



Teachers’ Practice Status in Addis Ababa: Tracer Study about Graduates of Kotebe University of Education

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ABSTRACT

The quality of provided educational service and its perception by students as well as employers in the world of work is an important element in the positioning of future employees in the labour market. To this end, the tracer study was aimed at identifying strengths, challenges, and gaps in preparing university teachers and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and expertise of how to equip in training relevant curriculum and enabling them to deliver quality instruction during training teachers. A qualitative case study was conducted in four primary schools selected purposively from the Addis Ababa City Administration. The target populations of the study were diploma graduates of Kotebe University of Education (2014–2017). Data were collected from 36 participants, including school principals, teachers and supervisors using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion (FGD), and a review guide of pertinent official documents. The result indicates that teachers have critical gaps in subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills. It was also found that graduate school teachers were under-equipped with a range of supporting skills such as solving instructional problems by conducting action research, delivering instruction using in-media English and utilizing computer skills in teaching and learning. This study concluded that for the former KUE diploma graduates the current status of teachers' practices was low and considered inadequate for the correct performance of their job due to a lack of professional competencies. Therefore, based on this study, KUE is expected to equip graduates in designing a relevant curriculum and in delivering quality training.

Key Words: Tracer study; teacher competence; pedagogic skills; subject matter knowledge; teachers preparation

Background of the Study

Teachers play a crucial role in a nation's development by producing knowledgeable, productive, and skilled graduates who are eager to work and transform the country. Qualified teachers are essential for building students' foundations, and many nations have implemented changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessments to better plan for all children at different educational levels. This helps citizens achieve their goals in a rapidly changing world, and teachers require competencies to effectively teach these skills to their students.

Teacher education has always been a crucial and essentially significant symbolic field of educational development in every country. Despite the aforementioned arrangements, and regulations, the effectiveness of teacher training programs in Ethiopia to prepare teachers for the 21st century has been questioned by a number of studies (Abebe, W. Woldehanna, T. 2013; Semela, T. 2014). Teacher-training institutions are criticized for not producing adequately trained teachers with pedagogical and subject matter skills, as well as professional collaboration. The sharp transition from university theories to classroom practice suggests that teachers are not well-prepared to apply theoretical knowledge. Complaints about newly hired teachers with low numeracy and literacy skills are common.

Teachers play a crucial role in nation building, nations can produce citizens who are equipped with 21st century skills, and able to propel the country to develop and progress" (MoE, 2013) through quality teachers. Teacher training programs are crucial for achieving Ethiopia's education vision, with Kotebe University of Education being one of the oldest institutions. However, less attention has been given to conducting tracer studies to evaluate the competence of recent graduates in teaching. This will help identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and gaps, ultimately improving the university's teacher training programs.

Statement of the Problem

College teacher training programs are evaluated by conducting a tracer study basically, because administrative decisions have to be made, and it is important to know and show that programs are good programs (Royce et al.,

2001). Programs in the graduate school must be evaluated by conducting a tracer study also to find out if their graduates are successful in achieving their vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Tracer study is one way of evaluating curricular programs, especially in higher education institutions (Gines, 2014; Ramirez, Cruz & Alcantara, 2014; and Pannogan & Ocampo, 2016). Tracer study can answer the questions, such as: (1) are the clients/students being helped? (2) Are the clients/ students satisfied with the services received? (3) Has the program made any real difference? (4) Does the program deserve the amount of money spent on it? And (5) how can the program be improved?

Teachers have to be knowledgeable in their subject areas and in a wide range of teaching approaches to cater for the diverse learning needs of their students. However, different studies indicate that teachers have critical gaps in subject matter competence and pedagogical proficiency. The impact study conducted (Lund University, 2005 and Haramaya University, 2007) on English Language Improvement (ELIP) indicated that teachers need intervention to improve their proficiency and pedagogical skills in the subject they teach. Students learning outcomes depend on teachers' quality of teaching, which includes assessment and evaluation. Teachers should be role models, listen to students' future needs, be open-minded, and set objectives to help them become full-fledged citizens.

