
Student Engagement in Geography Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching Program at Addis Ababa University

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Abstract: This study is intended to assess student-teacher engagement in the currently running but heavily contested add-on teacher training program at the College of Education in the Addis Ababa University by taking the case of Geography PGDT (Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching) program. Qualitative data for the assessment was gathered from two FGD (Focus Group Discussion) groups of the 2017 geography PGDT summer entries. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with six geography PGDT teachers/instructors and two other key informants with direct experience in the program: one from the researchers and the other PGDT program coordinator at Ministry of Education. The qualitative data was organized and analyzed using three successive steps: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions (Punch, 2005). The findings have clearly shown that the student-teachers were not engaged in the classroom and out-of-classroom activities as desired. This was reflected in their high truancy rate, lack of interest in classroom activities including failure to complete assignments, lack of preparedness in their teaching practices and failure to complete the practicum portfolio in the required quality in time. In view of the findings, this study suggests that the application of effective educational practices is very advisable for the college of education to develop realistically auditable engagement policies, governing both the instructors and students, and these have to be communicated ahead of time or at least before the registration processes.

Key terms: *add-on program, teachers' training program, student engagement*

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Introduction

Education is a means by which societies transfer their accumulated knowledge to the next generations with the aim of making life better and societal development continuous (Baofu, 2011). It involves a process of teaching and learning and is considered to be one of the most important contributing factors to the socio-economic growth of any nation (Workneh & Tassew, 2013). This is normally achieved through the establishment of formal and informal educational institutions with trained teachers (Fine, 2005). The formal educational system, which usually ranges from pre-school to tertiary levels, is performed by trained teachers. Hence, the most important factor to enhance learners' achievement is teachers' quality. It is believed that without qualified teachers, students' learning will severely be hampered and educational institutions without trained teachers cannot perform their jobs effectively (Guthri, 2011 and Ankomah et al, 2005).

The achievement of quality education requires proper curriculum development, availability of qualified trained teachers, provision of educational resources and application of appropriately designed continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. However, many educational researchers confirmed that the major role players for quality education are teachers (Workneh & Tassew, 2013). Training of quality teachers again requires qualified and resourceful higher teacher training institutions operating with the collaborative efforts of other major stakeholders (Schleicher, 2012).

In the higher teacher training institutions, student-teachers need to be provided with appropriately balanced subject area knowledge and pedagogical skills. To this effect, a clear understanding is required to enable us appreciate the engagement of student-teachers throughout the training process, in activities that are closely related to their professional growth.

Student-teacher engagement, in general, refers to the high level integrated concept encompassing the holistic (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) interest of learners, which is very essential to overcome problems of low achievers, student boredom, alienation, and high dropouts (Fredrick & McColskey, 2004).

It is in the creation of such an understanding that educational researches have an important role to play. The more we come to know about student-teacher learning engagement, the more able we are to construct models or theories of professional growth to shape the development of future teachers training programs (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2005).

The intension of this study is, therefore, to explore the extent of student-teachers' engagement in classroom and other related out-of-classroom training activities in the teachers training program of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies in the Addis Ababa University by taking the case of geography PGDT program of 2017.

Statement of the Research Problem

Many educational researchers believe that well-trained teachers through appropriately designed modalities are central in improving the quality of education given at all levels of the educational systems (Harris & Sass 2006 and Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse 2008). However, the current teacher education programs of many countries, especially in the developing countries, are entangled with not very well studied policies and inadequately planned and uncoordinated implementation modalities (Levine, 2006).

Until recently, student engagement has not been a major focus within the field of educational research in Ethiopia. But it seems paradoxical not giving emphasis to student-teacher learning engagement since it determines the quality of effort that these student-teachers would in the future devote to enhance educationally purposeful activities directly contributing to the desired educational outcomes (Hardy & Bryson 2009).

Some of the early studies in teacher education were primarily concerned with student-teacher evaluations for their own professional education. Some others have focused either on the curriculum/content (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2005 and Deacon, 2016) or on the significance of Teacher Educational program (NCRTE, 1988) and the experiences gained from Teacher Education programs (Shallcross, 2003).

Other studies have also emphasized on the enrolment, graduation and attrition proportion of candidates (Geberew, 2017) or on views challenging the implementation of teacher education programs (Aweke et al, 2017 and Mulugeta, 2017) without giving emphasis to the engagement of student-teacher in the training program.

