



## Exploring student teachers' stressors in teaching practice in the COVID-19 era in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe

<sup>1</sup>Marvelous Marenzenya 

Teaching Practice Department, Morgenster Teachers College, Zimbabwe

<sup>1</sup>Primary author: [maremarve@gmail.com](mailto:maremarve@gmail.com)

**Abstract** – This study explores student teachers' resilience in teaching practice in the COVID-19 era in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. More specifically, the study was intended to gain insights into the significant teaching practice COVID-19-induced teaching practice stressors. This research study contributes new knowledge to the ongoing discourses about student teachers' resilience in teaching practice in the COVID-19 era. To explore student teachers' resilience on teaching practice in COVID-19 era, the study employed a qualitative social constructivist approach through a phenomenological research design. Data were generated through focus group discussions and in-depth semi-structured interviews. One teachers' college was conveniently sampled, and twenty-one student teachers and six student teachers' mentors were purposively sampled from three primary schools in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. Data were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. The thematic findings revealed that student teachers teaching practice in the COVID-19 era are subjected to teaching practice stressors induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus, illness, isolation, stigmatization and death, anxiety, uncertainty, hopelessness, economic hardships, prolonged teaching practice period, school closures, transference of face-to-face teaching to online learning. Finally, thematic results revealed that the capacity for resilience can be developed during initial teacher preparation, so the study recommends that the teacher education curriculum include a module on resilience.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Resilience, Student teacher, Student teacher's mentor, Teaching practice, Teacher resilience, e-learning

To cite this article (APA): Marenzenya, M. (2024). Exploring student teachers' stressors on teaching practice in the COVID-19 era in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Studies in Inclusive Education*, 1(1), 76-84. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijisie.v1i1.1318>

### I. INTRODUCTION

**I**N Zimbabwe, teaching practice is a crucial component of the teacher education programme in higher education institutions. It serves as a vital platform for the professional development of student teachers (Moyo, 2020; Flores, 2016; White & Forgasz, 2016). The diploma programme follows a 3.3.3 training model, where student teachers spend their second year on teaching practice (Chivore et al., 2015; Mavundutse, Luthuli, Chivore & Dube, 2013). The COVID-19 pandemic, declared in March 2020, posed significant challenges to the teaching practice component of the teacher education programme (United Nations, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Schools closed for five months on March 24, 2020; unlike the theoretical component, which could be completed through e-learning, teaching practice, a practical task, had to be carried out in an actual classroom (Moyo, 2020). By April 15, 2020, about 1.5 billion students in 195 countries, from preschool to higher education, were affected by repeated lockdowns (UNESCO, 2020). The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, described the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a 'generational catastrophe' (United Nations, 2020).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a "forced" transition from classroom teaching to emergency remote teaching, and teachers at colleges and universities and school teachers had to adapt quickly (Flores & Gago, 2020). Teachers and student teachers faced challenges such as transitioning their teaching to an emergency remote online or blended format, learning new technology skills, re-planning and implementing an adjusted curriculum, and dealing with their fears

and anxieties (Dube, 2020; Mukuna & Aloka, 2020). While colleges and universities could arrange for teaching and learning to continue via various online platforms, the same could not be done for student teachers' teaching practice due to school closures, making teaching practice supervision impossible (Moyo, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a global shift from face-to-face to online delivery modes in higher education institutions and schools. However, this transition posed challenges for student teachers in teaching practice, which requires classroom observation, field-based coursework, and face-to-face practicum (Yamamura & Tsutsui, 2021). Tekel, Bayir, and Dulay (2022) found that countries like Canada, Malaysia, and Zimbabwe could not continue with distance education due to infrastructure limitations. Consequently, the requirements to complete teaching practice via distance education were abolished in these regions (Tekel et al., 2022).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience has become crucial for student teachers in teaching practice. Resilience is defined as the ability of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disruptions that threaten its function, viability, or development (Masten, 2014). Research indicates that teachers exhibiting resilience are more likely to persist in challenging situations, adapt to change more readily, and are less likely to consider leaving the profession (Olsen, 2017). Research on teachers' resilience has been conducted in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and Europe, with only a few studies focusing on the African perspective, such as those carried out in South Africa (Ebersohn, 2014; Mansfield, Beltman, Weatherby-Fell, & Brodley, 2016). However, none of these studies have specifically addressed student teachers' resilience in teaching practice in the COVID-19 era. The stress associated with teaching practice has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the need to explore student teachers' resilience in teaching

practice in the COVID-19 era. Given their susceptibility to stress, student teachers in teaching practice should be equipped with coping mechanisms that promote resilience (Gutierrez et al., 2016). While many personal and contextual resources necessary for teacher resilience have been acknowledged, and recommendations have been made at individual, school, and system levels (Day & Gu, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014), fewer studies have identified specific ways teacher education can contribute positively to developing resilience in student teachers on teaching practice (Mansfield, Beltman & Price., 2014).

Research exploring student teachers' stressors on teaching practice in the COVID-19 era has been scarce in Zimbabwe. A few studies conducted in Zimbabwe on the causes of stress in student teachers found that stress was a major challenge for student teachers in attachment (Nyabadza & Mutendera, 2014). The most prevalent sources of stress were ineffective mentorship, high college expectations, harassment by lecturers, and inadequate home support. Mapfumo, Chitsiko, and Chireshe (2012) identified complex learners, low allowances, heavy workloads, and a shortage of teaching-learning media as the main stressors for student teachers in teaching practice. Mavundutse (2004) found that Theory of Education examinations, workload, and being non-resident were stress sources among teachers' college students without specifically referring to teaching practice. None of these studies were conducted in Masvingo District, particularly regarding exploring student teachers' stressors on teaching practice in the COVID-19 era. This study explores student teachers' stressors on teaching practice in COVID-19.

#### **Teaching practice generated stressors in the COVID-19 era**

##### *Duration of teaching practice*

A comparative study on teacher education by Yadav and Dabhade (2011) in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka revealed that the duration and organization of teaching practice varied from country to country (Rembe, Shumba, & Mavuse, 2016). The primary school teacher education programme in Zimbabwe follows a 3.3.3 model of training where student teachers spend three terms on teaching practice (Rembe et al., 2016; Chivore et al., 2015; Mavundutse et al., 2013). Thus, as a result, student teachers may not graduate in Zimbabwe with a Diploma in Education certificate without going through the teaching practice rigours. Student teachers are deployed in practicing schools and attached to qualified, experienced teachers as mentors. College lecturers visit the student teachers in their practicing schools to supervise and examine their overall teaching performance so that a student teacher can complete teaching practice (Konyana & Motalenyane, 2022). Towards the end of the teaching practice period, the student teachers are externally examined by the external assessors from the Department of Teacher Education, University of Zimbabwe (Chivore et al., 2015). External examining is mandatory in all teachers' colleges under the University of Zimbabwe Scheme of Association. Student teachers are externally examined through critical analysis of their teaching practice records and live lesson execution based on the Department of Teacher Education's established criteria for the supervision of practical teaching (Department of Teacher Education, 2015).