There are a number of articles that emphasize the link between teachers' quality and students' achievement. For example, we can refer the studies of Kent (2004), Hawley and Valli (2000), Darling-Hammond (1998 and 1998a), Haycock (1998), and Fullan (1993). In this regard, the low quality of graduates from teacher training colleges joining the teaching profession is a significant issue in students' achievement. Research suggests that the quality of a teacher is the most important predictor of student success (Darling-Hammond, 1998). A Tennessee study (Haycock, 1998) discovered that low-achieving students increased their achievement levels by as much as 53 percent when taught by a highly effective teacher. The assessment tests make it clear that students enter colleges with very low levels of cognitive skills. They are caught in a cycle of low achievement and inadequate cognitive skills.

There were local and universal researchers who managed with common frame employability and competencies of teachers' graduates. In this case, they indicated that there are wide gaps in teachers preparation and pre-service programs in college. Nkumbi Emmanuel (2008) considered an instructional proficient improvement in Tanzania: Recognitions and practices found that a conception and practices of Instructor Proficient Improvement which combines both the raising of instructor scholarly capabilities and profession.

Besides this, dozens of local educational researchers Tekeste, (1996 & 2006); Kedir (2006 & 2010); Ahmed (2013); Workneh & Tasew (2013); and Tesfaye (2014) conclude that the quality of teachers and quality of education particularly at primary level need reconsideration. For instance, Tesfaye (2014:28) has the following to say:

The decline in education quality is very much real at all levels, but particularly alarming at primary level... schools are largely staffed by teachers who not only underwent ineffective teacher preparation programmes, but did not seem to have the necessary requisite subject-matter and professional knowledge and skills.

Tesfaye (2014:28) goes on to add that 'reforming the existing primary teacher preparation programmes should be an urgent priority.' Similarly, Shoeb-Ahmad (2013) reports the presence of poor quality of teacher education which needs reconsideration. As he concludes, 'Ethiopians are better aware of the problems and contradictions embedded within the teacher education system' and he recommended that 'it is time to take the situations seriously and find the appropriate solutions' (2013:15). The need for urgent reform of teacher education is best described in his report as follows:

It is the best time ... to rekindle new vigour and life in the pedagogical institutions and professional development centres to propel overall national development. It is a most appropriate time to take the necessary action infused with greater determination and commitment towards improving the condition of teacher education in the country (Shoeb Ahmed 2013:15).

The research results and official reports attribute the problem to the selection mechanism through which candidates join the teaching profession (Tefaye, 2014), the way they are prepared (MoE, 2012; Shoeb-Ahmed, 2013; Tesfaye, 2014; UNESCO, 2014) and the mechanism they are recruited and developed (Shoeb-Ahmed, 2013).

However, most local and international researchers deal with in a general form pre-service training and employability of graduate. That means studies carried out in teachers' preparation in general. However, these and other researches didn't study the status of graduate teachers in the field of the work and the knowledge and skill gaps they were faced in teaching practices. After Leinhardt, Putnam, Stein & Baxter (1981) Teachers' Roles Subject-matter Knowledge includes the specific information needed to present content and Action-System Knowledge Skills for planning lessons, making pacing decisions, explaining materials clearly, responding to individual differences of students.

In addition, the education system, particularly that of Addis Ababa's Education Sector can get qualified and competent teachers who can fulfil the expected results when employed in the teaching profession. Education is vitally important to the success of both individuals and nations, and growing evidence demonstrates that among

all educational resources teachers' abilities crucially contribute to students' high level of learning (Darling-Hammond: 2006: 14). However, in Ethiopia the most serious challenges, among others, are teachers' competences in subject matter knowledge, the know-how of the teaching force in the teaching profession, and abilities of teachers. The root cause identified includes; recruiting low achievers and less committed candidates, poor quality of the teaching force, low teachers' motivation and high teacher turnover (MoE DR, 2017-30). Moreover, the status of professional competencies and the level of the practices and their commitment are not addressed in previously conducted research properly. To this end, this study explored whether teachers are well equipped in the pre-service training to perform their duties effectively as expected. It was, therefore, with the previous backdrop that this study would attempt to fill the literature, methodology and practical gaps through the systematic and thorough exploration of the issue in question in this area.

Specifically, it sought answers the following questions:

1. What professional competencies (professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes and values) were prepared to carry out the teaching and learning process to the level they teach?
2. How are teacher graduates who are professionally competent and practically affect the teaching field perceived by stakeholders?
3. What knowledge and skill gaps does teachers' experience in teaching and learning after graduating from Teacher Colleges?

