

A Comprehensive Review of Teacher Preparation and Professional Development programs in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to review the current status of teacher training and professional development programs in Ethiopia. By reviewing existing programs, the study seeks to give recommendations to enhance the quality of education in Ethiopia. In order to accomplish this objective, a desk review methodology is used to examine literature and documents pertaining to the subject. The study reveals challenges faced by Ethiopian teachers, including limited funding for professional development, high workloads, lack of support and mentorship, and inadequate infrastructure and technology. These obstacles hinder teachers' ability to effectively prepare for lessons and improve teaching practices, leading to decreased enthusiasm and satisfaction. In conclusion, Ethiopian teachers face barriers such as limited funding, high workloads, lack of support, and inadequate infrastructure, hindering their effectiveness. To address these challenges, increased funding, manageable class sizes, mentorship programs, improved infrastructure, and structured incentives are needed. Collaboration, continuous education, promoting women's participation, and ensuring access to quality training and resources are important policy directions. The recommendations call for increased funding for professional development, reduced teacher workloads, mentorship programs, and investment in infrastructure and technology. Policy suggestions include recruiting trainees with necessary skills, continuous education, and aligning programs with educational levels. Incentives for teachers in challenging areas are proposed to promote quality education. Further research is needed to identify factors leading to inadequate teacher training and to develop successful enhancement strategies.

Keywords: Teacher Preparation, Professional Development Programs

1. Introduction

In the realm of education, the quality of teacher preparation and professional development plays a vital role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Sachs, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Middle level education in Ethiopia are no exception to this educational imperative, as the competence and skills of teachers directly impact the educational experiences of young learners (Tefera & Eaton, 2014).

Education is the process through which individuals share their experiences, discoveries, and values acquired over time, contributing to their survival and growth. It enables learning, encompassing the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. While traditionally guided by teachers, individuals can also

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educate themselves. Teaching involves active participation from both teachers and students. In addition to the student-teacher dynamic, the curriculum is now recognized as a crucial element facilitating interaction between educators and learners. Each component plays a vital role in education. The successful implementation of a high-quality curriculum hinges on the proficiency of teachers, teacher educators, and educational leaders. Therefore, continuous training and development are essential to enhance their abilities, adapt to evolving needs, and effectively support individual learners in curriculum implementation (MoE:ESDP VI, 2021).

Empirical evidence has substantiated the significant influence of teacher training and ongoing professional development on instructional practices, classroom management, and student achievement (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Thus, a comprehensive review of teacher preparation and professional development initiatives tailored specifically for middle primary schools in Ethiopia is warranted, aiming to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in enhancing the educational landscape (Ma & Macaro, 2018).

This article critically examines the existing literature on teacher preparation programs and professional development initiatives in Ethiopian middle level education, focusing on the unique context and educational needs of this schooling level. By synthesizing current knowledge and exploring best practices, this review seeks to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing efforts to elevate the quality of teacher education and professional growth in the Ethiopian educational system.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of education relies heavily on the quality of teachers, specifically their knowledge of the subject matter and teaching skills, which significantly impact students' learning outcomes. Effective teaching requires tailored training that meets individual teachers' needs, is linked to classroom practice, and includes regular follow-ups and personalized coaching. Unfortunately, a minimal number of teachers reported receiving any in-service training in the past year (World Bank, 2022). Moreover, research shows that only a small percentage of grade 4 teachers in Ethiopia are proficient in the content they teach, and less than a fifth demonstrate satisfactory pedagogical skills (World Bank, 2022).

The New Education and Training policy, implemented since February 2023, includes Middle Level Education for grades 7 and 8 (New Education and Training policy, 2023). These grade levels encompass a variety of subjects being taught to students. However, there is a notable lack of teacher preparation in key subjects such as General Science, Social Studies, Performing and Visual Arts, and Career and Technical Education. Furthermore, as outlined in the new education and training policy (2023), Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education are part of the new curriculum, leading to challenges in schools acquiring professional teachers in these areas.

Teacher preparation and professional development are crucial components in enhancing the quality of education in middle level education in Ethiopia. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that specifically examines the effectiveness and adequacy of teacher preparation and professional development programs in this context (Tefera & Eaton, 2014).

The existing literature on teacher education in Ethiopia often focuses on general trends or specific aspects of teacher training, leaving a gap in understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by teachers in

middle level primary schools. Without a thorough review of current practices and their impact on teacher effectiveness, it is difficult to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions to enhance the quality of education at this critical stage of schooling.

