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Assessment of Supervisors' Self-Efficacy in Teaching Practice and How Beliefs Influence Feedback to Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract
The present study explores supervisors' self-efficacy as "a future-oriented belief about the level of competence" a supervisor can master in Block Teaching Practice (BTP). A key focus was to examine self-efficacy beliefs that influence supervisors' thought patterns and emotions regarding the ability to provide effective supervision and "performance feedback" to student teachers. The overarching question of the study is: Does supervisors' feedback in BTP influence classroom instruction? A review of the relevant literature shows that few studies have examined these issues in Tanzania, the East Africa region, or indeed Africa in general. Few studies exist that explicitly explore self-efficacy in supervision of student teachers' practices. Since student teachers rely on supervisors for constructive feedback, this study is important and critical for the movement to improve supervision confidence in giving constructive feedback and an important element toward enhancing the competence of teacher trainees. Hence the need for the present study. A questionnaire was sent to supervisors as the primary instrument for data collection to determine the extent to which supervisors perceived their capacity to influence student performance. The findings indicate that, overall, supervisors' perceived self-efficacy was high, and this group was very much aware of the tasks involved in supervision. The study also revealed challenges supervisors face in their work and laid the foundation for further analysis of perceived self-efficacy in supervision.
Keywords: self-efficacy, supervisors, block teaching practice, pre-service teacher

1. Introduction

The assessment of Block Teaching Practice (BTP) supervisors' sense of self-efficacy is a project purposely designed to determine the relationship between *supervision* and *self-efficacy* in the mentoring process of pre-service students in Tanzania. Self-efficacy refers to the degree to which a person believes that he or she can affect an outcome (Ingersoll 2002). Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998) found that "greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, and which in turn leads to greater efficacy" (p. 234). For teachers and supervisors in the school environment, their sense of self-efficacy relies on the belief that they could affect changes in classrooms with student teachers. Supervisors' self-efficacy beliefs depend on the extent to which the supervisor perceives his or her capacity to influence student performance, including marginal or struggling pre-service teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001).

The analysis of *self-efficacy* in the present study examined three issues. The first part surveyed and documented supervisors' demographic information as a basis for an individual's sense of confidence and competence in the profession. The result is positive appraisal of performance and increased self-efficacy. Second, the study examined supervisors' practice of giving feedback to pre-service teachers during BTP and his/her belief in effecting changes. The feedback process includes couching, guiding, counseling, monitoring, supervising, and supporting teacher trainees. The third part analyzed supervisors' *self-efficacy*. This third analysis has not been included in the current article but will be part of a separate follow-up paper that examines a supervisor's belief that a teacher is capable of exercising personal control over one's behavior, thinking, and emotions. The goal will be to establish the level of confidence a supervisor brings to his/her work in providing feedback to student teachers.

The overall assumption of the present study is that an individual's demographic information, competence, teaching experience, and confidence in the job collectively contribute to building beliefs in one's capabilities as a supervisor—in other words, his/her perceived *self-efficacy*. Therefore, a supervisor's belief that he or she can affect student teachers' learning lies at the center of determining how to improve the practice of BTP.

Since assessment of student teachers during BTP aims to deliver *excellent* instruction to all classrooms, it is imperative that educators have clarity in the understanding of what supervisors "can do" in contemporary school classrooms. That is the quest of the present study, in which *self-efficacy* refers to the belief in what a person can do (Zimmerman & Cleary 2006). Such *can do* belief was characterized by Bandura (1977) as "perceived self-efficacy." In his 1977 article, "Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change," Bandura defined *perceived self-efficacy* as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3).

In this instance, Bandura's (1977) "perceived self-efficacy" was concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce given attainment. However, according to Coladarci and Breton 1997), self-efficacy is

about what a person "can do" to produce changes and how well he/she can do it (see also Bong & Skaalvik 2003). In turn, Bandura emphasized that people with low self-efficacy tend to magnify possible problems and threats, and dwell with their shortcomings. Thus, individuals with low efficacy often assess a task as "impossible" or too "difficult" to do, and therefore such a task should be abandoned. (e.g., the pre-judgment of the "*Haiwezekani*" attitude of saying "No" before all facts are gathered and examined, or an attempt is made to find evidence to support the "No" proposition). In sum, self-efficacy is tension between "I can vs. I can't." Thus, generally we may expect teacher self-efficacy to be negatively associated with a teacher's attitude toward perceived obstacles or stress in the environment.

In addition, one may feel different capabilities in different areas. For example, one may feel highly capable in math but only moderately capable in science. As I will further explain later in this essay, a perceived self-efficacy is developed based on mastery of experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and somatic and emotional states (Bandura, 2004). The present study explores supervisors' self-efficacy as "a future-oriented belief about the level of competence" a supervisor *can* master in a given BTP situation (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001, p. 787). The study examines issues underlying BTP supervision in order to understand how supervision can produce good teachers efficiently and effectively. Concurrently, this study examined *self-efficacy beliefs* that influence supervisors' thought patterns and emotions regarding the ability to provide effective supervision and "performance feedback" to student teachers.

Alternatively, this study asks—can supervisors ensure that highly qualified teachers are also highly motivated, persistent, and resilient? To answer these questions, a survey questionnaire was sent to supervisors who were engaged in training and evaluating student teachers during BTP in 2017, to determine their "sense of self-efficacy toward formal teaching as (education) function" (Prieto, & Meyers 1999).

