their students learn the most and be very good at the skills they need to do it. The process of teaching involves doing more than one thing at a time. The author pointed out that teaching requires teachers to be more successful because the subject requires well-trained, responsible teachers with good knowledge. It is important for teachers to be able to do their jobs well, so their training focuses on giving them both academic and practical knowledge and skills in teaching different topics (Azeem, 2012). That's why teachers go to colleges and universities to get official training that gives them the skills they need in the classroom. As part of the training, there is a time of work called "teaching practice."

Teaching practice is an important part of getting ready to be a teacher in schools that train teachers and in Nigerian universities' faculties of education. It gives student teachers a chance to see what teaching is really like and take part in professional events in the education field (Onyebukwa-Nwanoro, 2017). It can also be seen as times when student teachers are helped to use the educational ideas and theories they have learned in the classroom while they teach. The teaching practice activity also helps students become more familiar with a range of teaching materials and tools, as well as to evaluate and choose the ones that are best for meeting the goals of a unit or lesson.

Aglazor (2017) said that experiences in the field, like teaching practice, are meant to connect theory and practice. The teaching practice exercise is the last part of the program. It's where the relationships between the three main players—university managers, host teachers, and future teachers—intersect to decide how much experience the future teacher will gain. It's what the future teacher builds their professional personality on once they're qualified and working as a teacher.

Students can put what they've learned about how to be a good teacher into practice in the classroom through teaching practice. Students' experience teaching is a big part of getting them ready for their future teaching jobs. When you're a teacher, you need to know when to show off your skills, knowledge, and intelligence in the classroom. One of the main goals of changes to the teacher education program is to make teachers who can do their jobs well and deal with the problems of today (Onyebukwa-Nwanoro, 2017).

The National Policy on Education sets the four main goals for the Biology program as a teaching framework (2013). Among these goals are: having enough biology lab and field skills, Knowledge that makes sense and is useful, Being able to use scientific information in daily life to improve health, farm, and the health of others, practical and reasonable science views.

In line with the goals listed above, the course and its material put a lot of stress on outdoor studies, guided discovery, and conceptual studies. This means that Biology is taught in a very practical way. Biology is the study of living things and how they work in the real world. But most primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, both public and private, where most biology student teachers are working to use what they've learned, don't have the right teaching tools or lab equipment, and the buildings aren't very good. Most student teachers have stage fright, which means they don't feel confident speaking in front of the class. They also don't have the right teaching skills or knowledge to do their practice work on how to teach their subject, and they can't run their classrooms very well. In some schools, the resident teacher doesn't work with the student teachers, and most of the time, they are too busy with other tasks. Another problem is that some student teachers don't want to do teaching practice.

The teacher is an important part of the level of education a country gives its people, which is one reason why well-planned teacher education programs include special training and practice situations. The 2013 National Policy on Education said that the level of any school system can only be as high as its teachers. This shows how teachers and the school that trains teachers play a part in the growth of the country. Since the start of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1976, the goals of UBE can only be achieved by teachers who have had the right training. One of the most important parts of studying to be a teacher is getting to do actual teaching. This program in Nigeria was meant to give student teachers a chance to put their classroom knowledge and experience into practice while being supervised by a qualified teacher. The program's problems or shortcomings are to blame for not being able to fully reach the goals.

Managing the classroom, how the managers treat the student teachers, developing the curriculum, teaching, and lab problems are some of the problems that student teachers may face during their practice as teachers. Biology is an important science subject that is taught in all Nigerian schools. Students learn both theory and practice in this subject. Some of the problems that student teachers face includes not having access to lab equipment and teaching materials, not knowing enough about the subject's theory and practice, and not having a relationship with the resident teachers. These are just a few of the things that student teachers think about when they are practicing teaching. So, the purpose of this study is to look into the problems and possible solutions faced by trainee biology teachers at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education while they were teaching.

There is an internship program for teachers, as there is for many other people-related jobs. During this time, trainees can put what they have learned in the classroom into practice. When it comes to medical students, this "apprenticeship" program is like the housemanship. For engineering, technology, and accounting students, it's like the Industrial Attachment (IT), and for lawyers, it's like the court attachment. For education students, the experience is usually called "Teaching Practice." It is also known as practice teaching, teaching practicum, field studies, field experience, internship, school-based experience, and student teaching, among other names (Taneja, 2013).