##### **Risks associated with COVID-19 on student teachers in teaching practice**

Student teachers in teaching practice are exposed to dangers that put them at risk of infection with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pathogen. Dangers include pathogen exposure, long working hours, psychological distress, fatigue, burnout, stigma, and physical and psychological violence (World Health Organization, 2020). Being at home with families while engaging with learners on meeting platforms potentially caused an emotional overload among student teachers. School closures resulted in some student teachers being stripped of their teacher identity, with classes they had taught being fully or partially removed from them (White & McSharry, 2021). Feelings of isolation and detachment experienced by student teachers because of the removal of human contact and support plunged the student teachers into a state of heightened liminality (White & Mc Sharry, 2021).

The major impact of COVID-19 restrictions was the closure of schools, the postponement or cancellation of all campus-related academic and social activities, disrupting over 1.2 billion students' academic pursuits worldwide (UNESCO, 2020; Capone, Caso, Donizzetti & Procentese, 2020). The unprecedented shift from face-to-face to online teaching posed new challenges that included the development of alternate instructional delivery models and self-directed management of the studies for student teachers and learners with extensive uncertainty, anxiety, and panic (Capone et al., 2020). For student teachers in teaching practice, the insight of being infected with the coronavirus from the learning environment threatens their psychological, physical, intellectual, emotional, and occupational well-being (Patrick et al., 2020). COVID-19-related studies have also shown that student teachers' levels of stress, anxiety, and depression worsened compared to those before the COVID-19 pandemic (Elmer, Mepham, Stadtfeld & Caprano, 2020). For example, Cao et al. (2020) reported that uncertainties over economic impact and deferments in academic activities were positively related to anxiety symptoms. In Ghana, like other developing countries, the teaching-learning environment amidst COVID-19 is further heightened by a lack of adequate personal protective equipment (PPEs), teaching and learning materials and infrastructure, facilities, technical equipment, and other logistical support (UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2020; Agormedah et al. 2020) so the psychological pressure and burden could be enormous for both lecturers and student teachers in the light of the ongoing pandemic and context-specific inadequacies (Pragholapati, 2020).

The 2019 coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and the subsequent confinement have impacted mental health and the academic environment (Morales-Rodriguez, 2021). Several studies reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated an increase in fears of COVID-19 that contribute to growing levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Valero, Velez, Duran & Portillo, 2020; Pieh et al., 2021; Wang & Zhao, 2020) and traumatic stress (Huremovic, 2019; Ramirez-Ortiz et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with distress, fear of infection, depression, and insomnia in lecturers and student teachers, who may experience increased levels of stress associated with increased suicidal behaviours (Sher, 2020). Other COVID-19-induced stressors include prolonged quarantine, fear of infection, frustration, boredom, inadequate provision of supplies, inadequate information, and financial loss (Wakui et al., 2021).

##### **Pedagogy in COVID-19 era**

The unprecedented shift from face-to-face to online teaching posed new challenges that included the development of alternate instructional delivery models and self-directed management of the studies for student teachers and learners with extensive uncertainty, anxiety, and panic (Capone et al., 2020). Since learners and student teachers were not in the same room, student teachers were still trying to create lessons that would be engaging. Kaden's (2020) study revealed that confined to working from home, with existing lesson plans no longer adequate, challenged to learn new technologies, and removed from learners themselves quickly, many students experienced the single most traumatic and transformative event of the modern era. Most student teachers' initial reactions to the shutdown involved panic and rush (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Student teachers who had never used technology for instruction had to adapt and begin using it full-time quickly.

Meaghan (2021) established that with the onset of COVID-19, student teachers had to immediately switch their instruction to an online format in the snap of a finger; however, not every student teacher was as open and flexible to online instruction since they were not accustomed to this sort of format. Regardless of comfort level, student teachers had no choice but to plunge headfirst into a pool of technology. In line with the above revelations Nasr's (2020) study reported that some student teachers were already comfortable with technology, while others rarely used online teaching tools to direct student learning in the traditional face-to-face classroom. Although technology has been a lifesaver for teachers during this unexpected pandemic, there are still student

teachers who never became familiar with technology and never planned on using it for instruction daily. Not all learners will have equal access to online learning. Without additional action, this risks further opening attainment gaps, with the impacts felt the most by those from the poorest backgrounds (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). Little is known about the effectiveness of the implementation of e-learning by student teachers in teaching practice in Zimbabwe as an alternative means of teaching due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Effects of lockdowns and school closures on teaching practices**

When schools closed in Zimbabwe on March 24, 2020, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introduced alternative learning to ensure the continuity of education. These included using radio and television-programmed lessons and online platforms such as ZOOM, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp (Chitanana, 2021). Unlike other academic modules that could be completed online and in distance education, teaching practice presented unique challenges as a practical undertaking in the actual world of the classroom (Moyo, 2020). Teaching practice occurs when schools are open, thus forcing the teachers' colleges to organise teaching practice programmes under the school calendar. College lecturers could not continue teaching practice supervision because the schools have remained closed due to lockdowns used to control the spread of COVID-19. A survey conducted during the last week of March 2020 among student teachers in the United States of America revealed that 75% of the student teachers have experienced anxiety and depression because of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the closure of schools (UNESCO, 2020). In line with the above argument, UNESCO (2020) reported that the closure of schools has augmented an abrupt entry into a new era of learning; that is, the demand for almost immediate digital transformation of learning not only requires the incorporation of technologies but also require the creation or modification processes and abilities of people with the appropriate capacities and skills to develop said processes and technologies.

A study by Frontier Psychology (2022) revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought online learning as the new norm in education, which involves many issues, mostly in the quality of online education since the quality of teacher education is being questioned, especially in imparting adequate Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, which seems to be lacking in preparing teachers for sudden online learning. Research findings from a 2022 study by Frontier Psychology showed that the level of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge and readiness of student teachers were high, especially for Technological knowledge. UNESCO (2020) reported that online education lacks quality because teachers are unprepared for online pedagogical knowledge. Dalal, Archambault, and Shelton's (2021) study revealed that student teachers had difficulties adopting technology due to limited resources. The disruption of learning may exacerbate student teachers' delicate condition and force them to drop out, thereby perpetuating a situation of exclusion because of the inequality characteristic of the higher education system (Ferreira, 2017).