The purpose of the graduate tracer study was a means of maintaining curriculum relevance and providing targeted benefits to graduates to enhance the improvement of graduate profiles and marketability of educational programs.

Conceptualization of Tracer Study

The role of higher education in sustainable human development and contribution to economic growth and long-term benefits to society is well recognized (USAID, 2014). The curriculum is a fundamental aspect of any training programme as education institutions seek to translate and actualize societal goals and values (Alade, 2011; James, Lefoe&Hadi, 2004). Governments look up to universities not only in the production of human capital, but also in generating and disseminating knowledge, as well as innovation for sustainable development and competitiveness in a globalized world (UNESCO, 2012; Materu, 2007; World Bank, 2010). It is therefore expected that graduates of higher learning will have knowledge and generic skills that meet the requirements of society. Specifically, Chan, Brown and Ludlow (2014) argue that society expects students to develop discipline-specific competence as well as generic skills and dispositions.

The authors believe that education is about discipline specific knowledge, dispositions and cognitive skills that enable graduates to be effective citizens in the 21st century. Among the relevant employability or generic skills are communication, writing, innovation, tolerance, and compassion, while the required dispositions include attitudes, beliefs, team spirit, and curiosity (Chan, Brown and Ludlow, 2014; UNESCO, 2012.) All the same, unemployment of graduates is recorded in many countries. While financial crises and economic downturns are contributory, the supply side factors such as the relevance of programmes and skills are noted to contribute to graduate unemployment (UNESCO, 2012). For example, Rasiah (2009) noted the emergence of a skills gap between 'fit for purpose, of graduates having generic skills that employers expect and graduates with only subject-specific knowledge that institutions produce. One way to assess the contribution of the higher education institutions of society is to conduct tracer studies (Heidemann, 2011).

Specifically, this study was guided by the following objectives: to determine the knowledge, skills and abilities developed by the University college, which are considered useful by the respondents in meeting the demands of their present world of work; to describe how the employees satisfied in their work values of graduates; and to enhance the relevance of present course offerings and the college development program based on the findings of the study.

Concepts of Teachers' Quality

School effectiveness and school improvement are concerned with raising student achievement and developing other desirable student characteristics by focusing on the teaching/learning process and the conditions that support it. A significant result of this new approach is growing trust that teachers can function as professionals and make responsible decisions when they have sufficient understanding of the reforms they are being asked to implement, and support in becoming familiar with a range of effective alternative practices. Trust and support, in turn, often lead to an increased sense of professional identity and empowerment and more positive morale and energy (AED forthcoming; Boyle et al., 2003; Gidey 2002; LeCzel forthcoming; LeCzel and Liman, 2003; UNESCO, 2004, pp. 161–168 & Zeichner and Noffke, 2001).

The following conceptual framework like social constructionism has systems that help to answer research questions. It also enables to understand the case better.