Teaching practice gives student teachers the lab experience they need to learn the skills, attitudes, and practical information they need to be good teachers and apply what they learn in the real classroom. Students who are trained to become teachers are sent to schools to gain professional experience by putting all the educational ideas and principles they have learned in the classroom into practice. This is similar to an apprenticeship. In order to get certified as a teacher, this training is required before the student starts working.

The National Policy on Education (2013) lists several goals for teacher education. These include: a) making highly motivated, responsible, and effective classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system; b) encouraging teachers to be more curious and creative; c) helping teachers fit in with their communities and society as a whole; and d) making teachers more committed to national goals.

d) Give teachers the intellectual and professional training they need for their job and make them flexible enough to deal with new situations; and

e) Make teachers more dedicated to their job.

To achieve the above objectives, the student teacher is generally needed to experience twelve (12) weeks teaching practice to allow him/her gain the expected skills, which will position him/her as a competent professional teacher.

Supervision is an important phase of the teaching practice exercise. supervision as a term covering a wide range of teacher education processes and activities, beginning before a teaching practice, intensifying through the practice and continuing after the practice has been completed. Supervision of teaching practice is, therefore very important and no supervisor or moderator should take it for granted. The reason being that it is during this period that a student teachers' teaching progress performance is systematically recorded in all aspect of his career development during training (Akudo, 2013). Only professionally qualified lecturers should be incorporated into the exercise as stated in the regulating instruments for teacher education. Effective teaching practice supervision commences one week after students have acquainted themselves with the school environment and culture of the classrooms they are to teach. Effective educational supervision in the 21st century is questionable due to decline in the quality of Nigeria's educational system which gives more apprehension than contentment (Ijaiya, 2019). Broadly speaking, supervision of teaching practice can be divided into 3 main stages namely: interface, actual (lesson) observation and post observation stages. **Interface stage:** This is the stage where supervisors go to have pre-observation meeting with the student-teachers posted to a particular co-operating school. Student teachers are briefed on what is expected of them during the supervision exercise. **The actual (lesson) observation stage:** At this stage, the student teacher presents lessons and the supervisor observes him/her by recording the strengths and weaknesses during the lesson presentation. A typical teaching practice assessment sheet such as that utilized by the teaching practice unit of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education consists of 2 main sections (A and B). Section A contains

student's personal data such as name, matriculation number, teaching practice school, student's department, subject taught, lesson taught and date.

Section B is made up of six columns with the headings: items, clue to item scoring, maximum score, 1st visit, 2nd visit and remark. At the foot of this section are supervisor's name, signature and date. The item column specifies all the variables the supervisor will be looking out for in course of observing the student-teacher present his/her lesson. These items and their variables are divided into six groups as follows:

1. Preparation of lesson plan: (a) statement of objectives (b) content (1) logic and sequence (II) adequacy.
2. Presentation: (a) introduction (relevance) (b) development of lesson (c) mastery of subject (d) use of chalkboard (e) time management (f) question techniques (g) effective use of instructional materials-relevance-adequacy-variety (h) class participation (i) summary/conclusion.
3. Class management: (a) class control (b) class arrangement (c) reaction and reinforcement of students' responses
4. Communication skills: (a) clarity of voice (b) appropriate use of language.
5. Evaluation: (a) suitability of assessment (b) attainment of stated objectives.
6. Teachers' personality: (a) neatness/dressing (b) comportment.

The above items and variables form the checklist or observation inventory for supervisors to initiate actual observation during lesson presentation by student-teachers. The supervisors are advised to visit student-teachers in their teaching practice schools as many times as possible, but the average of any best two visits can be used to assess student-teachers. **The post observation stage:** During this stage which comes up immediately after the actual observation, supervisor's comments are discussed (by student-teacher and supervisor) with regard to strengths and weaknesses in effective and efficient lesson delivery, and corrections are appropriate made. These corrections form the bases for improvement in subsequent lesson presentations. Trainee Biology teachers face infrastructural development challenges during teaching practice exercise.