#### **State of preparedness for schools reopening in Zimbabwe**

A survey by The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) (2020) reported that most teachers in Zimbabwe were not aware of the preliminary measures that needed to be put in place ahead of reopening schools, the time frame, and actual dates of reopening, and lacked information regarding the testing of staff and the learners. A research study by ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, and APHRC (2021) revealed that in terms of finance for the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, most African countries had inadequate internal funding to facilitate compliance with the World Health Organisation protocols. In support of the above findings (ZHRC, 2020) revealed that most schools did not have enough finances to put in place preventive measures against COVID-19 before schools opened. Pre-existing challenges with infrastructure were another challenge, especially in already overcrowded schools. For example, Ghana, Nigeria, and Rwanda have average class sizes in primary schools of 39, 51, and 43, respectively

(ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, and APHRC, 2021). On the contrary, Ezeonu, Uneke, and Ezeonu (2021) revealed that in China, Taiwan, South Korea, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Australia, and Israel started with phased reopening, reduction of class sizes, wearing of masks was mandatory, and hand hygiene was ensured. Therefore, this research study needs to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of guidelines for safety put in place by the government of Zimbabwe in preparation for schools reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The study explored the major COVID-19-induced teaching practice stressors in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe. The study's research question was: What are the major COVID-19-induced teaching practice stressors in Masvingo District, Zimbabwe?

## **III. METHODS**

### **Research approach**

This study employs a qualitative approach. As Leavy (2017) suggests, qualitative research is grounded in a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that perceives reality as multi-layered, interactive, and a shared experience. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) also affirm that qualitative research is rooted in a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that views reality as multi-layered, interactive, and a shared experience. Furthermore, qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to understand participants' lived experiences in real-life situations, considering the physical, intellectual, and emotional environment (Chisaka, 2013, p. 10). Creswell (2014) argues that a distinguishing feature of high-quality qualitative research is the presentation of multiple perspectives spanning the entire spectrum of viewpoints.

### **Research paradigm**

Researchers embark on their studies with a specific paradigm or worldview, a fundamental set of beliefs, assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that guide their investigations (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This study utilizes social constructivism as its research paradigm. According to Creswell (2014), the primary objective of researchers adopting a social constructivist approach is to rely heavily on the participants' viewpoints of the situation being studied. This paradigm is particularly suitable for this study due to its focus on individual participants, their experiences, and the meanings they assign to these experiences (Pretorius, 2013). The subjective interpretation of reality inherent in social constructivism makes it an appropriate choice for this study (Magwa & Magwa, 2015).

### **Research design**

Research designs serve as blueprints for research, encompassing decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Shannon-Baker, 2016). This study utilises a phenomenological research strategy of inquiry. Within qualitative research, phenomenological studies strongly emphasise interpretative phenomenological analyses and focus on capturing the uniqueness of events (Yin, 2016). A key strength of a phenomenological research study is its ability to observe effects in real-world settings, acknowledging that context significantly influences causes and effects (Sefotho, 2015). This study aims to understand the individual experiences, the context of these experiences, and the resilient responses they employed in the face of stressors induced by the COVID-19 pandemic during teaching practice.

### **Data collection tools**

#### *Semi-structured Interviews*

This research study employed semi-structured interviews as an appropriate tool for data collection. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they provide an opportunity for follow-up questions and further probing (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are considered appropriate for this study as they allow the researcher to understand the world from

the standpoint of the participants (Barbour, 2013). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to collect data that could not be easily accessed using other methods, for example, data from gestures and facial expressions exhibited when participants expressed their feelings on COVID-19-induced teaching practice stressors (Leavy, 2017). The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews using an interview protocol with ten student teachers on teaching practice and six students' mentors at their practicing schools, which are their natural settings.

#### *Focus Group Discussions*

This study employed focus group discussions as a technique for data collection. The researcher regards focus group discussions as an innovative way of exploring the topic through conducting in-depth interviews with several people simultaneously (Mertens, 2015). Focus group discussions are extremely informative because participants feed off others' comments (Mertler, 2014). Three focus group discussion sessions with seven student teachers were conducted, each with student teachers, on teaching practice in their practicing schools.

During the interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher ensured that all the participants adhered to the World Health Organisation standard recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (World Health Organisation, 2020). The interviews and focus group discussions were tape-recorded to capture all the details. Using multiple data sources boosted the trustworthiness of the research findings (Cohen et al., 2018).

#### **Participants**

A population is a set of all elements, a large group to which a researcher wants to generalise the sample results (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). For this research, the population comprised all the Morgenster Teachers' College student teachers who were in teaching practice and their mentors. Convenience sampling was used to sample one teachers' college because of its typicality and accessibility. Researchers choose the sample from those with easy access (Cohen et al., 2018). Purposive sampling was used to sample three primary schools located in Masvingo district.

Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to sample student teachers on teaching practice and students' mentors from the selected three primary schools. Thus, purposive sampling was used to hand-pick information-rich participants and access well-informed persons on the phenomenon under study (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). The sample consisted of twenty-one student teachers in teaching practice and six students' mentors, who were to give twenty-seven participants. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2014) emphasised that samples in qualitative research are usually small because of the homogeneous nature of the sample.

#### **Data analysis**

Research data were analysed using eight interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) steps, aligning well with the phenomenological research design (Smith & Nizza, 2021). Data analysis involved compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2016). Trustworthiness ensures that the research findings are precise and exhaustive, as seen from the researcher's perspective, the participants, and the readers (Patton, 2015). Therefore, in ensuring trustworthiness in this study, the researcher employed the principles of dependability, credibility, transferability, low inference descriptors, and conformability (Dube, 2015; Creswell, 2014).

#### **Ethical considerations**

Research ethics were considered before research because doing research with participants demands a clear set of ethical behaviours (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The researcher adhered to the American Educational Research Association's set standards, which were designed specifically to guide the work of educational researchers (Cohen et al., 2018). Accordingly, informed consent, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, debriefing, non-maleficence, and beneficence were maintained throughout the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Participants signed consent forms to participate in the study and

recording of audio during the interviews. Furthermore, permission to carry out the study was sought before conducting the study by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

## **IV. RESULTS**

### **Influence of COVID-19 on teaching practice span**

The results found that teaching practice was prolonged by a term or four months due to the national lockdowns, resulting in school closures. During the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews, all the participants revealed that the student teachers endured a lengthy teaching practice period. The following extracts can help illustrate the participants' views:

*"We were on Teaching Practice for one year and four (4) months due to lockdown induced by COVID-19"* (Participant FGD2: P10).

In corroboration, another participant said:

*"I have been on TP for four terms instead of 3 terms because of COVID-19, which interrupted schooling through lockdowns"* (Participant STIRN3: 07).

During a semi-structured interview session, one of the student teachers' mentors confirmed that:

*"Student teachers have been in teaching practice for one (1) year and four months due to complications caused by COVID-19, such as prolonged lockdowns"* (Participant SMIN: 04).

The above extracts show that national lockdowns and school closures were done to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, this prolonged the teaching practice period and caused anxiety among the student teachers.