A primary role for BTP supervisors is supervision of student teachers (Glickman et al. 2004). Essentially, the teaching experience gained during BTP plays a significant role in molding student teachers' perceptions on their role and responsibilities as future teachers (Kushner 1993). For this reason, educators agree generally that there is a need for *mentoring*, coaching, and instructional support from supervisors (Murphy & Torff 2012). This type of mentoring is especially vital for student teachers who are new to the profession, since student teachers rely heavily on supervisors, cooperating teachers, and heads of schools (principals) for feedback on lessons that student teachers teach in schools (Oliva et al. 2009). As teacher evaluation policies continue to evolve and require teachers to meet performance standards (Murphy & Torff 2012), it is important to define the relationship between supervisors and the recommended "teacher performance standards" (Murphy & Torff 2012). These matters are the focus of the present study.

Every year the growing numbers of student teachers in Tanzania, for example, results in significantly hiring more teacher supervisors (Vumilia & Semali 2017). However, for most of supervisors' educational background is inadequate when assessing student teachers from another discipline (e.g., science education). Few supervisors are former science teachers, and supervisory training routinely fails to encompass STEM pedagogy (Hunt 2008; Shumate et al. 2005). It seems plausible, therefore, to presume that the increasing population of student teachers is causing a "supervision problem" in contemporary schools and in Tanzania in particular: more science teachers whom supervisors feel unprepared to supervise.

Previous research indicates that experienced principals, acting as supervisors and mentors of new teachers, are able to view the big picture, putting all the lesson components together to form meaning and coherence (Oliva, Mathers, & Liane 2009). Novice principals, however, attempt to understand each segment of the lesson without drawing direct connections in order to make meaning for the students (Murphy & Torff 2012). This finding affirms the fact that not all supervisors are equal in their abilities to supervise, and there may be factors (such as experience and mastery of disciplinary knowledge) that influence their ability to supervise teacher-trainees. Hence, it remains unclear whether the individuals who supervise student teachers feel competent enough to do so.

Although supervision is a common practice in schools everywhere, researchers know very little about its direct or indirect effect on teachers' formative evaluation (assessment) or factors by which teacher supervision influences classroom instruction (Sullivan, & Glanz 2005). Most of the existing reports found in the current literature that researchers could classify as "research-based" are either descriptive or correlational, and largely compare group means. Few of these studies are guided by *explanatory models* or employ analytical techniques designed to uncover such models (Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy 2001).

For this reason, some authors have questioned the value of doing research in this area, given the lack of conceptual grounding in the existing literature. This observation led Alfonso (1984) to surmise that the "lack of research and ongoing disagreement on the definition and the purposes of supervision in education" (p. 16) have contributed to weak preparation programs for instructional supervisors (Sullivan & Glanz 2005).

The present study examines these issues in Tanzania. In particular, the study probes whether a supervisor's evaluation of student teachers during BTP influences or sways in any way classroom instruction. In the following sections, I document the BTP process to examine the dynamic features of teacher education and the

engagement of supervisors in field experiences of teaching practice. First, I present the background and context of BTP supervision in Tanzania. Second, the study examines theories that support teacher self-efficacy in classroom teaching in the attempt to develop a framework of BTP supervision. Third, the study discusses reports gathered from BTP supervisors to explain the *role of supervisors' self-efficacy* in a learner-centered BTP experience that bolsters effective teaching. This study advances an empirically grounded investigation of supervisors' performance during BTP and suggests implications for future research, policy, and practice.

2. Context of BTP Supervision in Tanzania

This researcher explored supervision in BTP insofar as it provides training opportunities to beginning teachers who become socialized into the teaching profession to become teachers (Vumilia & Semali 2016; Furlong et al. 1988). In Tanzania, BTP is designed as an integral component of teacher training, and thus, student teachers are obliged to engage with experienced teachers (supervisors) who guide and monitor their teaching practice as part of their training program (Hardman et al. 2012). The overall intent of BTP is to expose student teachers to classroom teaching and learning environments in order to challenge the development of teaching skills through a framework of socialization into the profession (Lukanga 2011). Since teaching practice requires hands-on teaching, there is broad agreement on the importance of incorporating field experiential learning into teacher education programs (Wang et al. 2003) even though the requirements vary widely across countries (Ronfeldt & Reininger 2012).

The initial teacher training in Tanzania has traditionally consisted of two years of study in a Teachers' Training College (TTC), with relatively little time given to teaching practice in schools. However, the capacity of colleges to supervise teaching practice effectively has often been limited due to funding constraints (Hardman, & Tibuhinda 2012). In the past 10 years, there have been attempts to minimize costs by making the second year of teacher training school-based. However, this practice presents a major challenge in terms of the effectiveness of the supervision of the school-based component in the second year and suggests the need for more flexible approaches to pre-service training (Hardman, & Tibuhinda 2012). However, the overarching assumption of BTP supervision, which calls for scrutiny, is the conviction that an effective block teaching practice will stimulate and yield excellence in the teaching of student teachers (Garet et al. 2001; Feiman-Nemser 2001).

However, supervision in Tanzania conjures up three perspectives of teacher supervision, namely: (1) supervision in schools, (2) clinical supervision, and (3) supervision of novice teachers during BTP. First, school supervision refers to the act of overseeing the work of the school and providing professional guidance and advice to teachers. In a country like Tanzania, external school inspection aims at monitoring delivery of education, adherence to stipulated curriculum and set standards, and ensuring efficiency and quality (Kokeyo & Oluoch 2015; Wassena 2009). In this effort, supervision is a collaborative course of action where the supervisor works with the head of school, teachers, and the school committee/board to improve pedagogical and administrative activities at school. The three complementary roles of a supervisor are to provide: (a) advice to improve overall quality of the school management, (b) support and advice to improve school management and classroom pedagogy, (c) a link between the school and local government authority (Wassena 2009).