Okobia, et al (2013) in a study explored the infrastructural development challenges trainee Biology teachers faced during teaching practice. The study showed that 15 out of 21 items were viewed by the majority of student teachers as major challenges faced during teaching practice exercise. These include; lack of housing, poor classroom, poorly equipped libraries, lack of tables and chairs, overcrowded classes and poorly equipped labs.

Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) in a study investigated the infrastructural development challenges student teachers experienced during teaching practice and found out that insufficient classroom, lack of teaching equipment, inflexibility in classroom arrangement, lack of teaching equipment, not using relevant textbooks were the challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. In addition to infrastructural growth, classroom management is a cardinal aspect describing a flourishing teaching job.

Generally, classroom management encircles a wide range of steps and activities to create a friendly atmosphere of learning: ensure smooth running of lessons and limit the misbehavior and disruptions. Classroom management marks one of the major issues faced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. Another study was carried out by Kayikei (2017) on classroom management challenges, and results showed that students are loud, uncooperative and disturbing in class, overcrowded classroom, and uncaring attitude were the challenges.

Merc and Subasi (2015) performed a study in Turkey and results showed that teaching methods, lesson planning and students' motivation were major sources of classroom management issues new Biology teachers faced during teaching practice exercise. Another factor worthy of consideration was attitude of the managers toward trainee Biology teachers.

Bechuke, et al (2013) in their study on mindset of the supervisor towards trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise in South Africa, found that university supervisors are not consistent in their duties as supervisors. They stated that some supervisors make very harsh comments about lesson delivery and some of them do not pay regular visits to practicing schools and that some student teachers indicated that they were never visited by their supervisors, not even once, and yet their visits and roles contributes heavily to the success of the practice. In another study on attitude of the supervisors towards trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice, Mosas (2016), getting proper comments from the supervisors was a problem. In many cases, the supervisor leaves without comments or giving too broad comments that do not guide the trainee, some of the supervisor's intimidating nature makes me tensed during lesson delivery, which agrees with Nakpodia (2013), who stated that some supervisors do not even have time to sit down and discuss their observations and comments with the student teachers, some supervisors are reluctant to visit our school because of its location, some marked the lesson plan but do not observe the lesson, some of them do not supervise me at all. Yassin (2015) further investigated the challenges from academic supervisors during teaching practice and established that the academic supervisors do not give appropriate encouragement, guidance and feedback to motivate them, they spend only a few minutes in the class, and they are impatient to go through the lesson notes. In another study, it was found that there is lack of cordial connection between the boss and the trainee teachers (Abongida & Foncha, 2015). Suggestions were made to give answer to the challenges of trainee Biology teachers.

Lampert (2015) suggested that the chairman/coordinators or the organizing group of the teaching practice exercise must ensure that provisions for effective information exchange flow are made. The actualization of practical teaching relies eventually on the teaching practice group that is organizing the program. Also, Principals should provide office space to the student teachers; the government should pay teaching practice payments for the up-keep of student teachers and for supervision by lecturers. The supervisors should help

the student teachers earn the trust of both themselves and their managers. It will also be easier to reach the goal of teaching practice if the student teachers are constantly evaluated. It was stated by Ngada (2014) and Koross (2016) that schools of education and colleges should plan the teaching practice exercises very well so that new teachers can get the best education. Before they go on teaching practice, student teachers should get the right training through effective communication channels such as seminars, workshops, conferences, and discussions. They should also take part in at least two micro-teaching exercises to get experience with teaching. The University should ask the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, people, and businesses to help provide them with the educational tools and learning resources they need to do well. Additionally, it was suggested that proper attention should be paid to class management. To reach the specific goal, student teachers should be given housing by the practicing school, qualified and dedicated supervisors should be used for teaching practice supervision, and there should be enough facilities and reference materials, such as textbooks, available (Ngada, 2014; Abongida & Foncha, 2015). It has not been fully studied how teaching works at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, which is what led to this study: Challenges and possible solutions to the teaching experiences of trainee biology teachers at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

In particular, the study aims to: i. find out what problems trainee biology teachers had with building new facilities during their teaching practice exercises; ii. find out what problems they had with managing their classrooms during their practice exercises. iii. determine the attitude of supervisors toward trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. iv. find out the possible panacea to the challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the infrastructural development challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?
2. What are the classroom management challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?
3. What are the attitudes of the supervisors toward the trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?
4. What are the possible solutions to the challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?