In addition, Participant FGD3: P18 claimed that:

*"We remained in teaching practice because external assessors from the University of Zimbabwe due to COVID-19 did not externally examine us"*.

The verbatim quotes reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted teaching practice. Student teachers could not complete teaching practice without being externally examined by external assessors from the University of Zimbabwe.

Risks associated with COVID-19 on student teachers' teaching practice

Data revealed that student teachers were at very high risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus due to very high pupil-teacher ratios, shortage of personal protective clothing, and lack of masks and sanitizers. Results showed that most participants lived in fear of contracting the virus, getting sick, dying, and even spreading the virus to their family members back home. The following extracts can help illustrate the participants' lived experiences and the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another participant FGD3: P17 explained:

*"We were prone to contracting the COVID-19 virus as some learners, teachers, and community members were not taking proper measures to prevent COVID-19. Personal protective equipment was inadequate. We had one thermometer for the whole school, one mask per term for each teacher and each learner"*.

During a semi-structured interview, informant STIN: R02 postulated that:

*"Being on TP during COVID-19 was stressful due to fear of contracting the virus. I contracted the virus from learners, so I was afraid of dying because several people were dying. Teaching practice was prolonged, which caused the government to cease our allowances"* (Participant STIN: R02)

From the extracts above, it appears that the participants had the views that their lives were at risk as they were prone to contracting the COVID-19 virus due to factors such as shortage of personal protective clothing, lack of sanitizers, lack of masks, and lack of knowledge on the proper ways of putting on the masks. Student teachers who contracted the COVID-19 virus were stigmatised and isolated by their workmates and learners, leading to stress and depression.

The results found that crowded classrooms due to the high pupil-teacher ratio and lack of money to buy masks and sanitizers were some

risk factors that exposed student teachers' teaching practice to the COVID-19 virus. The verbatim quotes below help illustrate the opinions of the participants:

"The schools had no money to buy masks and sanitisers since most learners could not pay school fees due to joblessness caused by COVID-19" (Participant FGD2: P10).

One of the student teachers echoed her sentiments as follows:

"The teaching practice allowances we got from the government were inadequate to cater for our food, clothing, and stationery, paying teaching practice fees, and worse still, buying sanitisers and masks" (Participant FGD2: P14).

Participant STIN: R03 said that:

"There was a very high risk of contracting COVID-19 virus due to a very high teacher-pupil ratio of 1:56 learners, lack of masks and sanitisers".

The extracts above indicate that the participants lived in perpetual fear of contracting the COVID-19 pandemic as most classrooms were crowded and masks and sanitisers were in short supply. Due to poverty and joblessness caused by COVID-19, most parents could not afford to pay school fees or buy masks for their children. Student teachers received meager teaching practice allowances from the government, which were insufficient for them to buy masks and sanitisers for themselves and the learners. To make matters worse, the government ceased teaching practice allowances when a term extended the teaching practice period.

#### **Pedagogy in the COVID-19 era**

Results revealed that student teachers found it stressful to enforce the COVID-19 protocols and to use teaching methods that did not spread COVID-19 effectively. The verbatim quotes below can help illustrate the participants' views on the influence of COVID-19 on the suitability of the teaching methods used in the COVID-19 era.

#### **Face-to-face teaching methods**

During semi-structured interviews, most of the student teachers aired out their views as follows:

Participant STIN: R07 said that:

"Group work, drama, field trips, and role play spread COVID-19 due to high pupil-pupil interaction. However, the lecture and question-and-answer methods were safe since there is no physical interaction but were ineffective, which worried me".

In corroboration, Participant STIN: R03 postulated:

"The lecture method, Socratic Method and demonstration method helped to curb COVID-19. I avoided role play and grouped work method as these methods easily spread COVID-19".

Another student teachers' mentor expressed his views as follows:

"Experimentation methods and dramatisation spread COVID-19 because learners removed masks to discuss with group members and share the apparatus. Discovery and Lecture methods were safe" (Participant SMIN: R06).

In contrast, Participant FGD1: P03 said:

"While the lecture and demonstration methods did not spread COVID-19, they were not suitable for primary school learners because learners were passive and could not grasp the concept, so I lost confidence in my teaching skills".

The above extract revealed that the lecture, discovery, demonstration, and Socratic methods were very safe to use in the COVID-19 era since they promoted physical social distancing. However, the methods were not child-centred, so they were less effective. Most participants felt that child-centered methods such as group work, experimentation, and field trips were major drivers of the COVID-19 virus.

#### **e-learning**

Data show that face-to-face teaching was transferred to e-learning to facilitate learning. Teachers and learners had to adapt to e-learning quickly. Most participants felt that e-learning effectively prevented the spread of COVID-19 as it promoted social distancing. During semi-structured interviews, one of the student teachers' mentors remarked that:

"e-learning is the most suitable method since there is no physical contact between the teacher and the learners, so COVID-19 does not spread. However,

e-learning had challenges, such as lack of smartphones, expensive data, network problems, electricity, and constant power cuts" (Participant SMIN: R01).

Another student teachers' mentor added this:

e-learning was a suitable teaching method during school closures caused by COVID-19, but only a ¼ of our learners benefited due to a lack of connectivity and knowledge of e-learning. (Participant SMIN: R05).

During the semi-structured interview, one of the student teachers postulated that:

"e-learning helped teachers and learners to use modern technology, which was an easy and safe way of teaching and learning in the COVID-19 era. E-learning helped to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, but the college did not properly teach us to use E-learning, so we had a lot of challenges" (Participant STIN: R02).

One of the participants expressed her views as follows:

"e-learning is something new to us, so even the student teachers could not use e-learning to teach, e.g., Google class" (Participant FGD2: P12).

The above extracts indicate that e-learning effectively controlled the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, most of the participants revealed that e-learning had a lot of challenges, such as lack of electricity, expensive gadgets, expensive data, lack of technological pedagogical content knowledge, and lack of internet connectivity in most schools. Most participants revealed that practical subjects like Physical Education and Visual and Performing Arts could not be done through e-learning. The findings revealed that student teachers found it very difficult to teach using e-learning during school closures, which caused a lot of stress.

#### **Effects of lockdowns and school closures on teaching practice**

Findings revealed that lockdowns and school closures caused an extension of the teaching practice period by a term, allowances were ceased, a few student teachers dropped out, and some female student teachers fell pregnant. Teaching practice did not progress during school closure since student teachers lacked knowledge of e-learning and could not afford to buy smartphones and data bundles. Findings showed that teaching practice supervision stopped during school closures because the college could not use e-learning to supervise student teachers. The college did not have adequate ICT gadgets, and WIFI was very expensive. College lecturers did not know how to supervise student teachers online. The following extracts can help illustrate the participants' views on the effects of lockdowns and school closures on teaching practice.