One related quantitative study was conducted by Amare (2015) that focused on student-teachers' learning engagement with respect to academic and administrative practices. It deals with the general overview of student-teachers learning engagement not directly applicable to specific academic disciplines, particularly related to teaching geography. This study, therefore, is intended to fill the gaps of engagement category mentioned above by focusing on the student-teachers' practical trainings activities encompassing both inside and outside classroom activities. It would explore the consequences of the lack of student engagement in the geography PGDT program in the college and recommend viable measures to be taken.

Research Questions

Research questions in qualitative research include the central concept or the process being explored and thus are put interrogatively in the manner conducive to examine the process to be explored (Johnson & Christensen, 2004 and Creswell, 2012)). They are open-ended, general questions that the researchers would answer during the study (Creswell, 2012). This research study seeks for answers to the following research questions:

The main research question of the study is *how are student-teachers engaged in the add-on teachers' training program (PGDT) at the Addis Ababa University/AAU/?* Based on this, subsidiary questions may include:

- How do teachers explain student-teachers engagement?
- How do teachers encourage student-teachers to be engaged?
- What is the attitude of student-teachers towards the training program?
- What are challenges for student-teachers engagement?

Related Literature Review

Lack of quality teachers has long been a serious issue in Ethiopia since the introduction of modern education into the country in the early twentieth century by Emperor Menilik II (Tekeste, 1990). During these early days, the problem was offset by employing expatriate teachers, mainly Egyptians. Many of the enlightened Ethiopian Orthodox Church scholars were also used, most of which were assigned to teach Amharic language and moral education (Bolsvik in Tesfaye 2008).

The shortage of qualified teachers was also severe during the time of Emperor Haile Sellassie I, since most of the previous teachers were killed by the Italians and more schools were opened (Tekeste, 1990). This acute shortage of teachers was however temporarily overcome by resorting to available few teachers and traditional Orthodox Church scholars. In the meantime, the first low level teacher education program was first started in 1944, attached to the Menilik II School. Subsequent to this, several other Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) including the Harar, Debre Berhan, Jimma, Asmara and Kotebe were opened at different times up to 1970 (Befekadu in Tesfaye, 2008).

The first tertiary level teacher education program unit in Ethiopia was started in 1951/52 (Solomon, 2017) under the Faculty of Arts in the first University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) to produce quality teachers for the growing number of senior secondary schools in the country. This was later raised to the status of the Faculty of Education when the UCAA was transformed into the then Haile Sellassie 1st University in 1962. The Faculty of Education was again renamed as the College of Education when the Haile Sellassie 1st University was renamed as the Addis Ababa University in 2003. Notwithstanding the availability of historical documents on the beginning of teachers' education in Ethiopia, no records were found dealing with student-teacher engagement during this period.

Various curriculum /program/ changes and delivery method adjustments have been made to the secondary teacher education program in the country subsequent to the various educational reforms and policy changes. All these changes were made to improve the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education programs to raise teaching standards in the high schools (Shoeb, 2013). The first high quality pre-service integrated subject area-pedagogical teacher education program was started with the opening of the high standard Prince Bede Mariam Preparatory /Laboratory/ School (Lab School) in 1964 under the Faculty of Education of the then Haile Sellassie I University.

The intention of recruiting high achieving grade eleven complete students from the various public high schools in the country was to intensively train them to be high school teachers. Later, assessments made on the academic profile and teaching performance of these graduates have clearly confirmed that the program was reasonably effective in raising the quality of high school education throughout the country.

Since the early 1990s, however, the Ethiopian government has again started to give emphasis to the educational sector in its national development program by enacting various proclamations. The

Education Training Policy, ETP (1994) and Education Sector Strategy (1994); the current Education Sector Development Program, ESDP IV (2010) designed to meet the quantitative and qualitative educational goals of the nation; the Teacher Development Program, TDP (2007); and the Teacher Education System Overhaul, TESO (2003), were among the related policies and support programs launched to bring about quantitative and qualitative improvements to the educational system by giving emphasis on quality teacher production. All these programs were financed by World Bank under General Education Quality Improvement Program, GEQIP (2007).