Second, the use of clinical supervision as a method for improving instruction has a recent history. The earliest application began with Morris Cogan (1972) and Robert Goldhammer (1969) at Harvard University in the 1960s. They were reacting to frustrations they encountered as university supervisors trying to help novice teachers succeed. Cogan and Goldhammer borrowed the term "clinical supervision" from the medical profession, where it has been used for decades to describe a process for perfecting the specialized knowledge and skills of practitioners (Hall 1983).

Essentially, clinical supervision in education involves a teacher receiving information from a colleague who has observed the teacher's performance and who serves as both a mirror and a sounding board to enable the teacher to critically examine and possibly alter his or her own professional practice (Anderson 1993). Although classroom observations are often conducted by university supervisors or heads of school, clinical supervision is increasingly used successfully by mentor teachers, peer coaches, and teacher colleagues who believe that a fresh perspective will help to improve classroom success (Pajak 2003).

Despite the proposed variations, Goldhammer (1969) identified five states of clinical supervision. (1) Pre-observation conference, (2) Classroom observation, (3) Data analysis and strategy, (4) Conference—meeting with supervisor to clarify and build upon the student teacher's understanding of the behaviors and events that occurred in the classroom, and (5) Post-conference analysis—to critically examine his or her own performance during the clinical supervision cycle.

The third perspective is that supervision during BTP involves commonly recognized tasks. They include, for example, (1) syllabus interpretation—scheme of work, lesson planning, keeping subject logbooks, selection of teaching/learning methodology/techniques; (2) selection and designing of teaching/learning materials; (3) classroom instruction and management; and (4) assessment and evaluation of learning (Wassena 2009). These tasks inform a supervisor's beliefs and self-efficacy.

Apparently, the central contention of supervision as presented in this study is whether supervisors can teach student teachers to teach. There is a tacit assumption that when supervisors take supervision seriously and thus take into account the pedagogical objectives of teaching practice, their effort improves teaching and will yield excellence in teaching among novice teachers. However, little is known about the structure of supervision nationally.

As I have discussed elsewhere (Vumilia & Semali 2016), the socialization of student teachers that accompanies the supervisory tasks is appraised to be a unique academic mentoring process that calls for learning adjustments. Such adjustments include job proficiency, goals, values, school culture, interpersonal relationships, historic rules, and role language (Calderhead & Robson 1991; Deng & Yuen 2011). This process informs and influences a teacher's professional rules, reflective practice, teacher culture, and school environment (Killeavy & Moloney 2010) and is squarely situated within teacher's self-efficacy.

3. Theoretical Considerations

The study of teacher self-efficacy in contemporary educational research draws on social cognitive theory (Bandura 1997, 2002). Within this perspective, self-efficacy is a multi-dimensional construct and perhaps the most central mechanism of human agency—namely, the ability to influence an individual's functioning and life circumstances (Bandura 2006). Self-efficacy determines how an individual perceives environmental opportunities and impediments and thus influences peoples' goals, values, and behavior (Bandura 2006; Schunk & Meece 2006).

Bandura's (1977) perception of self-efficacy can influence thought patterns and emotions that enable actions in which people: (1) expend substantial effort in pursuit of goals, (2) persist in the face of adversity, (3) rebound from temporary setbacks, and (4) exercise some control over events that affect their lives. As such, "teacher efficacy is the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (TschannenMoran et al. 1998, p. 22). A teacher's self-efficacy beliefs depend on the extent to which the teacher perceives his or her capacity to influence student performance, even unmotivated or struggling learners (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001).

In his work, Bandura (1997) identified four sources that contribute to self-efficacy: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological persuasion. Mastery experiences have been determined to have the greatest impact on self-efficacy. Successful authentic mastery experiences help cultivate the beliefs an individual has about his or her performance. This has been determined to have more power than learning new knowledge or skills that may increase competence but not alter perception (Pajares 2002). Furthermore, self-efficacy increases when success is attributed to factors within the individual's control rather than sheer luck or the influence of others (Bandura 1993; Pintrich & Schunk 1996, as cited by Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998).

3.1 Origins of teacher self-efficacy theory

Teacher self-efficacy theory derives from two dominant theoretical frames: Rotter's social learning theory and Bandura's social cognitive theory. Rotter's theory focuses on an individual's perception of internal and external control. The term *teacher efficacy* was used to describe the extent that teachers believed their abilities influenced student learning rather than external factors beyond their control.

In the present study, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) represents the belief that teachers, and by extension supervisors, are capable of exercising personal control over their behavior, thinking, and emotions regarding the tasks of teaching (Spearing 2013). However, self-efficacy is differentiated from self-esteem. Self-efficacy is an evaluation of *capability* whereas self-esteem is a judgment of *self-worth*. Analysts have found teachers' sense of efficacy to be related to student outcomes such as achievement (Armor et al. 1976), motivation (Midgley 1989), and students' own sense of efficacy (Anderson et al. 1988).

Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998 have proposed an integrated model of teacher self-efficacy that considers both Rotter's and Bandura's contributions. This model includes analysis of both the teaching task and the context in which this task exists. In other words, both internal and external factors can influence a teacher's perception of his or her capacity to accomplish a given classroom undertaking. Judgments are made regarding both competence and contingency. Because teacher self-efficacy is a cognitive process, the process of performance, reflection, and assessment repeats itself. As efficacy increases, so do effort and persistence (Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy 2001). The result is positive appraisal of performance and increased efficacy. However, this cycle can be negative in nature if lower self-efficacy leads to less effort, persistence, and resilience (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998).

However, analysts distinguish *personal* from *general* teaching efficacy. The first, personal teaching efficacy, relates to a teacher's own *feelings of confidence* concerning teaching abilities (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001). The second, often called *general teaching efficacy*, "appears to reflect a general belief about the power of teaching—for example, teachers can; teachers can't reach difficult children" (Hoy 2000, p. 3;) such as slow

learners, students with some impairment, and so on (see also, Hoy & Spero 2005).