RESEARCH METHODS

The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. The population of this study was 450 which includes all the 300/400 levels undergraduate students, studying Biology education at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, main campus (2022/2023 session) who had undergone the teaching practice exercise. The sample of 203 students were randomly selected to fill the instrument for data collection. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled Trainee Teachers' Teaching Practice Experience Questionnaire (TTTPEQ) with 33 items, 10 items determining the stages of infrastructural

development challenges, 8 items determining classroom management challenges while 15 items collated data on supervisors' challenges during teaching practice.

The instrument was trial tested on 20 trainee Biology teachers from UNIPORT Nigeria, who were not part of the population of the study. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. This value was deemed appropriate for the instruments to be used for the study.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What are the infrastructural development challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation showing infrastructural development challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise

S/No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	Decision
1	Lack of accommodation for trainee teachers	3.06	1.05	Accepted
2	Lack of chairs and tables for trainee teachers	3.52	0.67	Accepted
3	The school does not have enough classroom for effective teaching	3.74	0.43	Accepted
4	No sufficient staffroom for trainee teachers	3.15	0.86	Accepted
5	There were insufficient seats for students	2.94	0.88	Accepted
6	Lack of laboratory for practical	3.78	0.65	Accepted
7	The library was not well equipped	3.82	0.63	Accepted
8	Relevant textbooks were not available for trainee teachers	3.01	1.02	Accepted
9	Lack of teaching equipment	3.05	0.82	Accepted
10	Difficulty in teacher's movement in classroom during lesson deliveries	2.99	0.91	Accepted

Table 1 presents the results on infrastructural development challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. The result reveals that all the items attained a mean greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, it implies that all the items are challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise.

Research question 2: What are the classroom management challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing the classroom management challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise

S/No	Items	Mean	Std.Dev	Decision
11	The way people are sitting makes it harder for me to teach.	3.07	1.04	Accepted
12	Some students are loud, don't want to work together, and cause problems in class.	3.46	0.68	Accepted
13	Some kids in class always get on my nerves.	3.00	0.96	Accepted
14	Class control was difficult	2.80	0.83	Accepted
15	The classroom was overcrowded by students.	2.94	0.93	Accepted
16	I can't use the discussion way because my kids won't cooperate.	3.06	1.05	Accepted
17	There are no clear disciplinary actions for students' misbehavior	2.05	1.06	Not Accepted
18	Some students misbehave because they do not consider me a permanent teacher	2.94	0.93	Accepted

Table 2 presents result on the classroom management challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. It can also be clearly seen that all the items had a mean greater than the criterion mean 2.50 apart from item 17 that has a lesser mean below the criterion mean. This implies that all the items excluding item 17 are challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise.

Research question 3: What are the attitudes of supervisors toward trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation showing the attitude of supervisors toward trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
19	The supervisor spent only a few minutes in my class	2.90	0.90	Accepted
20	The supervisors can't wait to read the lesson notes.	3.32	0.72	Accepted

21	There are some managers who don't get along with their students.	1.78	0.74	Not Accepted
22	Some bosses don't give me enough information about how I'm doing so I can improve.	3.26	0.69	Accepted
23	Some supervisors do not supervise me at all.	3.21	0.74	Accepted
24	Some managers don't want to come to our school because of where it is.	2.62	1.01	Accepted
25	Some managers mark my lesson plan but don't watch me teach.	3.13	1.02	Accepted
26	Some managers attack my lessons but don't tell me how to make them better.	1.99	0.62	Not Accepted
27	Some supervisors are unapproachable and hostile	3.20	0.74	Accepted
28	Some managers are scary, which makes me tense up while I'm teaching.	2.63	1.01	Accepted
29	Before my boss began, I always have to beg students to behave well.	3.06	1.04	Accepted
30	A review by some managers doesn't give me any new ideas.	3.00	1.07	Accepted
31	Before managers came to our school, my team leader always had to call them.	2.83	1.16	Accepted
32	Some bosses say very mean things about my lesson delivery.	3.40	0.79	Accepted
33	The supervisors extorted money from the trainee teachers.	3.20	0.74	Accepted

Table 3 presents result on the attitude of supervisors toward trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. All the items as reported in the table had a mean greater than the criterion mean apart from items 21 and 26. This implies that they are all the attitude of the supervisors toward trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Infrastructural development challenges trainee Biology teachers experienced during teaching practice.