In the Teacher Development Program, TDP (2007), many teacher development activities were clearly stipulated to improve the teaching-learning conditions in both the primary and secondary schools. The program anticipated to advance the quality of teaching by improving the teacher candidates selection criteria; organizing pre-service and in-service subject area and pedagogical training programs; enhancing teacher candidates teaching experience through practicum; encouraging professional development strategies for teacher educators; and developing career structure and licensing and re-licensing of teachers at all levels in the educational management system. It was observed that schooling and teacher preparation were poorly aligned with each other in their aims and practices, leaving the teacher education in the country with contradictions and challenges which was later subject to investigation.

In Ethiopia, the four years BA/BSc degree integrated subject area-pedagogical teacher training program has been replaced by three years BA/BSc. degree plus additional one-year training in pedagogical and professional courses, leading to Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT). The intention was to improve what the policy makers say a serious subject area knowledge deficiency observed among high school teachers trained in the previous integrated model. However, observations of the performance of teachers produced under this current teacher education model have not shown any visible improvement to the

quality of teachers. The change in the models of training didn't so far have brought the anticipated desired quality of education in the country.

It was apparent that many researchers have confirmed the obviously felt urgent need for quality teachers, to reverse the ever-declining quality of education in the country. However, the Ministry of Education and the other major stakeholders have repeatedly failed up to now to base their teacher preparation policies and in particular the implementation strategies on systematic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the previous teacher training programs (Tsfaye. 2008). This can clearly be attested by the high rate of policy and strategy turnover in less than a decade, many of which were short-lived, resulting in wastage of time and resources, and more than that spoiling the professional development of many of the student-teachers that have undergone such 'ill planned' and 'ill implemented' teacher training programs. What makes it funny is that several of the previously abandoned teacher preparation policies and strategies are being reinstated again and no one is being held responsible for all the damages caused so far.

This indicates that it is essential to critically study the implications of our current and future educational policies, strategies and implementation modalities before they are put into effect. This study therefore will attempt to explore student-teacher engagement, which is one of the major themes in the quality of teachers' education.

Engagement is the state or quality of being dedicated to an activity at hand (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). The concept is applicable to all human, behavioral, emotional and cognitive dimensions Trowler (2010). Kuh (2009)(as cited in Trowler, 2010) has also defined student engagement as the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to the desired outcomes of the training colleges and what these institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities. Hence, student engagement in this study is used to indicate the extent to which the student-teachers enrolled in the PGDT program have dedicated their efforts, both inside and outside classroom activities, as per the guidance

they get from the teaching staff, the training institutions, and other related stakeholders.

Student-teachers' prior motivation to become teachers can lead them to take part in teachers training programs and can be ready to engage themselves in the teaching-learning processes. According to Hammond (2005), such motivations come from significant attractions of the candidate to teaching, the nurturing of young people and making good contributions to society. A further source of engagement can come from the student-teachers' interest in their respective subject areas of study. They have studied a subject in a great deal of depth and thus teaching gives them an opportunity to keep up with the latest ideas and theories.

Student-teachers engagement during the training program could be stretched at times and their views on the job will also change as they come to understand and appreciate what the teaching profession involves. Adjusting their perspectives on teaching can be very challenging and they need to work hard to understand the different roles of the teacher (Hammond, 2005).

Research Design

This study has applied the case study method which is a very popular form of qualitative research approach (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 2012 and Willig, 2008). This method can be appropriate for investigating how an individual or program changes over time. It can also be used to study a particular individual, program, or event in depth for a defined period of time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Case study method can employ a range of different methods of data collection tools (Willig, 2008).

The researchers chose a single-case design method since a program (PGDT) can represent a unique or extreme case of interest to them (Willig, 2008). Thus the researchers studied the degree of students' engagement in the Geography PGDT program at the College of Education in the Addis Ababa University by developing unstructured

interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as appropriate data collection tools to seek the responses of the purposively selected participants who were in one form or another very familiar with the PGDT training program.

The selected research participants were 14 from among the PGDT student-teachers, supervisors from the College of Education, 2 key informants, one from the researchers and the other a coordinator of the teacher training program at the head office of the Ministry of Education. These research participants were the major stakeholders of the program who were believed to provide relevant and reliable information on the issue to be studied. The researchers' personal experience and observations were also used to reach at conclusions in addressing the research questions outlined. Finally, the data were analyzed using text interpretation and thematic coding (Willig, 2008).

Data Analysis

All interview texts collected from each of the interviewees, underwent the coding process. The researchers read the interview text of each interviewee line by line and raised questions related to the research questions. By doing so, it was possible to determine the themes related with the research questions from each interviewee's and FGD transcript. Finally, the themes were categorized to form a clear summary.