Research Objective

To review the trend of teacher preparation and professional development programs in Ethiopia.

Research Question

What is the trend of teacher preparation and professional development programs in Ethiopia?

Review of Teacher Preparation and Professional Development (TPPD)

Teacher professional development can be described as the process of enhancing teachers' understanding of the teaching and learning process, as well as the students they work with. It begins with pre-service education and continues throughout a teacher's career. Effective professional development involves teachers in both learning and teaching roles, allowing them to grapple with the uncertainties that come with each. This definition highlights the idea that teachers are both learners and educators, and that this dual role extends throughout their careers. It emphasizes that teaching is a profession that requires ongoing learning and development, with teachers constantly deepening their knowledge and skills (Dadi, 2015)

According to Serbessa (2009), education is widely regarded as a key driver of economic growth in countries, with access to high-quality schooling playing a pivotal role in national development. Parents understand the crucial impact that quality education can have on shaping their children's future and expanding their opportunities. As a result, many parents invest in their children's education, believing that a good education can lead to substantial improvements in their personal and social growth.

According to Harris and Sass (2006) and Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008), the presence of well-trained teachers is essential for enhancing the quality of education at primary and secondary levels in various countries. Teacher professional development, including pre-service training, in-service programs, and informal on-the-job learning, is crucial for improving educational standards. Content-focused professional development for teachers is believed to positively impact the quality of education (Harris and Sass, 2006). Additionally, trained schoolteachers are considered a critical component in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All objectives (Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse, 2008). Therefore, the provision of quality education is closely linked to the presence of qualified educators.

According to Ankomah et al. (2005), schools that lack trained teachers are unable to effectively fulfill their educational responsibilities. This is due to the crucial role that teachers play in the provision of education, which has a significant impact on the quality of education. Indicators of quality in education include the availability of teachers, pupil-teacher ratios, and the personal attributes of teachers. These personal attributes encompass academic qualifications, pedagogical training, content knowledge, skills/aptitude, and teaching experience.

Teacher motivation and incentives play a crucial role in the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Research conducted by Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008) in 13 developing countries highlighted the significant impact of teacher incentives on teaching quality and student achievement. They emphasized that the level and structure of incentives should be closely aligned with desired teacher behaviors to encourage extra effort. Furthermore, studies suggest that many sub-Saharan African countries face challenges related to poor teacher motivation (Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse, 2008).

According to Urwick and Mapuru (2005), the quality of teachers' professional relationships with their supervisors and colleagues can impact their motivation. Effective management and collaboration among teachers can help mitigate the negative effects of low pay on motivation. Additionally, differences in standards and expectations, influenced by better qualifications, may lead teachers to have higher expectations and, consequently, be more motivated to deliver high-quality teaching.

The Policy Direction on Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

The policy direction on teacher preparation practices in Ethiopia emphasizes the importance of ensuring that teacher trainees possess the necessary abilities, diligence, professional interest, and physical and mental fitness for the teaching profession. It advocates for collaboration between employers, training institutions, and the Teachers Association in the recruitment of trainees. The components of teacher education and training focus on basic knowledge, professional ethics, methodology, and practical training. Teachers are required to be certified before being assigned to teach at any level of education and must have the necessary qualifications and competency in the media of instruction through pre-service and in-service training (MOE: ETP, 1994).

Continuous education and training, professional ethics, and teaching performance are highlighted as criteria for the professional development of teachers. A professional career structure is to be developed to support the ongoing growth of teachers. Teacher training institutions, including higher education, are expected to function autonomously with the necessary authority, responsibility, and accountability. These institutions must align their programs with the educational level for which they are training teachers. Special attention is given to promoting the participation of women in teacher recruitment, training, and assignment. Special education training is integrated into regular teacher training programs, and incentives are provided to motivate teachers, especially those working in challenging or remote areas (MOE: ETP, 1994).

Education involves teachers guiding learners, but self-education is also important. Teaching is a collaborative process between teachers and students, with the curriculum playing a key role. Quality education relies on skilled teachers, teacher educators, and leaders who need training to meet student needs. This includes improving teacher quality, recruitment, professional development, and curriculum reform. Best practices will be shared, mentoring programs expanded, and teaching centers of excellence established to support teachers and students. The goal is to improve teacher distribution, equity, and skills nationwide (MoE: ESDP VI, 2021).