The study was on experiences of trainee Biology teachers: challenges and possible solution. Table 1 presents result on infrastructural development challenges like lack of accommodation, tables and chairs, lack of laboratories for practical, no sufficient staffroom for trainee Biology teachers, lack of teaching equipment, difficulty in teachers' movement in classroom, the library not well equipped which recorded means of 3.06, 3.52, 2.94, 3.82, 3.05, 2.94 and 2.99 respectively. With a grand mean of 2.50 the students

affirm that these challenges affect trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise. These findings are in line with the view of Okobia, et al (2013) who posited that infrastructural development is a central factor to an efficient and effective education and that poor teaching practice outcomes can be attributed to poor infrastructural development. The study also agreed with Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) revealed that teaching practice is a period of helping the students to try out and apply the principles they have learnt. As a result, they need not to have infrastructural development challenges by the schools of practice as most of them cannot provide relevant textbooks and teaching equipment so due to these challenges, it affects the teaching practice.

Classroom management challenges trainee Biology teachers experienced during teaching practice exercise.

Table 2 presents the data that answered research question 2 on classroom management challenges experienced by trainee Biology teachers in item 11-18. These include, uncooperative and disruptive in class by students, overcrowded classroom, unable to use discussion method because they are not cooperative, sitting arrangement with means of 2.05, 2.80, 2.94, 3.00, 3.07, and 3.46 respectively. As seen in item 17-there are no clear disciplinary actions for students' misbehavior recorded below the determinant mean of 2.50 indicating that the trainee Biology teachers are prepared by the teaching ethics to apply disciplinary measures to a student that misbehaves. Items 11-18 excluding 17 were seen as major constraints and with a mean of 2.80 and above. The respondents affirmed that they affect their practice effectiveness corroborating these findings. This is in agreement with Kayikei (2017) who observed that sitting arrangement, overcrowded classroom affect the effectiveness of teaching practice. It is also in agreement with Mphillimy (2014) who found out that uncooperative and disruptive in class by students, unable to use discussion method because students are not cooperative pose a big challenge to trainee Biology teachers.

Attitude of the supervisors towards trainee Biology teachers during teaching practice exercise.

Table 3 presents result on attitude of supervisors towards the trainee Biology teachers. Items 19-33 had their mean greater than the criterion mean. This indicated that trainee Biology teachers were faced with challenges from supervisors during teaching practice exercise. This is in line with Yassin (2015) who observed that trainee Biology teachers do not get appropriate guidance and feedback to motivate them to implement in classroom activities. Also, Bechuke (2013) further revealed that supervisors do not pay regular visits to practicing schools, they are unapproachable and hostile, they criticized the lesson but do not provide any direction for improvement. These findings also agreed with that of Abongida and Foncha (2015) who observed that there is lack of cordial relationship between the supervisors and the trainee Biology teachers, they do not give sufficient feedback on their performance to enable them make corrections. It also agrees with

Mosas (2016) who stated that supervisors leave without comment or giving too broad comment that do not guide the trainees.

CONCLUSION

The study was on challenges trainee Biology teachers face during teaching practice in universities, a preview of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria. The study findings showed that infrastructural development challenges, classroom management challenges and the attitude of supervisors affect trainee Biology teachers and influence their effective practice of teaching. These findings call for prompt tackling of the obvious challenges to enhance education for sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to make teaching practice effective.

1. The government should endeavor to build more classrooms, staffrooms and accommodations for student teachers. All secondary schools should have a well - equipped laboratory and library.
2. Trainee Biology teachers should only be sent to schools with laboratories.
3. The government and the school authority should put heads together in providing modern teaching equipment to student teachers to enhance effective teaching and learning.
4. Finally, University authorities in Nigeria should as a matter of urgency re-orientated supervisors on the need to properly supervise trainee Biology teachers in order to bring out the best in them during teaching practice. The supervisors should go a step further to serve as models that the students would copy in order to prepare them well for the future role of nation builders and economic backbones.

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