In the coding process, the researchers assigned words, phrases or descriptive words for the interview text of each interviewee and FGD participant group. Coding was not done by the researchers alone so as to increase its credibility. It was also done by other colleagues who were thought to have knowledge in qualitative research. Prior to the final category, which was similar to coding, the researchers developed names that represented the content of the segments of the data collected.

Interpretation of the data was made based on the research questions. Whenever there appeared possible contradictions and conflicting themes, the researchers depended on their own perspective and experiences to make sense out of these. In line with this, additional data were collected to verify or fill the gap of some of the incomplete data identified during the process of analysis.

Lastly, the interview transcripts were classified into three different groups. Accordingly, the interview transcripts for student-teachers were put under one group, the interview transcript of the PGDT program coordinator at Ministry of Education in a second group and the instructors' views in a third group. The researchers sought the findings and made conclusions for the entire study.

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality the participants' identity or real name was not revealed. Instead, the researchers used two digital numbers were used in the place of the research participants' names. Eventually, each transcript was made to pass through a critical reading process in relation to the research questions raised and the analysis was made based on the following themes.

Student-teachers' perception of teaching

All selected student-teacher participants have expressed their views regarding the concept of teaching profession. It is essential that they should have a good understanding of the importance of teaching if they are going to be successful future teachers. The following quotations extracted from the interview verbatim about their perception of the profession would suffice to justify this assertion.

02: It is the mother of all professions that brings about Cultural Revolution to the human race; **06:** Teaching is a good profession because it helps to obtain knowledge for solving social problems; **08:** Teaching improves the skills of students and the teachers themselves;

The selected student-teacher respondents seem to have a considerable perception of teaching profession. Some of them even went as far as expressing its immediate and long-term importance in its contribution to generate adequate knowledge that could eventually lead to social transformation for the betterment of the society. Yet, observations have shown that, despite the positive perceptions they had on the profession, many of the student-teachers join the training program with little interest in the teaching profession. They joined the teachers training program simply to buy time until they find other more paying respectful employment opportunities of their interest. This could answer the question why they were indifferent to the program and thus less interested to get engaged in the training activities.

Besides their prior perception of the teaching profession, they have also expressed their views and expectations of what a teacher is supposed to be. It means that they have an idea about the academic, technical and social profile of a good teacher. This can easily be attested from their responses below:

01: Endless learner and transmitter of knowledge; **02:** A dedicated, committed and motivated person ready to learn and teach; **04:** A person that specializes in sharing ideas and knowledge to others; **05:** To be a teacher is to pay sacrifices to shape students (directing, helping and correcting generations); **09:** A key for every knowledge; **13:** I understand to be a teacher is to develop critical thinking ability of students;

From the above responses of the selected student-teachers, a teacher is characterized as a critical thinker, a knowledgeable professional in her/his subject area, a good transmitter of knowledge and a devoted hard-working person.

Based on their understanding about the profession and profile of a good teacher, they have tried to set their respective vision of what they wanted to achieve from the training program and what they want to be as professional future teachers. The visions expressed by student-teachers are diverse and can be categorized into three major groups:

Visions aimed at becoming professionals

02: My vision of teaching [is] to be professional in my teaching career; **06:** My vision is to be a good teacher & researcher to solve societal problems; **07:** My vision is to solve problems of my teaching knowledge & I will improve my life from time to time; **08:** My vision of teaching is to create professional people; **13:** My vision of teaching is persisting to seek evidence for myself through it. Because it is an active process useful to my academic position or knowledge;

Vision is something that the person admires and wants to attain in his/her future career. Thus, it serves as a guiding star leading to his/her desired career achievement.

More vigorous vision to bring about change to the teaching profession

03: My vision is to bring a methodological change in teaching; **09:** My vision of teaching [is] changing the society and myself; **14:** My vision of teaching [is] to show change, comfort and facilitate the new generation to become a global professional;

Considering teaching as a stepping stone for another hidden vision

04: Teaching is interesting but the society has negative attitude for teachers.

At normal conditions, these pre-set professional visions of student-teachers could have served as potential guides to what extent they could have been engaged themselves throughout their professional development, both as learners and teachers. However, the following interview transcript shows that only few of them have expressed of having prior teaching experiences in teaching.