During the interview session, one of the student teachers had this to say:

"The college lecturers had to send notes through WhatsApp, but I ignored the notes due to a lack of knowledge of Information and Communication Technology. Teaching practice did not progress through e-learning, but we waited for schools to be reopened" (Participant STIN: R02).

During the interview sessions, one of the student teachers' mentors had this to say:

"Some student teachers lacked technological pedagogical content knowledge and did not have money to buy smartphones, so TP did not progress during the lockdowns" (Participant SMIN: R01).

Furthermore, another student teacher's mentor posited that:

"During school closures, student teachers did not manage to continue with TP since schools were closed. Their TP period was stretched, which caused anxiety, and some of them dropped out while others failed to get fees for the extended term. The government ceased allowances due to the extension of the TP period" (Participant SMIN: R03).

During focus group discussion sessions, most of the student expressed their views on the effects of lockdowns and school closures as follows:

"T. P. did not progress through e-learning, and because schools were closed, there were no means of supervising student teachers. Also, student teachers could not teach using e-learning" (Participant SMIN: R04).

About the effects of school closures on teaching practice supervision, one of the student teachers' mentors reiterated that:

"It was difficult for lecturers to come and supervise student teachers or to

use e-learning to supervise students, so teaching practice was at a standstill. Student teachers completed T. P. half-baked" (Participant SMIN: R05).

The above extract revealed that school closures crippled teaching practice supervision. College lecturers could not supervise live lessons as the schools were closed. To make matters worse, the college lecturers could not use e-learning to supervise student teachers due to a lack of knowledge, ICT gadgets, and WIFI.

Most of the student teachers expressed their opinions as follows:

"Due to COVID-19-induced school closures, I lacked interest in my studies due to the prolonged teaching practice period. Some female student teachers fell pregnant and deferred the course, and a few male students dropped out due to financial constraints" (Participant STIN: R06).

Another informant explained that:

"Student teachers deferred because guardians could not pay fees as they lost jobs or died due to COVID-19 because COVID-19 affected the aged mostly" (Participant FGD1: P04).

The above extracts revealed that school closures affected student teachers' teaching practices economically, socially, and psychologically. A few student teachers either dropped out or deferred due to financial or social problems. Financial constraints were exacerbated by the death of some breadwinners or job loss caused by COVID-19 lockdowns. Results show that teaching practice stopped due to lockdowns and school closures because live lessons could not be executed while learners were at home. Student teachers failed to complete teaching practice due to being under supervision since lectures failed to supervise the student teachers when schools were closed adequately, and face-to-face teaching was transferred to e-learning. Due to a lack of e-learning knowledge and ICT gadgets, teaching practice supervision online was impossible. The results showed that teaching practice was negatively affected by the national lockdowns and subsequent school closures.

#### State of preparedness for schools reopening

The results showed that most schools were not prepared to reopen for various reasons. The following verbatim quotes can help illustrate the participants' views on the state of preparedness of the school for reopening after the lifting of the national lockdown.

In an interview, one of the student teachers echoed that:

"Our school was not adequately prepared for reopening since there were no masks for learners, and only learners who had fully paid up their fees were given masks. Learners without masks were sent back home, so we had problems updating our records. I bought masks for my learners with the little money because I did not want them to be sent back home to collect masks" (Participant STIN: R07).

Given the above quotation, results seem to point to the fact that most schools were not prepared for reopening after the national lockdown was lifted.

During an interview session, one of the student teachers' mentors said:

"The school bought masks and sanitisers for staff members and paid-up learners only. Student teachers were not given masks and sanitisers. Due to the loss of income caused by COVID-19, most parents could not afford to pay school fees for their children, so our school was ill-prepared to reopen" (Participant SMIN: R02).

Responding to the same question, another student teacher's mentor had this to say:

"The school had inadequate furniture and classrooms to maintain social distancing due to the large enrolment of learners. Correct wearing of masks was challenging for learners, but student teachers kept reminding them to mask up properly" (Participant SMIN: R05).

In contrast to the above sentiments, one of the student teachers' mentors stated:

"Our school was prepared as the government workshopped teachers on protecting themselves and the learners against COVID-19. The government provided sanitisers, masks, and a detergent called hydrogen peroxide for fumigation. The school bought additional furniture to enhance social distancing. A few teachers were workshopped on preventing the spread of COVID-19" (Participant SMIN: R06).

Another student teacher elaborated that:

"Most schools were not ready for reopening since, at the opening, there were no masks and sanitisers for teachers, student teachers and learners. Most learners contracted the COVID-19 virus and were always absent from school, making it difficult for us to update our records, especially the reading record book, the test and progress record book" (Participant FGD2:P10).

In corroboration, another student teacher remarked:

"Most qualified teachers did not report for duty when schools reopened due to fear of contracting the COVID-19 pathogen and only came for work after the government threatened to cease their salaries. There was not enough furniture to cater to social distancing, and no new classroom blocks were built. Fumigation of classrooms was irregular as it was done only once per term" (Participant FGD2: P11).

The above responses from the student teachers' mentors and the student teachers seem to concur that most schools, except very few, were unprepared for reopening. Most schools had a critical shortage of sanitisers, masks, thermometers, fumigation chemicals, furniture and classrooms. Most schools had no money to buy masks and sanitisers since most parents had lost their jobs due to COVID-19. However, some parents were reluctant to pay school fees because they feared the schools might close. On schools reopening, most qualified teachers did not report for duty because they were not vaccinated, leaving the student teachers with the burden of teaching large classes while enforcing the COVID-19 regulations. Most teachers and student teachers were not workshopped on protecting themselves and the learners against COVID-19. This unpreparedness for reopening caused a lot of stress and exposed student teachers to the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus.

## V. DISCUSSION

This study revealed that due to the national lockdowns and the resultant school closures induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching practice period was prolonged by one term. The research findings contradict Mavundutse et al. (2013), who posit that in Zimbabwe, student teachers must do Teaching Practice for three terms. A comparative study on teacher education by Yadav and Dabhade (2011) in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka revealed that the duration and organisation of teaching practice varied from country to country (Rembe et al., 2016); however, in this case, the variation from the stipulated teaching practice span was due to school closures caused by the need to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings are consistent with views by other scholars (UNESCO, 2020; Capone et al., 2020), who point out that the major impact of COVID-19 restrictions was the closure of schools, postponement or cancellation of all campus-related academic and social activities disrupting 1.2 billion students' academic pursuits worldwide. This view is corroborated by Kosar (2021), who opined that because of school closures due to COVID-19, student teachers could not complete their teaching practice in their placement schools.