The concepts of this theory were integrated into educational research conducted in 1976 by the Rand Corporation, which added two new prompts to their study on the success of a variety of reading programs. These prompts addressed the participants' beliefs in a teacher's influence on student motivation and performance. The prompts were added in a second study, and results showed that student achievement was positively influenced by those teachers with higher self-efficacy (Tschannen Moran et al. 1998).

In this case, *teacher efficacy*—namely, teachers' confidence in the ability to promote students' learning—was identified by the Rand Corporation (Armor et al., 1976) as one of the few teacher characteristics related to student achievement. The Rand study established *teacher efficacy* as the extent to which teachers believed they could control the reinforcement of their actions, that is, whether control of reinforcement lay within them or in the environment in which they teach. Teachers who concur that the influence of the environment overwhelms a teacher's ability to have an impact on a student's learning, exhibit a belief that reinforcement of their teaching efforts lies outside their control, or is *external* to them. Teachers who express confidence in their ability to teach difficult or unmotivated students demonstrate a belief that reinforcement of teaching activities lies within the teacher's control, or is *internal* (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Simply put, it is the belief that a teacher can teach.

The overarching assumption of this teacher efficacy theory is that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more likely to commit themselves to professional development and experiment with innovative teaching strategies (Berman et al. 1977; Guskey 1988; Stein & Wang 1988, as cited by Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). They are more enthusiastic about teaching in general. Much of the research in teacher self-efficacy has focused on pre-service and novice teachers. These studies have shown that efficacy may be more impressionable early in learning (Bandura 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998), and many teachers with low self-efficacy leave the profession within the first five years (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001).

4. Methodology

The present study was conducted in northern Tanzania in 2017 using a cross-sectional research survey design in which a questionnaire was the primary instrument for data collection. The goal of the study was to find out what contribution supervisors make to their work. A 30-question survey was sent to supervisors who were engaged in training and evaluating student teachers during BTP in 2017 to determine the extent to which the supervisor perceives his or her capacity to influence student performance.

A few open-ended questions complemented the written questionnaire. The main survey questions were divided into three parts. The first part consisted of 14 questions that probed supervisors' demographic attributes. The second part of the questionnaire sought information about supervisors' competence (3 questions), confidence (5 questions), expectations (3 questions), and challenges (5 questions) in providing feedback to student teachers. The third part examined teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (3 questions) on the extent to which supervisors perceived their ability to influence students' performance. The questions asked supervisors to make a series of judgments about their supervision of BTP novice teachers. Likert-scale questions aimed at probing lecturers' TSE based on their belief that a teacher is capable of exercising personal control over one's behavior, thinking, and emotions related to the teaching, mentoring, and couching of student teachers.

The study was informed further by a relativist-interpretivist paradigm (Cicourel 1964), which is consistent with the qualitative approach and case study method (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Research participants (N=55) were purposely sampled to include only individuals from a pool of supervisors that regularly participate in field BTP (N=170) activities organized by the university where the BTP students were enrolled. The study also provided a basis upon which the practices of self-efficacy could potentially add significant contributions to knowledge in school improvement scholarship.

5. Presentation and Discussion of Results

Information on supervisors' gender, teaching experience, and highest degree completed was sought from respondents. Table 1 summarizes the supervisors' responses to the demographic information.

The data in Table 1 show that 74.5% of the supervisors were males and the remaining 25.5% were females. Moreover, the data indicate that 38.2% of the supervisors had teaching experience between 4-6 years as university lecturers, 30.9% had experience of 1-3 years, and 25.5% had experience of 7-10 years. A small percentage (7.3%) of lecturers had bachelor's degrees while the majority (64.4%) had master's level degrees. These findings suggest that the majority of supervisors had a high level of education, one indicator of their competence and confidence on the job. In addition, the findings revealed that each of the lecturers had supervised teacher trainees during BTP in the past.

5.1 Supervisor's Familiarity with Aspects of Supervision

The first objective of the study was to determine the extent to which supervisors consider themselves competent and familiar with aspects of supervision and therefore of assessing and providing feedback to student teachers.

They were asked to choose among (1) very aware, (2) aware, (3) somehow aware, and (4) not aware. Table 2 summarizes the results.

Table 2 shows that 74.5% of the supervisors considered themselves to be "very aware" about giving constructive feedback during the BTP supervision. Being confident that one is capable of giving constructive feedback is a significant determinant of a supervisor's teacher-efficacy and an important element toward enhancing the competence of teacher trainees. This is because student teachers rely on supervisors for constructive feedback (Oliva, Mathers & Liane 2009). When supervisors visit teacher trainees, they make classroom observations, and based on what was observed, feedback is then given to teacher trainees. Therefore, skills in making observation are an essential part of the competencies expected from supervisors.

In addition, data from Table 2 show that 72.7% of supervisors indicated being very aware with classroom observation, and the other 27.3% reported being generally aware of the same. The overall data profile suggests that supervisors perceive themselves to be confident in making classroom observations, understand the strong and weak points in teacher trainees' practice, and then give constructive feedback that aims at helping student teachers to improve their teaching.

5.2 Perceived Competence in Supervising Teacher Trainees

The next series of questions attempted to determine supervisors' beliefs of what they can do during BTP. They were asked to assess their beliefs about teaching and the way they perceived themselves when conducting supervision. To do this, a Likert scale was presented containing nine items with instructions to rate their agreement on a scale from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. Table 3 summarizes the responses.

Table 3 shows that all participants agreed that they have always given constructive feedback. This implies that they consider themselves competent in giving feedback. Most of them (74.5%) are much aware of giving feedback to student teachers. Some 83.3% of supervisors agreed that they could positively change a number of teacher trainees during teaching practice supervision. These supervisors have strong beliefs that the feedback they give to student teachers is vital and capable of having positive effects on students. Other supervisors (57.4%) believed that there are students who are difficult to change despite having good supervisors.