No direct experience

02: My experience of these courses was negative. But this time I've seen that all were mistaken. I've seen my mistake during time of teaching; **05:** The teachers need to know new things in their trainings and advices, and counseling how to do the teaching easily; **08:** Lack of economy, experience, bring to teacher training program no to limiting myself for that teaching; **13:** Before this, I cannot evaluate myself after teaching (not observe or think) what did I do in the previous class. But the program influenced me to evaluate my weakness [es] and strengths after and in each teaching period; **14:** I have no teacher training program. Should provide, I hope.

Indirect experience

01: There is no influence on my experience of training, **03:** Not more but few additional things have gotten from.

Previous experiences of one's own profession are expected to have positive influence on the student-teachers' interest to spend his/her time and capabilities on engaging themselves in the learning process. This could also affect his/her decision to stay in the profession.

However, except in rare cases, student-teachers joining the add-on program are assumed to be young who are directly recruited just as they

have graduated from the universities. Thus, most of them have reported lacking previous teaching experiences.

Student-teachers' assessment of the PGDT program

No matter how much it varies among them, most student-teachers have expressed their views regarding how the training program could have been planned and managed /Response from FGD/

There was no any monitoring program to check teachers; some students were not attending class all the time; no peer teaching program was arranged, the interest of some students toward teaching should be assessed; the content of the program was fine but regarding its implementation it was teacher-centered; the program has no uniform time length across the [different] universities; some teachers were not discussing the course well; why couldn't we get certificate just at the end of the program which is a problem by itself; Why no grade for PGDT program? We may not teach according to the knowledge we have gained here; to be frank, it brought a change to my profession; why the same courses regarding PGDT are not offered across the country?; practical teaching programs should be arranged for the participants; teachers were not using their time effectively [and] teachers should play a role model.

As indicated in the preceding responses of student-teachers, they have listed out the major factors that have affected their engagement in their learning process. One can see that most of these factors identified as weaknesses are largely focused on the training institution, the teachers and the design of the program itself. However, most of the responses seem to be heavily biased as the contribution of the student-teachers themselves towards the training program isn't reflected.

Teachers' opinion on student-teachers learning progress

Teachers are supposed to make close follow-up on the behavior and performance of the student-teachers throughout the training process by guiding, coaching and mentoring their activities regularly. Hence, they have the following opinions to say about the learning progress of their student-teachers (Teachers' response)

01. It depends on their instructors: - If we follow their learning & what they do in their assignments, they learn in a good mood. If we are careless they show the same behavior; **02.** Unfortunately, I can express the learning progress of students in our university is disappointing. In my opinion, the root causes are inappropriate educational teachers training policy, curriculum & physical environment; **03.** The learning progress of the students is not promising and their overall performance is not compatible to the goal of the program. Most of the students join the program to obtain certificate. They don't have strong motive to equip themselves with noble pedagogical skills; **04.** It appears to be an extraordinary program, but it requires substantial improvement; **05.** Students learning progress in the PGDT program seems to be very poor. Students haven't the interest and willingness ever to attend classes. More specifically the students (don't) communicate with their respective instructors in English. They show poor skills; **06.** I think it is [they are] passive & less motivated.

Reasons for poor engagement (as can be seen in the above interview excerpt) as described by teachers can be categorized as:

- Lack of commitment of the teachers in properly guiding the student-teachers
- Poor subject area and English language background knowledge of the students.

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- Issues related to training policy; such as those related to unstable programs including shift in training modalities (add-on and integrated), change of certification from PGDT to PGCT, quality of the curriculum (modules not prepared thoughtfully) and students accommodation problems.
 - Lack of congruity in program designing, timing, programming and implementing among the concerned stakeholders including Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Bureaus and the Training Institutions.

Views on the quality of the current PGDT program by Ministry of Education coordination office

Ministry of Education is the coordination center of planning, programming, implementation and evaluation of PGDT program in all the universities of the country involved. In view of this, the person in charge of the program has reflected his views as follows regarding the current conditions of the program:

I believe that the training institutes are capable of handling PGDT program. The curriculum is relevant to the situation in our country The student-teachers aren't committed. As a result, they don't engage themselves in doing assignment and attending classes. Some of them don't take examinations. All graduates should fulfill the requirements set for PGDT program.

As reported by the Ministry of Education program coordinator, training institutes are believed to have the capacity to handle the training program. But reliable sources from the other stakeholders such as the Regional Educational Bureaus and Training Institutions claim that they don't have the autonomy to plan, program and implement the training programs and are most of the time detected from outside by Ministry of Education.