Factors Affecting Teachers' Professional Development

According to Arnold (2005a, as cited in Dadi, 2015), researchers have categorized the factors influencing teachers' professional development into three main groups: context, process, and content. Contextual factors

encompass societal, organizational, and school work culture aspects that influence when, where, and why professional development occurs. Understanding these contextual factors is crucial in planning teachers' learning activities. Process factors focus on how learning and development activities are designed, executed, and evaluated to achieve their goals, emphasizing that learning is a social process where learners actively engage and direct their own learning. Content factors pertain to the new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences teachers acquire in their field of study and pedagogical aspects. Arnold (2005a) highlighted the importance of developing technical knowledge, skills, working techniques, and teamwork capabilities concurrently for effective professional preparation. These competencies are interdependent and cannot be developed in isolation.

Factors Affecting Teachers' Preparations and Professional Development in Ethiopia

According to the World Bank (2019), there are several factors that can affect teachers' preparations and professional development in Ethiopia. Some of these factors include:

1. Lack of access to quality training and resources: Many teachers in Ethiopia do not have access to high-quality training programs and resources that can help them improve their teaching practices. This can hinder their ability to effectively prepare for their lessons and develop professionally. Moreover, teacher's professional development program was encountered with so many challenges such as level of teacher's professional development of teachers, lack of facilities and lack of profound organization that includes materials and budget (Anna, 2000 cited in Mohammed, A. 2020).
2. Limited funding for professional development: The lack of adequate funding for professional development programs can also impact teachers' ability to improve their skills and knowledge. Without proper financial support, teachers may not be able to attend training sessions or workshops that could help them enhance their teaching practices. Moreover, Ministry of Education of Ethiopia has listed some of the challenges encountered like the following:
 - o Cluster resources not well organized
 - o Failure to synchronize the career structure and the CPD values and activities
 - o Time constraint for the teachers and the program leader to effectively implement the program
 - o Lack of coordination between the concerned stake holders and institutions
 - o Lack of resources and expertise
3. High teacher workload: Teachers in Ethiopia often have high workloads, with large class sizes and limited time for lesson planning and preparation. This can make it difficult for teachers to adequately prepare for their lessons and engage in professional development activities.
4. Lack of support and mentorship: Many teachers in Ethiopia may not have access to mentors or colleagues who can provide guidance and support in their professional development journey. This lack of support can hinder teachers' ability to improve their teaching practices and develop professionally.
5. Inadequate infrastructure and technology: Limited access to technology and inadequate infrastructure in schools can also impact teachers' preparations and professional development. Without proper tools

and resources, teachers may struggle to effectively prepare for their lessons and keep up with the latest teaching practices.

Moreover, the absence of incentives impacts teacher enthusiasm and satisfaction in their roles. This necessitates a reevaluation of incentives within the education field and the implementation of a structured incentive program for educators. Creating a sustainable incentive framework entails educators and administrators consistently demonstrating their passion and dedication to their profession (MoE: ESDP VI, 2021).

Due to various factors, teachers are leaving the teaching profession in Ethiopia. Tracking attrition can provide valuable insights into the number of teachers exiting the education system annually and the reasons behind their departure. This data is essential for understanding the extent of the teaching workforce gap. According to the Ministry of Education's Annual Abstract for 2021/2022, the national attrition rate for primary and middle school teachers in 2021/22 stood at 1.4%, marking a 0.3 percentage point decrease from the previous year. The attrition rate is higher among female teachers compared to male teachers. Regions such as Harari, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa reported the highest attrition rates, while Amhara, Somali, and Sidama had rates below 1%. The primary reasons for leaving the teaching profession were categorized as "Other" (reasons not listed), followed by "Change/Left teaching profession" and "Retirement". In secondary schools, the national attrition rate was approximately 1.3%, with similar reasons for attrition, including "Change/Left teaching profession" and "Retirement" being prominent at both national and regional levels. See the following tables.