5.3 Supervisors' Beliefs in Teaching Abilities

Participants were asked to rate the strength of their beliefs in teaching abilities in BTP to attain certain outcomes. Some 14 items were presented with the understanding that participants will rate themselves from the perspective of a BTP supervisor working to produce an effective teaching and learning environment. Responses were marked on a scale of 1-4 with (1) very weak belief in my abilities (VW), (2) weak belief in my abilities (W), (3) strong belief in my abilities (S), and (4) very strong belief in my abilities. Table 4 summarizes the results.

The results in Table 4 show that lecturers have strong beliefs in supervision (mean 3.15 out of 4.0). Further, the data show that 41.8% and 52.7% of supervisors perceived communicating needs and goals necessary to enhance effective instructional effectiveness. Additionally, 36.4% and 60% of the lecturers considered influencing student teachers to utilize teaching and learning practice to be a very strong and strong belief, respectively.

Despite lecturers rating most of the items as being strong beliefs, 10.9% and 29.1% of them rated the aspect of guarding student teachers from filling out too much (unnecessary) paper work as being a very weak and weak belief, respectively. These findings imply that some supervisors had a negative attitude toward discouraging paperwork to teacher trainees, suggesting that these supervisors believe that paperwork can make a positive contribution to teaching practices. Both theory and practical aspects of teaching should be emphasized to teacher trainees.

5.4 Supervisors' Engagement in Supervision

Lecturers were asked to indicate the extent to which they consider their engagement in the supervision process to be productive toward enhancing teacher effectiveness. Responses are summarized in Table 5.

Data from Table 5 show that 90.9% of supervisors agreed that the time spent supervising student teachers during teaching practice is productive. This finding implies that most of the lecturers who supervise student teachers believe not to be wasting time doing supervision and that such activity is of great importance toward enhancing teaching effectiveness among student teachers. This is further supported by lecturers who indicated that they have positively changed a good number of student teachers through supervising them during teaching practice.

Though lecturers believed they were using their time well on enhancing effectiveness among teacher trainees, 89.1% reported efforts were hampered by policy and other impediments. This finding implies that lecturers are internally motivated to conduct supervision but that the presence of external forces may affect their efficacy in supervising student teachers. Additionally, 87.3% of lecturers indicated that the time they spend in improving teaching and learning during BTP makes little difference and leaves them feeling discouraged. The

findings suggest that though lecturers consider their time during BTP to be productive, the result is too little. This means that not all of what they expect from teacher trainees as a result of supervising them is achieved.

5.5 Implementation of Teaching Practice Supervision

Supervisors were asked to make a series of judgments about their experiences as a BTP supervisor. They rated their strength of beliefs to attain stated outcomes. Eleven items on a Likert scale were provided for rating from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. Feelings and experience concerning the implementation of teaching practice supervision was rated. Responses to this question are summarized in Table 6.

Findings in Table 6 show that 81.8% of supervisors indicated that a single visit is not enough to effectively assess student teachers. This was further supported by 94.5% of them who reported that follow-up visits are important to check on student teachers' progress. These findings imply that a good number of supervisors supported positively that follow-up visits are important for proper supervision. Moreover, results show that 92.7% of the lecturers were found to be observing student teachers in real classroom settings. This finding implies that though some supervisors complained that schools were located in rural areas, they managed to reach them and do the supervision.

In addition, 41.8% of supervisors disagreed with the statement that "when it comes right down to it, teachers really cannot do much in the class because most students' motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment." However, the majority (80%) of supervisors agreed that if they try really hard, they can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students. These results suggest that supervisors struggle hard to increase the efficacy of teaching practices, despite some student teachers not being malleable.

5.6 Supervisors' tasks performed during teaching practice

Supervisors were further asked to rate the extent to which they performed various activities during the supervision process, and the results are summarized in Table 7.

Results showed that 79.6% of supervisors always help student teachers to build confidence while teaching, and 79.6% reported they encourage student teachers to dedicate themselves to the teaching profession and help them to identify the strengths and weaknesses. Also, 83.3% of supervisors reported that they provide constructive feedback that is aimed at professional growth of student teachers, 85.5% of lecturers evaluate student teachers' performance objectively following the assessment grid (form/rubric), 77.8% of lecturers help student teachers to be organized during teaching and 85.5% of them encourage student teachers to prepare their lessons before going to class. The findings revealed that the majority of supervisors agreed that to a large extent they always perform supervisory activities.

However, 7.4% of lecturers indicate neither assisting student teachers to select appropriate teaching methods nor helping them to select appropriate teaching and learning resources. This may be because some lecturers consider themselves ill- equipped regarding learner-centered techniques. Therefore, a need exists for a serious orientation of lecturers on learner-centered methods to make them capable of helping student teachers during teaching practice supervision.

5.7 Lecturer's perceptions on the importance of supervision

Table 8 shows that 83.3% of supervisors strongly stated that supervision helps student teachers to become competent teachers. Roughly, 80% of them strongly agreed that supervision helps the student teachers to build confidence, 85.5% of them agreed that student teachers change positively after being supervised, and 96.3% of them agreed that supervision helps student teachers to improve lesson preparation and to improve their presentation skills. The findings reported by supervisors suggested that teaching practice has more to do with student teachers' preparation because it enhances their ability to prepare lesson plans, adopt teaching and learning methods, as well as changes their attitude and improves student teachers' presentation skills.

5.8 Challenges Encountered during Supervision

Lecturers were asked to state the impediments that affect their efficacy in the supervision process. Table 9 presents the challenges. The supervisors stated that the impediments included: transportation problems, most schools are in remote areas, collision of assessment time with school timetable such as sports, religion, and weekly tests.