Below is an illustration of the Conceptual Framework of the study

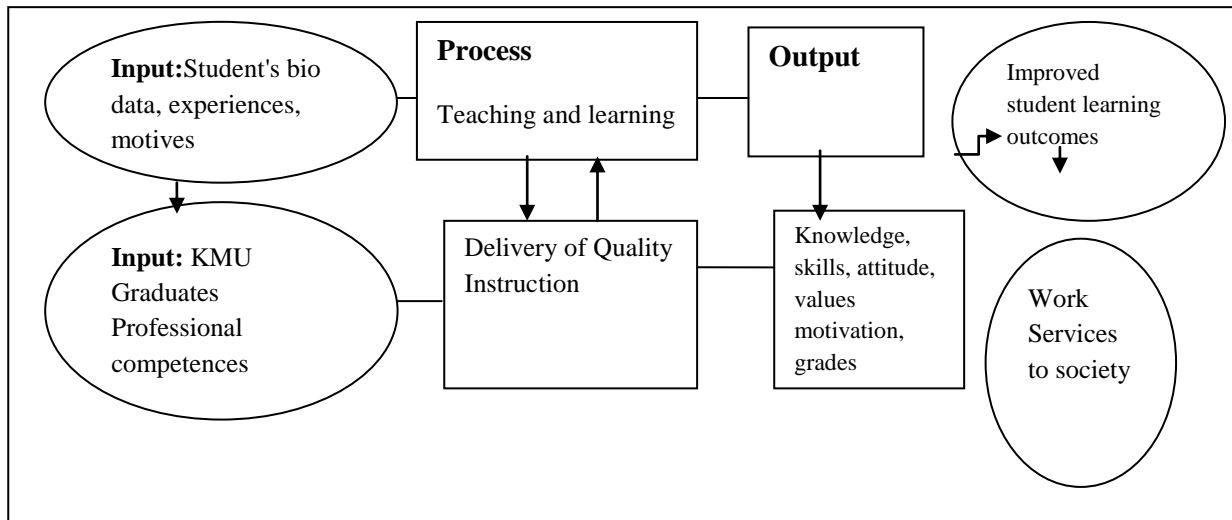


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for tracer study

Research Paradigm

Paradigm & Methods

All research is based on a few fundamental philosophical presumptions around what constitutes “valid” research and which methods are suitable for the advancement of knowledge in a given circumstance. Research ideal models allude to the world’s stand or belief of frameworks that direct researchers and influence the way in which knowledge is produced, examined and translated (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990). The choice of paradigm is exceptionally vital because it sets down the aim, and gives a theoretical system for the techniques utilized in the investigation (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). A worldview can either be positivist, interpretive, transformative or down to business. This study is, in any case, arranged within the interpretive worldview.

Interpretive approach is subjective, socially constructed, utilizing multiple measures and observations to understand individual perceptions, advance knowledge, and share meanings. (Bassegy 1999: 44). This study employs an interpretive stance, drawing on participants' perceptions, experiences, feelings, and opinions on professional competencies. It uses primary data from interviews and secondary literature, utilizing interactive, reflective questions to understand research focus and human actions' social meanings.

Research Design

This exploratory and interpretive study utilizes a subjective case study plan to analyze and clarify units in common settings. This approach is preferred when the agent or analyst has limited control over the process and the center is a contemporary wonder in real-life contexts (Merriam-Webster, 2012; Yin, 2011:18y). Inductive subjective case considerations are suitable for examining graduate teachers' knowledge and improving gaps in their field. Quantitative cases provide a perfect plan for understanding and deciphering instructional marvels, while a case study plan helps gain an in-depth understanding of the situation. To this end, the case study enabled an in-depth exploration that can be undertaken to understand participants’ strengths in knowledge and skill gaps in their context and condition.

Research Approach

Qualitative research is grounded in a basically constructivist philosophical position, in a sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced, deciphered, and caught on in a specific setting and at a specific point in time. Tracer study is conducted basically employing a qualitative approach instead of quantitative in nature. Each is planned locally and by and large the controlling mechanism is within the hands of the programs when the think about is attempted by autonomous exterior analysts. The expectation of subjective investigation is to look at a social situation or interaction by allowing the analyst to enter the world of others and endeavour to attain an all-encompassing instead of a reductionist understanding (Bogdan&Biklen, 2007; Merriam & Partners, 2002; Schram, 2003;).

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis face challenges in understanding large amounts of data, reducing information volume, identifying patterns, and constructing a framework. Researchers should make data analysis and collection a simultaneous activity to avoid repetition, unfocusedness, and overwhelming data. Analyzing involves within-case analysis and cross-case analysis to enhance generalizability and deepen

understanding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study analyzed qualitative data through interviews and content analysis, focusing on themes arranged by frequency. Themes were translated and explained in the findings, and triangulated and corroborated using relevant documents. Overall, converged findings were identified through text and quote analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

What professional competencies (professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes and values) where they prepared to carry out in the teaching and learning process of the level they teach?

Regarding the relevance and relationship of the knowledge of the contents of the subject matter attained from the undergraduate teacher education programs with respect to the contents and lessons in the real teaching career after graduation i.e in the degree of adequacy and relevance of the pre-service training programs in relation to their program competencies. In this regard, many responses were obtained from the participants. Regarding these competencies, one of the FGD participants (a teacher) said the following:

Even though the education we received during our diploma program has something to do with what we are teaching now, in actual fact, we cannot say that they are properly related to a satisfactory level. This might be resulted from the coincidence that we were trained to be teachers of grades 5 to 8, whereas we were assigned to teach from grades 1 to 4 as well. With regard to our teaching skill and efficiency, we believe that we are carrying out our responsibility appropriately according to the training we had acquired from KUE. (T1)

This interview supports the FGD conducted among teacher participants, who mentioned the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they acquired during pre-service training. They claimed that General Education courses helped them acquire lessons in Mathematics, Language, General Psychology, and Social Science. They claimed these lessons added value to their subject matter choices and real-world work. However, the supervisor, principal, and the department head disagreed with teachers' self-perceptions, focusing on their professional competence and practical effects on teaching.