Findings and Discussions

As it is known, case studies generate large amounts of information from different sources. Synthesizing this information means combining, integrating, and summarizing findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In relation to this, each individual research question can be stated to provide findings for each question in the case study (Cresswell, 2012). Accordingly, the researchers in this study discussed the findings under the themes of each research question as follows;

Teachers' explanation of student-teachers engagement

Most of the teachers' (four of them) describe student-teachers learning progress as lacking interest. This is based on their observation of student-teachers behavior in the class and outside. In relation to this, an observation (by one of the researchers) has shown that many of the student-teachers join the training program with little interest in the teaching profession as reflected in their regular academic activities. They joined the teachers training program simply to buy time until they find other more paying and respectful employment opportunities of their interest. Most of them were not interested in the teaching profession and they have not been able to participate in the training program seriously. This could answer the question why they were indifferent to the program and less interested to get engaged in the training activities. However, researches have confirmed that there is a strong correlation in engagement between people with positive attitudes towards a particular thing than people with negative attitudes (Hewstone, et al, 2005).

Attitude of student-teachers towards the training program

Many of the student-teachers took the training time and the accommodation facilities they get from the training program as a stepping stone opportunity to look for other jobs using their BA degrees. It was thus not uncommon to hear many of the student-teachers discussing about the efforts each one of them were making to find jobs

and of the employments that some of their colleagues had already secured. The fact that they were BA/BSc. holders has become much easier for them to secure other more paying jobs easily due to the fertile ground created by the currently growing demands for high and medium level work force in the growing industrial, service and agricultural sectors in and around Addis Ababa and in many other national and international donor organizations. This is the reflection of their attitudes expressed in their behaviors that are seen regularly. This is confirmed by modern research that there is a strong relation between attitudes and behavior (Hewstone, et al, 2005).

Challenges for student-teachers engagement

Several factors including the economically and socially less paying nature of the teaching profession relative to the benefits that other employees in the different economic and social sectors enjoy, the prevailing poor student discipline in the high schools, lack of housing and other supportive facilities, serious shortage and/or absence of teaching resources, and prevailing poor school management have all together made the student teachers to be disinterested in the training program.

The other and probably the major reason for the poor commitment and disengagement of the student-teachers in the add-on teacher training programs is the disorganized and less coordinated nature of the training activities. Many believe that the add-on training modality was unilaterally adopted and hastily launched by the Ministry of Education as a panacea to the previously existing subject matter deficiency among high school teachers, without carefully identifying and analyzing what this new modality demands to be effective, such as building supportive structure for the mandatory roles of each of the major stakeholders including the planning and coordination of the activities.

Capacitating the selected higher teacher training institutions with the necessary facilities to properly accommodate and engage the student-teachers, and studying the curriculum and the type of appropriate

certification that the student-teachers would be entitled after graduation (whether it is a postgraduate diploma in teaching, PGDT, or a post graduate certificate, PGCT) was not also given due consideration in terms of time and resources.

Thus, as observed during the actual training processes for the last five years, there have been very serious clearly manifested coordination problems, such as in effectively adhering of the training activities with the university academic calendar, arrangements of student accommodations and provision of other related services, provisions of essential educational resources and facilities, and designing appropriate mechanisms to enforce both student-teachers and teachers to adequately engage themselves in the training program.

According to a research findings made on transforming teacher education (Hugh et al, 2001), it is recommended that such new educational reforms, no matter how much they may have been effective in the different socio-economic scenarios, need high level of quality and timely collaboration and communication with the major stakeholders right from the very beginning to the end.

Each stakeholder needs to become a guide to the other in time of emerging or unanticipated difficulties, which the Ministry of Education seems to have failed and/or ignored to do so. It is thus highly apparent from this that the confusions and uncoordinated activities being observed throughout the training process among the concerned offices of the Ministry of Education, regional and woreda education offices, individual schools, the teacher training institutions and more among the student-teachers themselves are the outcomes of this negligence. This has been clearly reflected from the researchers' discussions made with many of the research participants.