The efficacy of supervision can be affected internally (which is determined or controlled by the supervisor him/herself) or by external factors, which are impediments that generally affect the self-efficacy of supervision process. The presence of many lecturers pinpointing environmental factors as being challenges is an indication that some lecturers consider teaching practice supervision as an income-generating project and not a means of working with teacher trainees in making them effective teachers.

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Direction of Future Research

The quest in the present study was to understand the extent to which a supervisor perceives his/her capacity to influence student performance in pre-service teaching practice. The term "teacher efficacy" was used in this study to describe the extent to which a supervisor believed his/her abilities were central to student teachers' teaching skills rather than external factors beyond the supervisors' control. The study relied on the work of Bandura (1977) to define the theory of self-efficacy and to explain the origins of teacher self-efficacy.

The assumption of this teacher efficacy theory is that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more enthusiastic about teaching in general and more likely to commit themselves to professional development and will experiment with innovative teaching strategies (Berman et al. 1977; Guskey 1988; Stein & Wang 1988). A questionnaire was sent to supervisors who were engaged in training and evaluating student teachers during BTP. The intent was to determine their sense of self-efficacy toward formal teaching and the preparation of future teachers. It was important to probe supervisors' future-oriented belief about the level of confidence in the ability to promote students' learning. In addition, the study examined how a supervisor can master environmental obstacles, expectations, and challenges in a given BTP situation. How can the supervisor control the reinforcement of his/her actions?

The underlying assumption of this study was based on a keen interest in understanding the mental processes and mind-set that supervisors bring to their work of supervising student teachers during BTP in Tanzania. The study asked—Does a supervisor's feedback influence classroom instruction? Can supervisors affect changes in classrooms with student teachers? Reports gathered from BTP supervisors who regularly supervise student teachers provided insights into what occurs during teaching practice. The focus was on the judgments supervisors made and how an individual supervisor perceives the student teaching environmental opportunities and impediments, and how these judgements and perceptions influence a supervisor's goals, persistence, values, and behavior.

Teacher efficacy—teachers' confidence in the ability to promote students' learning—was identified in this study and made obvious in a variety of forms. For example, the participants of the study indicated they were highly educated, were confident in what they teach, know what they teach, and expect their student teachers to teach well in classrooms of their own. Supervisors identified some of the most powerful influences on the development of teacher efficacy, namely, mastery experiences during student teaching.

In sum, the key findings of the present study revealed that (1) confidence, (2) competence, and (3) the ability to give feedback to student teachers were the source of a supervisor's self-efficacy. First, supervisors demonstrated ample confidence in what they can do to influence the outcomes of student teaching. They were very much aware of classroom need for student observation and giving constructive feedback to student teachers. Supervisors were aware of activities such as preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans, respectively. Some open-ended questions invited supervisors to make a statement about the efficacy of their own teaching, reflecting confidence that they have adequate training and experience to develop strategies for overcoming obstacles to student teachers' learning.

In addition, the data in Table 4 show that 29.1% and 56.4% of lecturers rated the aspect of performing regular observation of teachers as being very strong or strong, respectively. Another 29.1% and 52.7% (81.8%) rated the aspect of using data collected from teacher observations to inform school-wide efforts for improving teaching and learning as a strong belief in teaching student teachers. Providing effective modeling for teachers regarding effective teaching and learning practices was rated to be a very strong belief (67.3% of the supervisors). The findings suggest that most of the supervisors believe that supervision should aim to improve teaching and learning practice through collection of classroom performance data and giving constructive feedback. These findings affirm the perception that most lecturers believe that supervisors need to provide guidance to teacher trainees that will enable the trainees to utilize available resources and consider the goals of education and needs of society to enhance effective teaching.

Nevertheless, a few supervisors indicated that they felt inadequately prepared to assist student teachers in executing two important aspects of supervision (scheme of work and lesson plans). They felt their previous training was responsible. In addition, findings show that few lecturers (3.6%) are not adequately aware of learner-centered methods. Lack of knowledge or competence in this area limits the supervisor's ability to help student teachers in learner-centered methods. Besides, despite the reporting of being confident in making classroom observation (5.5%), supervisors indicated being unaware of the skills to evaluate teacher trainees' performance.

Second, regarding the supervisor's belief in his or her competence, a small minority of them indicated that they could not supervise teacher trainees of any subject. This implies that this group felt inadequate when supervising teacher trainees teaching a subject with which they are unfamiliar. The sense of inadequacy was beyond the control of the supervisor. The supervisor may not be in a good position to help teacher trainees. That is, supervision may not meet its expected goals.

Third, the study revealed that supervisors have a strong belief in the ability to give feedback to student

teachers. A supervisor who assumes the role of a coach or mentor, for example, can dramatically support a student teacher in identifying specific strengths and weaknesses (Hoy 2000). Research affirms this theory by documenting how skill development programs that use feedback and coaching are more successful than similar programs that do not include coaching (Joyce & Showers 1996). The inclusion of coaching elements is even more critical when instructional leaders are working with marginal teachers.

Some questions explored self-efficacy beliefs that influence supervisors' thought patterns and emotions regarding the ability to provide effective supervision and performance feedback to student teachers. The overarching question of the study was—Can supervisors ensure that highly qualified teachers are also highly motivated, persistent, and resilient teachers? Supervisors seem to indicate this issue was the top priority of student teaching and an area in which a supervisor is able to exert much influence on the student teacher. Previous research has found that some aspects of efficacy increase during student teaching while other dimensions may decline (Coladarci 1992; Hoy & Spero 2005).