When compared to other colleges and schools, our students and parents frequently say that teachers are not competent enough to enable students to be smart because they themselves, i.e, the teachers, do not know what they teach. They lack the proper knowledge of the subject matter. We know this bitter reality by the results of our children; their maximum score in the grade 8 exam is not more than 38%. This incompetence of teachers clearly shows that they graduated without knowing what they should know to teach after graduation. Therefore, it is much expected from Kotebe University of Education to correct such abnormalities with respect to this basic profession. P1

Cluster supervisor informants stated that there has been difficulty with reality due to poor pre-service training. One of them pointed out;

Teachers are the main actors among the stakeholders in the improvement of the schools, and consequently in the students' outcome. The classroom interaction between the teacher and students is the main factor for the improvement of students' performance. According to our follow up through instructional supervision, we cannot say that these KUE graduate teachers have proper training and knowledge of the subject matter they are assigned to deliver. This might result from a lack of the right recruits from the very beginning. But some teachers who are upgrading their diploma to BA degree are observed doing better when compared with others who are teaching with only diploma certificate. S1

Many interviewed teachers reported that pre-service training competencies for principals and cluster supervisors were not as expected, with gaps and limitations in practice. The Ministry of Education (MoE) should consider designing a benchmark for teachers to evaluate and advance in their careers. CPD programs are primarily designed to develop teachers' capacity and competency through continuous participation in various activities. However, some view CPD as a narrow approach, lacking an overarching goal and impact. (Glusac, 2013).

The benefit of their real teaching job of the pedagogical skill trainers had got from KUE during their practice

The Professional Education (Prof Ed) courses taught them to manage their classes and to plan their lessons well, for more efficient and effective teaching and learning of their specialization. More so, the use of teaching strategies specific to their field of specialization facilitated their lessons. Regarding pedagogical skills, one of FGD teacher participants indicated;

During our training we had received different courses related to teaching methodologies. With this regard, we learnt how to prepare teaching aids, how to plan daily and weekly lesson plans, and we took practicum that introduced us to the real teaching environment. But we cannot say that all those efforts can enable us to face the challenges of teaching in this modern society. We believe that teacher training colleges should do more to enable their would-be teachers, especially in terms of using modern technologies, classroom management, and handling disciplinary cases with respect to parent-student-teacher relationships. T1

Regarding the competencies acquired from preservice training and the benefit of their real teaching job of the pedagogical skill trainers had got from KUE during their practice. Regarding pedagogical skill of a teacher

Regarding teacher graduates professionally competent, the pedagogical skill and practical effect on the field of teaching as perceived by the school principal:

Some teachers try to make their classes more participatory than others. Nevertheless, most teachers are not as they are expected towards some pedagogical skills that using different methodical aspects such as using active learning, preparing teaching aids, experience sharing among peers, and making alive the whole teaching process.P2

Similarly, the cluster supervisors regarding teacher graduates' professional competence, the pedagogical skills and practical effect on the field of teaching as perceived as:

Teachers most often use teacher centred way of traditional teaching rather than student-centred way of modern approach. They mention the high number of students, as many as 50 and above in a single classroom, as a reason for not implementing student-centred way of teaching. As a matter of fact, even though a training how to deal with such a big number of students in a classroom is given during the training sessions; no one seems to take into consideration and apply it. Therefore, KUE is expected to focus on trainings that help teachers handle large size classes and implement active learning.S2

The pedagogical aspect of their profession requires not only understanding theories and concepts on how to handle their target classes, but also translates all these into tangible experiences while they are in their work-based learning environment.The focus of teacher training is the training and development of professional applicable skills, innovative and relevant to the process of teaching-learning evaluation, in the context of student-centred instruction

Regarding the importance of the training on lesson plan preparation during the teacher education program at the University and its benefit and application in the real teaching profession.Regarding this issue, one of the FGD participant teachers replied that,

We had learnt how to prepare lesson plans in the training. We also applied that lesson in our practicum course. But we have a problem in preparing our lesson plans as we were taught. The gaps are seriously visible, especially in designing our lesson plans with regard to setting rationale, contents, etc. We are trying to solve such gaps through consulting with each other and reading books.T1