Table 1 Attrition of Teachers in Primary and Middle Schools by Region and Sex, 2021/22									
	Total Attrition			All Primary Teachers			Attrition Rate (%)		
Region	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Afar	78	44	122	4,472	1,553	6,025	1.7	2.8	2.0
Amhara	304	215	519	79,683	75,499	155,182	0.4	0.3	0.3
Oromia	1,674	1674	3,348	103,709	73,078	176,787	1.6	2.3	1.9
Somali	1	1	2	11,504	2,168	13,672	0.0	0.0	0.0
Benishangul-Gumz	69	23	92	4,698	2,777	7,475	1.5	0.8	1.2
SNNP	1,037	574	1,611	49,747	31,165	80,912	2.1	1.8	2.0
Gambella	66	31	97	2,960	1,137	4,063	2.2	2.8	2.4
Harari	44	37	81	1,137	978	2,115	3.9	3.8	3.8
Addis Ababa	536	448	984	14,672	15,957	30,629	3.7	2.8	3.2
Dire Dawa	49	43	92	1,864	1,100	2,964	2.6	3.9	3.1
Sidama	191	47	238	25,120	10,392	35,512	0.8	0.5	0.7
SWEP	335	200	535	16,355	9,278	25,633	2.0	2.2	2.1
National	4,384	3,337	7,721	315,921	225,048	540,969	1.4	1.5	1.4

Source: MoE: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2021/22

Table 2		Reasons for Leaving the Profession in Primary and Middle School Teachers, 2021/22														
Change/Left				Prolonged												
Region	Teaching Profession		Death		Ethical Problem		Political Post		Sickness		Retirement		Other		Total Attrition	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Afar	31	18	6	3	3	1	4	1	3	2	1	1	30	18	78	44
Amhara	88	52	23	16	16	3	9	6	6	14	69	49	93	75	304	215
Oromia	264	263	201	201	123	125	120	120	104	105	306	305	556	555	1,674	1,674
Somali	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Benishangul-Gumuz	32	6	13	2	-	-	6	2	2	3	6	-	10	10	69	23
SNNP	239	178	92	51	96	48	126	53	75	55	150	62	239	127	1,037	574
Gambella	18	12	10	5	8	3	8	2	6	1	-	1	16	7	66	31
Harari	10	11	5	1	8	5	4	-	2	3	6	11	9	6	44	37
Addis Ababa	172	133	42	30	32	19	25	18	15	28	60	68	190	152	536	448
Dire Dawa	12	15	7	6	5	1	2	2	5	2	4	7	14	10	49	43
Sidama	51	11	23	5	14	5	9	1	22	6	42	13	30	6	191	47
SWEP	66	40	18	8	21	6	27	8	9	9	21	7	173	122	335	200
National	4,384	3,337	441	319	326	216	340	213	249	228	665	524	1,360	1,088	4,384	3,337
																7,721

Source: MoE: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2021/22

Table 3 Attrition of Teachers in Secondary Schools by Region and Sex, 2021/22

Region	Total Attrition			All Secondary Teachers			Attrition Rate (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Afar	14	3	17	829	150	979	1.7	2.0	1.7
Amhara	94	33	127	31,343	10,494	41,837	0.3	0.3	0.3
Oromia	383	385	768	35,466	7,379	42,845	1.1	5.2	1.8
Somali	1	0	1	2,619	442	3,061	0.0	0.0	0.0
Benishangul-Gumuz	41	17	58	1,660	372	2,032	2.5	4.6	2.9
SNNP	275	80	355	17,891	4,494	22,385	1.5	1.8	1.6
Gambella	13	1	14	1,280	132	1,412	1.0	0.8	1.0
Harari	18	5	23	413	134	547	4.4	3.7	4.2
Addis Ababa	184	96	280	8,726	2,230	10,956	2.1	4.3	2.6
Dire Dawa	22	5	27	665	122	787	3.3	4.1	3.4
Sidama	56	15	71	5,360	1,331	6,691	1.0	1.1	1.1
SWEP	88	32	120	4,966	1,212	6,178	1.8	2.6	1.9
National	1,189	672	1,861	111,218	28,492	139,710	1.1	2.4	1.3