In sum, this study confirmed that "any experience or training a supervisor provides that helps novice teachers succeed in the day-to-day tasks of teaching will give the novice teachers a foundation for developing an increased sense of efficacy" (DiPaola & Hoy 2008, p. 110). Marginal teachers can be identified by observing classroom performance and disaggregating assessment data. Signs of low self-efficacy among student teachers may include "minimal effort, helplessness, and passive teaching" (DiPaola & Hoy 2008).

The present study gives direction for future research. The findings show that a supervisor can exert much influence on the student teacher in terms of motivation, persistence and resilience in the cases of drawbacks. Future research should explore these aspects further. Overall, the present study becomes a basis for future research on policy and practice of supervision. The results exposed the fact that there are areas that need to be examined further regarding the self-efficacy of supervisors. In sum, effective teaching of future teachers rests upon the ability of the supervisor to instill the enthusiasm of teaching and of controlling learning that takes place in classrooms. Self-efficacy proves to be an important element to realize such eventuality. A supervisor's self-efficacy follow-up study to the present study will examine in depth how a supervisor can effect changes in classrooms with student teachers. The goal will be to differentiate supervisors with high self-efficacy from those with low self-efficacy.

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Table 1. Demographic Information of Supervisors (N=55)

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	41	74.5
Female	14	25.5
Teaching experience in years as a university lecturer		
1-3	17	30.9
4-6	21	38.2
7-10	14	25.5
+10	3	5.5
Highest Degree Completed		
Bachelor's	4	7.3
Master's	38	64.4
Doctorate (PhD)	13	23.6

Table 2. Supervisors' Level of Familiarity with Aspects of Supervision

Variable	Frequency (%)				Mean
	Very aware	Aware	Somehow aware	Not aware	
Classroom observation	40(72.7)	15(27.3)	0(0)	0(0)	3.73
Giving constructive feedback to	41(74.5)	14(25.5)	0(0)	0(0)	3.75
Student teachers' lesson planning	31(56.4)	20(36.4)	4(7.5)	0(0)	3.49
Developing scheme of work	28(50.9)	22(40)	5(9.1)	0(0)	3.42
Components of the scheme of work	31(56.4)	19(34.5)	5(9.1)	0(0)	3.47
Components of lesson plan	34(61.8)	17(30.9)	4(7.3)	0(0)	3.55
Classroom management	44(80)	11(20)	0(0)	0(0)	3.8
Learner centered methods	33(60)	20(36.4)	2(3.6)	0(0)	3.56
Formation of small groups	34(61.8)	18(32.7)	3(5.5)	0(0)	3.56
Dealing with students' misbehavior	29(52.7)	23(41.8)	3(5.5)	0(0)	3.47
Lesson evaluation	36(65.5)	15(27.3)	4(7.3)	0(0)	3.58
Evaluation of teachers' performance	32(58.2)	18(32.7)	2(3.6)	3(5.5)	3.38

Table 3. Supervisors' Perceived Competence in Supervision

Variables	Frequency (%)					Mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
I believe to have all the skills needed as a supervisor	23(42.6)	24(44.4)	2(3.7)	4(7.3)	1(1.9)	4.19
I am experienced enough to become a good supervisor	26(48.1)	19(35.2)	5(9.3)	4(7.4)	0(0)	4.24
I am capable of dealing with difficult teacher trainees during BTP	26(48.1)	20(37)	3(5.6)	4(7.4)	1(1.9)	4.15
I always give constructive feedback to the teachers I supervise	41(75.9)	13(24.1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.76
Personal relations with students do not interfere with the supervision process	30(55.6)	11(20.4)	4(7.4)	4(7.4)	5(9.4)	4.06
I have positively changed a good number of teacher trainees during teaching practice supervisors	25(46.3)	20(37)	8(14.8)	1(1.9)	0(0)	4.28
I believe that there are some students who are difficult to change regardless of the presence of good supervisors	15(27.8)	16(29.6)	9(16.7)	10(18.5)	4(7.3)	3.52
I am capable of supervising teacher trainees of any subject	24(44.4)	20(37)	3(5.6)	6(11.1)	1(1.9)	4.1
My role as a supervisor is to help students to become effective teachers	48(87.3)	7(12.7)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.96

Table 4. The Strength of Supervisors' Beliefs in Teaching Abilities

Variable	Frequency (%)				Mean
	VW	W	S	VS	
Influence student teachers to utilize effective teaching and learning practices	1(1.8)	1(1.8)	33(60)	20(36.4)	3.31
Provide effective modeling for teachers regarding effective teaching and learning practices	0(0)	3(5.5)	37(67.3)	15(27.3)	3.22
Use research on teaching and learning to guide strategic planning for accomplishment of school goals	1(1.8)	9(16.4)	32(58.2)	13(23.6)	3.04
Plan effective activities and experiences that facilitate teachers' beliefs in their abilities to provide effective teaching and learning activities to their students	1(1.8)	4(7.3)	31(56.4)	19(34.5)	3.24
Use data collected from teacher observations to inform school-wide efforts for improving teaching and learning	1(1.8)	9(16.4)	29(52.7)	16(29.1)	3.09
Regularly perform effective observations of teachers	1(1.8)	7(12.7)	31(56.4)	16(29.1)	3.13
Stay abreast of current best practices for facilitating effective teaching and learning	2(3.6)	5(9.1)	34(61.8)	14(25.5)	3.09
Communicate needs and goals necessary to enhance effective instructional effectiveness to faculty	1(1.8)	2(3.6)	29(52.7)	23(41.8)	3.35
Provide experiences that foster and facilitate high levels of teacher motivation toward teaching and learning	0(0)	8(14.5)	29(52.7)	18(32.7)	3.18
Protect instructional time so that effective teaching and learning can take place	2(3.6)	4(7.3)	32(58.2)	17(30.9)	3.16
Facilitate an atmosphere that provides fair and consistent discipline for all students	0(0)	3(5.6)	29(53.7)	22(40.7)	3.29
Maintain healthy school/community relations	0(0)	5(9.3)	27(50)	22(40.7)	3.25
Maintain a school-wide atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning	2(3.6)	2(3.6)	36(65.5)	15(27.3)	3.16
Guard student teachers from filling out too much (unnecessary) paperwork	6(10.9)	16(29.1)	25(45.5)	8(14.5)	2.64