Similarly, in relation to their practicum experience, the one of teacher respondents articulated that the opportunity to teach in actual classroom settings was most essential in honing their skills as a teacher. However, the participant felt that without an appropriate support and evaluation, practicum alone didn't enable them to be competent in pedagogical skills that they can implement in classroom teaching and learning process. A semester of practicum was suggested with appropriate support and feedback as a better time frame for practicum. (T2)

Designing and structuring engaging activities and resourcing the lesson to assess students' learning are some of the major skills expected of teachers. One of the school principals (Head Masters) indicated that: -

Regarding lesson plan preparation, we observe serious problems among teachers. We see a large gap, especially with respect to designing their lesson plan didactic elements like setting the objectives of the lesson, articulating rational with following the rules and regulations of the curriculum content, in preparing and setting the daily, weekly, monthly, semester and annual lesson plans along with other inputs of teaching methodologies. This problem may arise from their inability to understand the subject matter they teach and the pedagogical skill they should master.

Similarly, another Supervisor said that,

There is a great problem with regard to lesson plan preparation among teachers. This problem should be addressed properly if we want to have a good teaching-learning process. We observed much problem among teachers in applying formal lesson plan. Their plans miss didactic elements in every aspect of an appropriate lesson plan that must be considered as standard.

Lesson planning is a basic component of each teacher's practice. Be that as it may, concurring with the data from participants, the researcher observed from document analysis (teachers' yearly, week-by-week and day-by-day lesson) that there was a wide gap in planning lesson plans. The lesson plan needs suitable learning destinations, basis and results. Planning and organizing, designing engaging activities in teaching and resourcing the lesson to evaluate students' learning are a few of the major abilities anticipated by instructors. It isn't a coordinated instructional method: arranging, educating and assessing. It moreover needs to present the key concepts and abilities of lesson planning and gives a common sense system for their improvement.

Based on your lessons at the University about preparing continuous assessments and final exams, how did you equip yourselves to implement those exams in the table of specification in real teaching career?

For the purposes of formative and summative assessment differ from one another, teachers were expected to prepare formatives and summative assessment to better understand how the learning experience is progressing and to track the learner's progress at the end of a lesson. Regarding skills in preparing assessment responses from teacher informant said that:-

We have got skills that could enable us to design different types of assessments and exams. However, we are not trained enough to apply the table of specification for exam preparation, exam item difficult, development skills and the analysis of student achievement for feedback and the report's purpose in such a way that we are not in

line with the actual practices at school level ability to assess our students properly. Because we took only one course with this regard, still there is a major gap in preparing tests and exams to properly assess analysis students' achievement.

The assessment allows both the teacher and student to monitor progress towards achieving learning objectives, and can be approached in a variety of ways. It is one of the top qualities and skills of a good teacher. Concerning this issue, a school principal (Head Masters) replied that:

Teachers often prepare tests and exams that do not meet the expected standards, resulting in inadequate training. This lack of training hinders their ability to apply specifications for exam preparation, item difficulty, development skills, and student achievement analysis. To address this issue, institutions are offering on-the-job trainings to teachers. Designing tests and exams to assess students' learning is crucial to the teaching process, and KUE must work to correct this crucial problem.

As mentioned above, the assessment allows both the instructors and student to monitor progress towards achieving learning objectives, and can be approached in a variety of ways. With regard to the skills in preparing formative and summative assessment the ability of teachers the supervisor participant indicates that,

The design of tests and exams has been criticized for not meeting expected standards, as teachers are not trained to apply the table of specification for exam preparation, item difficulty, development skills, and student achievement analysis. This lack of training hinders their ability to assess students properly. KUE is working to fill this gap by providing on-the-job trainings. Addressing these chronic problems is crucial, as preparing tests and exams is a major part of the teaching learning process based on the table of specification

The researcher analyzed documents from primary schools observing mid-exam and final-exam questions prepared by teachers for formative and summative assessment. They found that most questions were true/false and matching, lacking critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Initial teacher education did not equip teachers with the necessary skills to prepare formative and summative assessments, impacting teaching quality and student performance. As teachers fulfil different roles as assessors, tensions and gaps between formative and summative assessment purposes can be significant (Bol and Strange, 1996). However, teachers often are in the position of being able to tailor assessments for both summative and formative purposes.