Teachers' support towards student-teachers encouragement

Some teachers at the College of Education and Behavioral Studies claim of doing their best to give handouts and assignments to encourage student-teachers and engage themselves in their respective fields of studies both during classroom activities and their own free times. However, other teachers have also expressed their reservations about the lack of enthusiasm by the program coordination offices and they admit that they are less motivated in engaging their student-teachers. According to a study made by Michelle (2011), high level of relationship has been identified between teacher and student engagements in the teaching learning process. It is therefore obvious that this relatively low level of teachers' engagement has significantly contributed its share to the lack of engagement observed among the student-teachers.

Summary and Conclusions

From the analysis made on data gathered from the research participants, the researchers have come-up with the following conclusions:

- The add-on teacher training program is taken as an opportunity by the students to look for other job which leads to the termination of their presence and engagement in the training program. According to the add-on program, student-teachers are recruited after acquiring their first degree in subject areas that they are expected to teach. The fact that they own their first degrees enables them to look for other employment opportunities. As observed by one of the researchers who taught geography subject area methods, which were also confirmed by the other teachers, a significant percentage of student-teachers leave the program before graduation, because they get employed in other non-teaching fields. Besides, they considered teaching profession as less prestigious and less paying.

- Student-teachers fail to do their assignments, ignore classroom participation, neglect to regularly attend classes and become disinterested in the learning process. In general, they suffer from lack of interest and active involvement in the teacher training activities as per the syllabi.
- Responses of the student-teachers have indicated that there was lack of proper coordination of the program, lack of facilities necessary for the teaching-learning processes, lack of punctuality among the student-teachers in attending classes, lack of student-teachers interest in the practical aspect of the training activities and high inclination of the student-teachers not to stay in the profession. This seems to have caused teachers not to encourage student-teachers to fully engage themselves in the training program.
- As observed during the practical implementation of the training, the major stakeholders; including, Ministry of Education, the training institutions(in this case the College of Education of AAU) and the Regional Educational Bureaus fail to properly coordinate the planning, programming, implementing and evaluation of the teacher training program. This has been clearly manifested in the time discrepancies, failures to recruit appropriate candidates, lack of allocating basic training resources, lack of accommodation and delay in the provision of accreditation as soon as the student-teachers complete the training program. All these shortcomings observed have contributed their share in discouraging student-teachers to properly engage themselves in the teaching-learning process.
- As responded by one of the teachers, student-teachers training devotion depends on the encouragement provided by their teachers. However, this was not materialized effectively by their teachers. The teachers simply claim that the students are less interested and indifferent to the program, without making efforts to closely assist the student teachers.

Recommendations

As this paper is intended to assess student teachers' engagement in the teacher training program at the College of Education and Behavioral Studies in the AAU, taking the case of the Geography PGDT program and come up with viable solutions, the researchers have proposed the following recommendations:

- It is highly advisable to reinstate the previous integrated high school teachers training modality because it enables the trainees to get holistically integrated subject area and pedagogical methods knowledge. This can also minimize the high rate of student teachers dropouts observed in the add-on training program.
- A comprehensive teacher candidates' recruitment criterion must be clearly designed taking into consideration all aspects that characterize fully fledged professional teachers including; interest and commitment to become a teacher, the professional look, language command and subject area knowledge of the candidates.
- The teacher training institutions must be given the mandate to recruit the student-teachers candidates as per the criteria set which has to be checked and authenticated by Ministry of Education for their validity in line with the overall national objectives.
- As a center of excellence for training qualified high school teachers, the Addis Ababa University need to have its own well equipped model laboratory school to demonstrate its researched training activities, to conduct school observations, exercise teaching practices, and to produce and demonstrate multidisciplinary teaching materials /resources/ so that the teacher candidates could get the chance to practice and familiarize themselves with these resources.
- Until the Addis Ababa University establishes its own model high school, it has to select appropriately located and better equipped

high schools within its vicinities and create a clearly defined working-together relationships with the Addis Ababa Education Bureau to make these schools understand that they are part of the teacher training program and have to cooperate in accepting student teachers sent to them and facilitating their activities. This could minimize the currently observed occasional misunderstandings created between the high schools and the training institution.

- The College of Education and Behavioral Studies need to have its own premises/compound/ accommodating all facilities including dormitories, computer rooms, reading rooms, a specialized library, teaching resources /materials/ production and demonstration center, which are very essential to fully engage the student-teachers throughout their training processes.
- It has to be mandatory that all teacher trainers apply appropriate teaching resources in training the student teachers so that the student teachers could get familiarized with these resources before they become fully fledged teachers.
- The College of Education need to further strengthen its research capacity focusing on teacher education and teaching materials production

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