Table 5. Lecturers' Beliefs in the Engagement in Teaching Practice Supervision

Variable	Frequency (%)		Mean
	Yes	No	
The time I spend engaged in improving teaching and learning at BTP is generally productive	50(90.9)	5(9.1)	1.91
The time I spend engaged in improving teaching and learning at BTP is hampered by policy and/or other impediments	49(89.1)	6(10.9)	1.89
The time I spend engaged in improving teaching and learning at BTP makes little difference and leaves me feeling discouraged	48(87.3)	7(12.7)	1.87
I have quit spending much time attempting to facilitate instructional effectiveness because the efforts do not make a difference	53(96.4)	2(3.6)	1.96

Table 6. Lecturers' Experiences as a BTP supervisor

Variables	Frequency (%)					Mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
A single visit by lecturers is enough to effectively assess student teachers	2(3.6)	6(10.9)	2(3.6)	30(54.5)	15(27.3)	2.09
I observe student teachers in real classroom settings	33(60)	18(32.7)	1(1.8)	3(5.5)	0(0)	4.47
I notify the student teachers before visiting them	38(69.1)	13(23.6)	0(0)	2(3.6)	2(3.6)	4.51
Follow-up visits are important to check on student teachers' progress	40(72.7)	12(21.8)	3(5.5)	0(0)	0(0)	4.67
When it comes right down to it, a teacher really cannot do much in the classroom because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment	5(9.1)	12(21.8)	15(27.3)	16(29.1)	7(12.7)	2.85
If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students	10(18.2)	34(61.8)	7(12.7)	4(7.3)	0(0)	3.91

Table 7. Frequency of Tasks Supervisors Performed during Supervision

Variables	Frequency (%)			Mean
	Always	Sometimes	Never	
Helping student teachers to build confidence while teaching	43(79.6)	10(18.5)	1(1.9)	2.78
Assist student teachers to select the appropriate teaching methods for their learners	25(46.3)	25(46.3)	4(7.4)	2.39
Encourage student teachers to dedicate themselves to the teaching profession	43(79.6)	9(16.7)	2(3.7)	2.76
Help student teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching profession	43(79.6)	11(20.4)	0(0)	2.8
Help student teachers to select appropriate teaching and learning resources	35(64.8)	15(27.8)	4(7.4)	2.57
Provide constructive feedback that is aimed at professional growth of student teachers	45(83.3)	9(16.7)	0(0)	2.83
Evaluate student teachers' performance objectively following the assessment grid(form/rubric)	47(85.5)	7(12.7)	1(.8)	2.89
Help student teachers to reflect on what they have been taught about learners	37(67.3)	17(30.9)	1(1.8)	2.7
Observe student teachers and planning of the activities	31(56.4)	20(36.4)	4(7.3)	2.54
Encourage student teachers to prepare their lessons before going to class	47(85.5)	5(9.1)	3(5.5)	2.85
Help student teachers to be organized during teaching	42(77.8)	10(18.5)	2(3.7)	2.74

Table 8. Perceptions of the Impact of Supervision on Teacher Trainees

Variables	Frequency (%)					Mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
Supervision helps student teachers to become competent teachers	45(83.3)	9(16.7)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	4.8
Supervision helps the student teachers to build confidence	44(80)	9(16.4)	2(3.6)	0(0)	(0)	4.85
Student teachers change positively after being supervised	26(48.1)	20(37)	8(14.8)	0(0)	0(0)	4.33
Supervision helps student teachers to improve lesson preparation	35(64.8)	17(31.5)	1(1.9)	1(1.9)	0(0)	4.59
Supervised students teach better lessons than first-year student teachers	19(35.2)	9(16.7)	11(20.4)	9(16.7)	6(11.1)	3.48
Supervision helps student teachers to select best methods of teaching	25(46.3)	22(40.7)	6(11.1)	0(0)	1(1.9)	4.3
Students teachers are likely to change their attitudes toward the teaching profession after the tasks performed by supervisor	21(38.2)	26(47.3)	6(10.9)	2(3.6)	0(0)	4.28
Supervision helps teacher trainees to improve their presentation skills	30(54.5)	23(41.8)	2(3.6)	0(0)	0(0)	4.59
Supervision has no impact on student teachers' professional growth	5(9.1)	3(5.5)	0(0)	14(25.5)	33(60)	1.81
Supervision helps student teachers to manage their classes effectively	21(38.9)	29(52.7)	1(1.8)	0(0)	3(5.6)	4.2
Supervision has no impact on student teachers' teaching efficacy	5(9.1)	3(5.5)	3(5.5)	14(25.5)	30(54.5)	1.93

Table 9. Challenges Faced During BTP Supervision (n=40)

Opinion	Frequency	(%)
Assessment form format missed some pages	1	2.5
Collision of assessment time with school time table such as sports, religion, and weekly test	5	12.5
Transportation problem; most of schools are in remote areas	19	47.5
Conduct conference	1	2.5
Lack of opportunity to make follow-up for supervised students	1	2.5
Many students teacher training the same subject in one school and lack confidence	5	12.5
Dressing code and language problem	2	5
Unpreparedness of some teacher's students	4	10
Inadequate teaching facilities and poor organization of specific objectives of trainee	2	5