Data showed that student teachers could not complete teaching practice because they were under-supervised by internal assessors and were not externally examined by external assessors from the University of Zimbabwe due to COVID-19. External examining is mandatory in all teachers' colleges under the University of Zimbabwe Scheme of Association, so in line with this requirement, student teachers could not complete their teaching practice (Chivore et al., 2015). The preceding study has established that the teaching practice span was prolonged due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings confirm findings from the World Health Organisation (2020) report, which revealed that student teachers in teaching practice are exposed to dangers, including pathogen exposure, long working hours, psychological distress, fatigue, burnout, and stigma. Participants revealed that they feared death or being quarantined after contracting the COVID-19 virus, which caused a lot of stress and anxiety. This view is also corroborated by other scholars (Patrick et al., 2020), who pointed out that for student teachers' teaching practice, the perception of being infected with the coronavirus from the learning environment threatens



their psychological and physical, intellectual, emotional, and occupational well-being.

Data revealed that most student teachers who contracted the COVID-19 virus were quarantined in COVID-19 clinics or at home, so they felt isolated. Participants also explained that even after the quarantine, the COVID-19 sufferers were isolated and stigmatised at their practicing schools, causing depression due to loneliness. Garmerzy (1991) validated this finding and stated that risk factors appear to have a cumulative effect, reducing qualities of engagement and enhancing disruptiveness. This study's findings are consistent with COVID-19-related studies that have also shown that student teachers' levels of stress, anxiety, and depression worsened compared to those before the COVID-19 pandemic (Elmer et al., 2020). It emerged from the findings of this study that the government ceased the teaching practice allowances of the student teachers because their contracts had expired after three terms. Additionally, the findings of this study allude to similar views as those by Cao et al. (2020), who reported that student teachers had worried about the economic impact and deferments in academic activities due to school closures as a measure to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results from the current study corroborate the survey by UNESCO (2020) which reported that in Ghana, like other developing countries, the teaching-learning environment amidst COVID-19 is further compounded by a lack of adequate personal protective equipment (PPEs), teaching and learning materials and infrastructure, facilities, technical equipment and other logistical support so the psychological pressure and burden could be enormous for student teachers in the light of the ongoing pandemic and context-specific inadequacies (Pragholapati, 2020). Participants further explained that some learners came to school without masks while most teachers and learners did not know how to mask up correctly and to maintain physical social distancing. Findings showed that most schools had only one point for hand washing and temperature testing. However, only student teachers were assigned to ensure learners washed their hands and to test their temperature, exposing them to the COVID-19 virus and causing work overload. Data following UNESCO's (2020) report revealed that most learners did not have a short supply of masks, sanitisers, and fumigation chemicals, so the virus could easily spread. Furthermore, the study revealed that most classrooms were crowded due to a very high pupil-teacher ratio, so it was difficult to maintain physical social distancing.

Research findings concur with several studies which reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had triggered an increase in fears of COVID-19 that contributed to growing levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Valero et al., 2020; Pieh et al., 2021; Wang & Zhao, 2020) and traumatic stress (Huremovic, 2019; Ramírez-Ortiz et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2021). The participants in this study reported that they were highly stressed and anxious due to the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the number of positive cases and deaths kept on rising in the country. Furthermore, the findings of this study are commensurate with Sher (2020), who opined that the COVID-19 pandemic had been associated with distress, fear of infection, depression, and insomnia both in lecturers and student teachers who may experience increased levels of stress associated with increased suicidal behaviours. Results showed that most participants lived in fear of contracting the virus, getting sick, dying, and even spreading the virus to their family members back home. The participants' views corroborate those of Koerner (2020), who alludes that while student teachers were worried about their learners' well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were also worried about their families and health.

It emerged from this study that before school closures at the onset of the spread of COVID-19 child-centred methodologies such as group work, experimentation, and field trips were banned. At the same time, the lecture and Socratic methods were preferred as they did not promote the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, they were ineffective in teaching primary school learners as they did not promote active

participation. The findings of this study are inconsistent with a study by Meaghan (2021), which established that with the onset of COVID-19, student teachers had to immediately switch their instruction to an online format in the snap of a finger. It emerged from the findings of this study that most of the student teachers lacked knowledge on the use of e-learning platforms for teaching, and they were not even aware of these online platforms as they were not trained to use them at college.

Contrary to Nasr's (2020) report, it emerged from this study that student teachers were abruptly expected to use online learning platforms such as Google Class and Microsoft Teams, which they did not know. Findings from this study revealed that most student teachers lacked technological pedagogical content knowledge, and as a result, they experienced technological shock, frustration, and anxiety. Findings confirm findings from a study by Dalal et al. (2021), which revealed that student teachers had difficulties adopting technology due to limited resources, teaching practice ground to a halt, causing panic, feelings of hopelessness, and frustration on the part of student teachers. The findings of this study are inconsistent with research findings from a 2022 study by Front Psychol, which showed that the level of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge and readiness of student teachers were high, especially for Technological knowledge. However, the same study revealed that technological pedagogical content knowledge should investigate the online teaching readiness of student teachers to ensure they are well-equipped with online pedagogical knowledge for effective teaching and learning. The current study's findings resonate with UNESCO's (2020) report that online education lacks quality because teachers are unprepared for online pedagogical knowledge.

The findings from this study corroborate those by Konyana and Motalenyane (2022), who claimed that college lecturers and external assessors from the University of Zimbabwe must visit the student teachers in their practicing schools to supervise and examine the student teachers' overall teaching practice performance for a student teacher to complete teaching practice. In this study, it has been established that teaching practice supervision came to a halt during school closures because college lecturers could not supervise student teachers who were teaching face-to-face. Participants revealed that the college could not use e-learning to supervise student teachers in teaching practice because the college did not have adequate ICT gadgets and WIFI, and college lecturers did not have knowledge of virtual teaching practice supervision.

Findings revealed that most teachers and student teachers had no idea of enforcing the COVID-19 protocols to curb the spread of COVID-19, and there was conflicting information regarding the opening dates and modalities for reopening. The results from this study concur with a survey by The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) (2020), which reported that most teachers were not aware of the preparatory measures that needed to be put in place ahead of reopening schools, the time frame, actual dates of reopening, and lacked information regarding the testing of staff and the learners. It emerged from the study that due to a lack of finances, there was a shortage of masks, sanitisers, fumigation chemicals, furniture, and classrooms to facilitate compliance with COVID-19 protocols. Their views corroborate those of a research study by ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, and APHRC (2021), which revealed that in terms of finance for the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, most African countries had inadequate internal funding to facilitate compliance with the World Health Organisation protocols. It emerged from the findings that it was difficult to maintain physical and social distancing due to the high pupil-teacher ratio and the shortage of furniture and classrooms. The findings of this study are consistent with a survey carried out by ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, and APHRC (2021), which showed pre-existing infrastructure challenges and overcrowdedness. The thematic findings indicated that when schools reopened, a staggering of classes, hot sitting, or splitting of classes were put in place to decongest the classrooms and maintain social distancing, resulting in work overload. Student teachers were overwhelmed with work, so they suffered from isolation, fatigue, headaches, high blood pressure, and