The English language ability of would-be-teachers during the training sessions or programs has major contribution to improve classroom instruction. Thus, teachers trained in college are expected to teach English and use it as instructional media in the school. Regarding the qualities, skills and characteristics that English is used as a medium of instruction, one of teacher informants said the following;

During our stay in the university as trainers for the teaching profession, we had learnt all courses in English but no course was given in Amharic. Nevertheless, the courses were not enough to enable us to teach the subjects we are entrusted to offer in schools. The skills and lessons about the subject matters we received are less sufficient to enable us to carry out our teaching responsibility. It is therefore difficult for to use English to teach the subjects and even to communicate with others. The major reason is that all instructors in the training programs mix up Amharic language, whereas they should use the English language that is used in the real teaching job. This kind of code switching is negatively impacting our language capacity.

The following interview about the aforementioned point was taken from by one of the school principals (Head Masters): -

The English language problem among teachers is highly visible. Even those teachers who are assigned to teach English as a subject are very poor in not only teaching the language, but also even in communicating using the language with others. This problem is extensively seen in their lesson plans and exam papers. Therefore, this problem should be addressed properly during the undergraduate program course offerings. If a teacher, he doesn't know the language s/he is assigned to teach, its impact will be disastrous in achieving success in the education sector.

English language communication skill was expressed as a critical problem of KUE Diploma graduates. Let's read the following response from one informant with respect to this;

We have understood that the English language is in jeopardy in classes we went to observe or supervise. We observed teachers struggling to communicate in English, but in vain. There is a huge gap in properly using English. If a teacher doesn't speak the language, it is hard to believe that s/he will teach students and make them successful. Therefore, we recommend that this problem should be given due consideration during teacher training programs.

Despite efforts to assist teachers with minimal teaching qualifications, there are risks associated with their level of language command. A good dialect educator must possess skills in reading, speaking, and listening, as well as the ability to use vocabulary and words effectively. The main challenge for English language teachers teaching for young learners is the need for preparation, information, and proficiency in English. The primary concern is the need for qualified teachers, but the analyst emphasizes the importance of tried-and-true experiences for teachers.

The result or effect of the course “Action Research” among teachers during their performance in the real job

Action research is useful in solving an immediate, specific problem. Action research is very useful in solving classroom problems. Regarding this teacher informant stated that:-

To speak the truth, with regard to action research, we didn't get sufficient knowledge and experience from our instructors. The students' action research skills were lacking due to inadequate instruction from their instructors. One group member, who had access to former students, submitted copied papers without proper verification. This lack of knowledge hindered their ability to equip themselves with the necessary skills. Instead, they learned action research through trainings, workshops, and schools. To address this issue, it is recommended that teacher education programs address this issue during the training process. By educating teachers on action research, they can better handle work-related problems (T5).

Action research enables teachers to reflect on what they would like to change, explore what others are doing in that field and experiment with practice in a controlled fashion. This practical training, support participants in improving teaching and learning through classroom-based research. The response given by one among school principals (Head Masters) regarding teacher status in action research seems the following;

Teachers have a big gap with regard to action research. To get rid of this gap, we are organizing different training sessions so that our teachers become beneficiaries of action research after the inductions. Unless teachers are aware of solving problems through action research method, their job in schools would face major problems. Therefore, it is vitally important if teacher education programs incorporate this action research as a course and give due attention in offering the course so that would-be-teachers become genuine users of the action research method to avoid their problems while teaching.(P2)

Responses from the Supervisors

The interviewees (principals and TDP coordinators) were asked and their discussions were almost in line with the statistical information drawn above. Here was the argument made by the principal of sample school (I) for instance:

It is expected from teachers that they solve problems through action research while carrying out their duties at the schools. Nevertheless, we have proved that most teachers are incapable of doing this due to, perhaps, the fact that they don't have this skill of engaging themselves in an action research method. We haven't seen any teacher doing action research.

Action research helps teachers improve their practice, become more autonomous, and create a dynamic environment for teaching and learning. However, participants and researcher analysis of teacher portfolios reveal that teachers lack the skills and attitudes to implement action research effectively. This is due to their inability to solve classroom instruction problems through action research. KUE was unable to develop the research skills of its graduate participants 2015-2019.

Do teachers have the basic knowledge of computers and related modern technology?