Source: MoE: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2021/22

Table 4	Reasons for Leaving the Profession in Secondary Teachers, 2021/22																		
Change/Left				Prolonged															
Region	Teaching Profession		Death		Ethical Problem		Political Post		Sickness		Retirement		Other		Total Attrition				
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total		
Afar	7	1	2	1						1				4	1	14	3	17	
Amhara	31	7	15	5	3		6	4			1	19	9	20	7	94	33	127	
Oromia	55	55	34	35	17	17	34	33	23	23	84	86	136	136		383	385	768	
Somali	-		1													1	0	1	
Benishangul-Gumuz	19	6	2	1	1		3		1		2			13	10	41	17	58	
SNNP	70	21	12	6	13	3	55	10	16	5	44	9	65	26	275	80	355		
Gambella	6				3		3		1					1	13	1	14		
Harari	3	1	1		3		1		2	1	3	1	5	1	18	5	23		
Addis Ababa	57	25	23	1	12	6	14	4	6	5	23	17	54	30	184	96	280		
Dire Dawa	7	1	1	9	4	1	1		2		1	2	4	1	22	5	27		
Sidama	20	5	5		3		1		4	1	10	4	13	5	56	15	71		
SWEP	18	5	5		2	1	15	6	2	1	8	2	35	17	88	32	120		
National	293	127	101	58	61	28		57	58	37	194	130	349	235	1,189	672	1,861		

Source: MoE: Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2021/22

Conclusions

In conclusion, the challenges faced by teachers in Ethiopia, such as limited funding for professional development, high workload, lack of support and mentorship, and inadequate infrastructure and technology, significantly impact their ability to effectively prepare for lessons and enhance their teaching practices. Addressing these challenges requires prioritizing funding for professional development, reducing teacher workload, establishing mentorship programs, and investing in infrastructure and technology. Implementing a structured incentive program for educators can help boost morale and motivation. The policy direction on teacher preparation practices emphasizes collaboration among employers, training institutions, and the Teachers Association in recruiting trainees with necessary skills, continuous education, and aligning programs with educational levels. Factors influencing teachers' professional development include contextual, process, and content factors. Factors affecting teachers' preparations and professional development in Ethiopia include lack of access to quality training and resources.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education can offer bridge courses for graduates in natural sciences and Social Studies to prepare them for teaching **Integrated Science and Social Studies**. These courses will cover curriculum content, pedagogy, and assessment strategies specific to these subjects, attracting individuals with relevant backgrounds to become qualified teachers in these areas and addressing the shortage of professional teachers.
- **To address the challenges in acquiring professional teachers in Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education, the following recommendations can be made to policy makers and the Ministry of Education:**
 1. Develop specialized teacher training programs: Create specialized training programs for teachers in Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education. These programs should focus on both theoretical knowledge and practical skills to ensure teachers are well-equipped to teach these subjects effectively.
 2. Provide incentives for teachers: Offer incentives such as higher salaries, professional development opportunities, and career advancement options for teachers specializing in Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education. This will attract more educators to these fields and encourage them to stay in the profession.
 3. Collaborate with industry experts: Partner with industry experts and professionals in the fields of Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education to provide mentorship and training opportunities for teachers. This collaboration can help teachers stay updated on industry trends and best practices.
 4. Support schools in acquiring resources: Provide schools with the necessary resources, such as equipment, materials, and facilities, to effectively teach Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education. This will enable teachers to deliver high-quality instruction and engage students in hands-on learning experiences.

5. Promote awareness and advocacy: Raise awareness about the importance of Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education in the curriculum and advocate for increased support and investment in these subjects. This can help garner public support and commitment from stakeholders to address the challenges faced by schools in acquiring professional teachers in these areas.
- Therefore, to address the shortage of professional teachers in Integrated Science and Social Studies, the Ministry of Education should design new curricula for these subjects, as well as Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education, to attract and retain qualified educators in a sustainable manner.
 - **The policy direction on teacher preparation and professional development should focus on ensuring that teachers receive comprehensive training and ongoing support to enhance their knowledge and skills. This includes:**
 1. Investing in pre-service education programs to equip teachers with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills before entering the classroom.
 2. Implementing effective in-service professional development programs that provide opportunities for teachers to continuously improve their teaching practices and stay updated on the latest educational trends.
 3. Providing incentives and recognition for teachers to boost motivation and encourage high-quality teaching.
 4. Establishing clear standards and expectations for teachers, including qualifications, to ensure a high level of professionalism and commitment to delivering quality education.
 5. Promoting collaboration and effective communication among teachers, supervisors, and colleagues to create a supportive professional environment that fosters continuous learning and growth.
 - Further research is needed to identify the specific reasons behind insufficient teacher training and professional development in **Integrated Science and Social Studies, Performing and Visual Arts and Career and Technical Education**. This will help in developing effective strategies for improvement.

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