forgetfulness, which affected their health, and physical and mental well-being.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The thematic findings revealed that student teachers on teaching practice in the COVID-19 era are subjected to teaching practice stressors induced by COVID-19 pandemic, such as fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus, illness, isolation, stigmatisation and death, anxiety, uncertainty, hopelessness, economic hardships, prolonged teaching practice period, school closures, and transference of face-to-face teaching to online learning. The study uncovered that student teachers were at a very high risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus due to the shortage of personal protective clothing, shortage of masks and sanitisers, shortage of fumigation chemicals, overcrowded classrooms due to high pupil-teacher ratio, and lack of knowledge on how to enforce the COVID-19 regulations. Thus, the fear of being infected by the COVID-19 virus greatly affected the student teachers' psychological, intellectual, and emotional well-being. The thematic findings indicated that e-learning had many challenges, such as lack of internet connectivity, lack of electricity and constant power cuts, and lack of compatible gadgets such as laptops, smartphones, expensive WIFI, and data bundles. In addition, the study indicated that the student teachers lacked technological pedagogical content knowledge on how to use e-learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Class, and Microsoft Teams as they were not prepared to use online learning while in college due to early closures and disruption of learning activities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Implicitly, the use of e-learning caused a lot of stress and anxiety for student teachers as they lacked the prerequisite technological skills and knowledge of technological pedagogical content.

Furthermore, the study indicated that due to a lack of internet infrastructure and knowledge of online learning, student teachers could not complete teaching practising their placement schools within the stipulated three terms due to under supervision and lack of teaching practice external examining. Findings from this study indicated that most schools were not prepared for reopening due to pre-existing infrastructure challenges, lack of finance to buy sanitisers, masks, additional furniture, fumigation chemicals, and lack of replacement of qualified teachers who had died due to COVID-19. The research recommends that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation Science, and Technology Development formulate and enact policies that mandate the introduction of a compulsory module on resilience in all teachers' colleges and universities offering a degree or a Diploma in Education certificate.

## VII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

## REFERENCES

- ADEA, AU/CIEFFA. & APHRC. (2021). *School Reopening in Africa during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Obijan, Ougadougou, Nairobi: ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, APHRC.
- Barbour, R. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research. A student guide to the craft of doing qualitative research*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135-9781526485045>
- Capone, V., Caso, D., Donizzetti, A. R., & Procentese, F. (2020). University Student well-being during COVID-19 outbreak: What are the relationships between information seeking, perceived risk and personal resources related to the academic context? *Sustainability*, 12, 7039. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177039>
- Chisaka, B. C. (2013). The Qualitative Research Paradigm. In B. C. Chisaka, A. Mamvuto, S. Matiure, M. T. Mukabeta, T. Shumba & D. Zireva (Eds.), *Action Research: Some practical ideas for educational practice*. Harare: Save the Children.
- Chitanana, L. (2022). Parents' Experience with Remote Learning During COVID-19 Lockdown in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Open Flexible and Distance Learning*, 26(2), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.61468/jofdl.v26i2.529>
- Chivore, B., Mavundutse, O., Kuyayama-Tumbare, A., Gwaunza, L., & Kangayi, P. (2015). *Handbook for Quality Assurance in Associate Teachers' Colleges*. Harare: Fidelity Printers and Refiners (Pvt) Ltd.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Abington: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Dalal, M., Archambault, L., & Shelton, C. (2021). Fostering the growth of TPACK among international teachers of developing materials through a cultural exchange programme. *Aust. J. Edu. Technol*, 37, 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5964>
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2014). *Resilient teachers, resilient schools: Building and sustaining quality in testing times*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Dube, B. (2020). Rural online learning in the context of COVID-19 in South Africa: Evolving in inclusive education approach. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 10(2), 135-157. <https://doi.org/10.4471/remie.2020.5607>.
- Ebersohn, L. (2014). Teacher resilience: theorizing resilience and poverty. *Teachers and Teaching* 20(5), 568-594. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.214.9379>.
- Elmer, T., Mephain, K., Stadtfield, C., & Capram, V. (2020). Students under lockdown: Comparisons of students' social networks and mental health before and during the COVID-19 crisis in Switzerland. *PLOS ONE*, 15, e0236337. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0236337>
- Ezeonu, C. T., Uneke, C. J., & Ezeonu, P. O. (2021). A Rapid Review of the Reopening of Schools in this COVID-19 Pandemic? How Ready are We in Nigeria? *Nigerian Journal of Medicine*, 30(1), 8-16. [https://doi.org/10.4103/NJM.NJM\\_161\\_20](https://doi.org/10.4103/NJM.NJM_161_20)
- Flores, M. A., & Gago, M. (2020). Teacher education in terms of COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal: National, institutional and pedagogical responses. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 46(4), 507-516. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2020.1799709>
- Garmerzy, N. (1991). Resilience in children's adaptation to negative life events and stressed environments. *Pediatric Annals*, 20, 459-466.
- Gutierrez, J. C., Lid-ayan, Z. B., Cuison, C. J. M., De Vera, J. B., Dilem, C. D., Diwag, J. M. B., Marzo, R. R. (2016). Stress and Coping Mechanisms of Preservice Teachers. *South American Journal of Academic Research*, 3(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.21522/TIJAR.2014.03.01.Art003>
- Huremovic, D. (2019). *Psychiatry of Pandemic A mental Health Response to Infection Outbreak*, (1ed.). Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2014). *Educational Research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Kaden, U. (2020). COVID-19 School Closure-Related Changes to the Professional Life of a K-12 Teacher. *Education Sciences*, 10(6), 165. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060165>
- Kim, L. E., & Asbury, K. (2020). Like a rug had been pulled from under you": The impact of COVID-19 on teachers in England during the first six weeks of the UK lockdown. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(4), 1062-1083. <http://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12381>
- Konyana, S., & Motolenyane, M. A. (2022). A Changing World and a Changing Teaching Practice Model for Zimbabwe in a post Covid-19 Context. *Journal of Culture and Values in Education*, 5(1), 43-58. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2022.5>
- Kosar, G. (2021). Distance Teaching Practicum: Its impact on Pre-Service EFL Teachers Preparedness for Teaching. *Special Issue COVID-19: Education Response to a Pandemic. IAFOR Journal of Education*, 9(2), 111-121.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed methods Arts-Based and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*. London: The Guilford Press.
- Magwa, S., & Magwa, W. (2015). *A guide to conducting research*. Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co. LLC.



- Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Weatherby-Fell, N., & Brodley, T. (2016). Classroom ready? Building resilience in Teacher education. In R. Brandenburg, S. McDonough, J. Burke, & S. White (Eds.), *Teacher Education: Innovation, intervention, and impact* (pp. 211-229). Singapore: Springer.
- Mansfield, C., Beltman, S., & Price, A. (2014). 'I'm coming back again!' The resilience process of early career teachers. *Teachers and Teaching*, 20(5), 547-567. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2014.937958>
- Mapfumo, J. S., Chitsiko, N., & Chireshe, R. (2012). Teaching Practice generated stressors and coping mechanisms among student teachers in Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(2), 155-166. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v32n2a601>
- Masten, A. S. (2014). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development*, 85(1), 6-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12205>
- Mavundutse, O. (2004) Stress Antecedents among Student Teachers: *The Zimbabwe Bulletin of Teacher Education*, 13(1), 4-20. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12413/4944>
- Mavundutse, O., Luthuli, A. J., Chivore, B. R. S., & Dube, S. (2013) *Teaching Practice: Protocol and Public Relations*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Meaghan, R. (2021). *Preservice Teachers' COVID-19 stressors*. Milligan University Spring.
- Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research methods in Education and Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Mertler, C. A. (2014). *Action Research, Improving Schools and Empowering Educators*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New Delhi: SAGE.
- Morales-Rodriguez, F. M. (2021). Fear, Stress, Resilience and Coping strategies during COVID-19 in Spanish University Students *Sustainability*, 13, 5824. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13115824>.
- Moyo, N. (2020). COVID-19 and the future of Practicum in teacher education in Zimbabwe: Rethinking the "new normal" in quality assurance for teacher certification. *Journal of Education and Teaching*, 46(4), 536-545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2020.1802702>
- Mukuna, K. R., & Aloka, P. J. O. (2020). Exploring educators' challenges of online learning in COVID-19 at a rural school, South Africa. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(10), 134-149. <http://doi.org/10.26803/ylter.19.10.8>.
- Nyabadza, G., & Mutendera, G. (2014). Stress management among female student teachers on attachment teaching practice: The case of Marymount Teachers College, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Social Science and Education*, 4(2), 429-436.
- Olsen, A. L. (2017). Compared to what? How social and historical reference points affect citizens' performance evaluations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 27(4), 562-580. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mux023>
- Pandey, M., & Pandey, P. (2015). *Research methodology: Tools and techniques*. Baza: Bridge Centre. Retrieved from [www.stat.wisc.edu/~st51](http://www.stat.wisc.edu/~st51).
- Patrick, S. W., Henkhaus, L. E., Zickafoose, J. S., Lovell, K., Halvorson, A., Loch, S., ... & Davis, M. M. (2020). Well-being of parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic: a national survey. *Pediatrics*, 146(4), e2020016824. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-016824>
- Pieh, C., Budimir, S., Delgadoillo, J., Barkham, M., Fontaine, J. R., & Probst, T. (2021). Mental health during COVID-19 lockdown in the United Kingdom. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 83(4), 328-337. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PSY.0000000000000871>
- Pragholapati, A. (2020). COVID-19 Impact on students. *EdArXiv* 1, 1-6.
- Pretorius, C. N. (2013). *Caregivers' experiences of stress while caring for orphaned and vulnerable children in an institution* (Unpublished Masters thesis). Pretoria: University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Ramírez-Ortiz, J., Castro-Quintero, D., Lerma-Córdoba, C., Yela-Ceballos, F., & Escobar-Córdoba, F. (2020). Mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic associated with social isolation. *Colombian Journal of Anesthesiology*, 48(4), e930. <https://doi.org/10.5554/22562087.e930>
- Rembe, S., Shumba, J., & Mavuse, M. (2016). Teaching Practice Purpose and Implementation: A Concept Paper. *International Journal of Education and Science*, 13(3), 310-317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2016.11890466>
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2014). *Qualitative research practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage Publication.
- Sefotho, M. M. (2015). A researchers' dilemma Philosophy in crafting dissertations and theses. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(1,2), 23-36.
- Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10(4), 319-334. <https://doi.org/10.1177-15586815575861>
- Sher, L. (2020). The Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide rates. *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, 113(10), 707-712. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qjmed/hcaa202>
- Smith, J. A., & Nizza, I. E. (2022). Essentials of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000259-001>
- Sun, L., Sun, Z., Wu, L., Zhu, Z., Zhang, Z., Jia, Y., Gu, J., Zhou, Y., Wang, Y., et al. (2021). Prevalence and risk factors for acute posttraumatic stress disorder during COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of affective disorders*, 283, 123-129. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.01.050>
- Tekel, E., Bayir, Ö. Ö., & Dulay, S. (2022). Teaching Practicum During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Comparison of the Practices in Different Countries. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 18(2), 71-86. <https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2022.431.5>
- UNESCO. (2020). *The COVID-19 impact on the education sector*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/news/13-billion-learners-are-still-affected-school-university-closures-educational-institutions>.
- UNICEF. (2020). *UNICEF and Microsoft Launch Global Learning Platform to Help Address COVID-19 Education Crisis*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/unicef-and-microsoft-launch-global-learning-platform-help-address-COVID-19-education>.
- United Nations (2020). *United Nations Comprehensive Response to Covid-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*. Retrieved from <https://unsdg.un.org>.
- Valero, N., Velez, M., Duran, A., & Portillo, M. (2020). COVID-19 Coping: Stress, fear, anxiety, and depression? *Enferm Inv.*, 5, 63-70.
- Wakui, N., Abe, S., Shirozu, S., Yamamoto, Y., Yamamura, M., Abe, Y., Murata, S., Ozawa, M., Igarashi, T., Yamagiya, T., Machida, V., & Kikuchi, M. (2021). Causes of anxiety among teachers giving face-to-face lessons after the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 21, 1050. <https://doi.org/10.1186/512889-021-11130-y>
- Wang, C., & Zhao, H. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on anxiety in Chinese university students. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 1168. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01168>
- White, I., & McSharry, M. (2021). Preservice teachers' experiences of pandemic related school closures: anti-structure, liminality and communities. *Irish Educational Studies*, 40(2), 319-327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2021.1916562>.
- White, S., & Fargasz, R. (2016). The Practicum: The Place of Experience? In J. Loughian & M. L., Hamilton, (Eds.). *International Handbook of Teachers Education* (pp 231-266) Springer Science. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0366-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0366-0_6)
- World Health Organization. (2020). *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/docs/defaultsource/coronavirus/situation-reports>.
- Yadav, R. K., & Dabhade, N. (2011). Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among the Working Women of Banking and Education Sector: A Comparative Study. *International Letter of Social and Humanistic sciences*, 21, 181-201. <http://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.21.181>
- Yamamura, R. E., & Tsutsui, Y. (2021). The impact of closing schools on working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence using panel data from Japan. *Review of Economics of the Household* 19(1), 41-60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/3/11150-020-09536-5>.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.