A response to this question from a teacher is presented next;

Of course, we had taken a course on how to use a computer during our training. But that is not enough and only a course couldn't enable us to be efficient in using this technology. That is only as an introduction, we didn't take it in depth. Therefore, we observe a wide gap with this regard and hence this gap should be given much focus through in-service training if we need to improve the teaching learning process.

A response given to the above question by one of the school principals (Head Masters);

Teachers have no interest as well as skill to give lessons through technological support such as internet and computers. To tell the truth, the training they took with this respect doesn't even invite them to use such technological support. Therefore, it's vitally important if the training is improved and incorporate courses that help teachers' use of technological teaching aids and facilities such as computers and the internet.

A response from one of the supervisors: -

Teachers have wide gaps in utilizing technological apparatuses such as internet and the like. As we know, for example, using a computer is too ordinary in this age of IT. But it is irritating that most teachers are strangers to this modern technology in our context. Therefore, it is naivety to expect students that keep pace with this modern world if they are taught by such teachers who detached themselves from the information technology (IT).

CONCLUSIONS

The result with regard to the status of teachers' practices, and the level of satisfaction of stakeholders (principals and supervisors), indicates that teachers have critical gaps in subject matter competence and pedagogical competence in their status of the actual practices, This becomes imperative that they are not knowledgeable in subject matter content areas and extremely in a wide range of skills of teaching methods to cater for the diverse learning needs of every student as much as the expected from KUE graduates. There are some deficient areas

such as basic computer, action research, and English language skills of the graduates, problems in assessment techniques, preparing tests and exams to meet the expected standard, some teachers' lack of experience, lack of sufficient counselling services, some students being unethical were also some of the pinpointed weaknesses consistently highlighted by the respondents. This implies that the initial teacher training has a positive impact on teacher practice and student outcomes of pedagogical preparation. This view is in harmony with Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy (2003), and Getachew Tefera. (2011–2013), (Lund University, 2005 and Haramaya University, 2007) who review 57 empirical research reports on United States teacher education by putting into evidence a positive connection between teachers' preparation in terms of subject-matter knowledge and the pedagogical skills preparation the performances of their teacher graduates, even if it also acknowledges the fact that the solution to achieve teacher effectiveness is more complex than simply requiring the major or more subject matter course (p.2).

These findings may serve as a baseline for curriculum review and give suggestions for future tracer studies.

Limitations

The study only tried to see a tracer study on teachers' competencies and teachers' education quality in the Diploma program, hence; other variables which could be included in the tracer study were not included. Furthermore, the tracer study focused on KUE diploma-level graduates. Thus, graduates from any other educational institutions and those degree-level graduates from KUE were not considered in this study. Therefore, the results may not be generalized for all teachers working in the schools of the city administration of Addis Ababa.

Implications

It was implied in the study that the Diploma graduates are employable, however, they are in the rank and file status. They also realized and felt that their working lives could have been much better if they had undergone and being equipped with pedagogy, action research, language and ICT skills so that they are work-ready graduates. Moreover, the graduates are still looking for jobs that could provide for all their family's needs and continuously seek financial stability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are derived.

1. Most KUE graduates were found to be poor in fundamental computer and related technology skills. KUE has to empower its students to be familiar with fundamental computer and related technology abilities. This shows that KUE has to empower its students to be familiar with fundamental computer skills and related technology abilities, by giving them fundamental courses along with adequate facilities and making conducive environments in which pre-service teachers are motivated to utilize ICT throughout their stay there as a trainer. Hence, an instructor in the twenty-first century not only should but must be a computerized educator.
2. English language communicative skill was identified as one of the critical problems of KUE diploma graduates. Therefore, English language and the English Language Improvement Center (ELIC) of the University should take the initiative in offering continuous remedial tutorial classes of "Basic English language skills Training Programs" to its students.
3. Action research skills were also identified as a great problem with KUE diploma graduates in the world of work, therefore, the University needs to work on how to integrate adequate and competency-based action research methodology courses in the curriculum and training on how they conduct the action research to solve instructional problems should be designed in order to make them skilful with action research methodology before graduation. Besides that, to solve action research related problems, the graduates should be encouraged to improve their action research skills through in-service training could help to internalize the action research skills.
4. The University may create proper opportunities for sharing good practices among colleges, each college has success stories and challenges which could be shared to expand and strengthen promising practices and innovative ideas throughout the University programs.

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