
Educating the Heart: Space for Teachers' Professional Identity Development through Pre-Service Primary Teacher Education in Ethiopia

Ambissa Kenea *

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Abstract: Teachers' professional identity is generally taken as the professional self-concept of teachers. It is connected to several other factors related to professional effectiveness such as job satisfaction, professional self-identification, self-efficacy, motivation, and continued attachment to teaching. Complete education of the teacher needs to include not only the cognitive and technical skills of teaching but also the affective components - a love for teaching, commitment for teaching, identification with teachers (and teaching), and membership in a professional community of teachers. Consequently, the development of teachers' professional identity needs to be one of the essential agendas in teacher education theory, practice, and research. This paper examined the place of professional identity development in the pre-service primary school teacher preparation system of Ethiopia. Data were collected through document review/analysis and interviews. The sources of data were policy documents; curriculum framework, three teacher education experts from three different regions, six teacher educators, and six teachers in cooperating schools. Data acquired through these methods were analyzed qualitatively and the result revealed, among others, that teacher identity development was not explicitly targeted, at least in practice. There is a tendency to see that teacher identity is something that is default present in the process of equipping teachers with the basic skills of teaching. Teachers' professional identity development has not been a visible area in research on the teacher education system in Ethiopia. This study concludes by including possible implications of these and other findings of the study.

Keywords: *professional identity development, teacher education, teacher education pedagogy, teacher educator, teacher professional identity*

* Associate Professor of Curriculum Studies and Multicultural Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University

The problem

Ethiopia has been in good progress as far as the expansion of education is concerned during the last three decades. However, there is an apparent decline in the quality of education from time to time. Even though several factors have contributed to the bad state of the quality of education in Ethiopia, the effectiveness (or quality) of the teaching force is said to be among the prime reasons. Teachers are not happy about their work; they are not as competent as required; brain drain from teaching is a common phenomenon; students do not enjoy learning; they are not competent enough commensurate with the level of schooling they complete and graduates are not able to create jobs while they are sheer job seekers (see Eyasu, et al (2017); Geberew (2017); Koye and Yonas (2016)). Therefore, there is an apparent concern on how we can improve this state of affairs. From the government side, there are multiple packages (often consulted from international agencies referred to as 'development partners') including the General Education Quality Improvement Program; the School Improvement Program; the Teacher Development Program to mention but a few meant to take the Ethiopian education out of the terrible state it is in now. Yet, year after year, reports (e.g., Eyasu et.al, 2017) indicate that there is no improvement. Improving the quality of the teachers is often pointed at in terms of attempting to solve the problem from the foundation.

There are debates in Ethiopia on the modality of pre-service teacher preparation; the balance between pedagogy and subject matter load; the duration of the pre-service preparation program; the proportion of practicum/practical component in the whole teacher education program; the type of in-service education (and development) to be put in place and many more. Through the years, there is a continued swing from one prescription to another (Aweke *et al*, 2017). Yet, the teacher-related problems have persisted to date. So, changing the modality, the content balance, duration of the program, etc. alone cannot bring about observable change in what Ethiopia gets from its

pre-service teacher education program. This may require exploring where the solution could lie.

This paper, in its attempt to contribute to the continuing efforts to explicate the problem, focuses on teachers' professional identity development as an essential component of the solution to the problem. Identity, as used in the paper, refers to a self-concept originating from an introspective reflection (Castaneda, 2011) and is concerned with answering the question 'who am I?' Related questions of identity could be 'to which group do I belong?' 'What is my role in the group?' 'How important am I in the group?' 'How do others see my role in the group?' Identity could also be a response to external expectations from other individuals or groups: e.g. who you are? Based on this, professional identity can generally be taken as the understanding that a person has about himself/herself related to his/her profession (Beijaard et al in Leijen, et al, 2014). Hence, teachers' professional identity is taken to be the understanding that a teacher has about teaching; i.e., his/her professional self. We can also say, professional identity is the professional self-concept of the teacher. Teachers' professional identity is essential because it determines whether teachers identify themselves as professionals. As Leijen and Associates (2014), citing Day (2002), stated a teacher's professional identity is connected to several other factors relating to professional effectiveness such as job satisfaction, professional self-identification, self-efficacy, motivation, and continued attachment to teaching.

Centuries ago, Cooper conceptualized the idea of complete education as 'training' the head, the hand, and the heart (Willis and Harris, 2001). Similarly, the eighteenth-century Swiss pedagogue and education reformer, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, promoted the harmonious development of what he called the three human fundamental powers - the intellectual, the moral, and the physical powers - which he symbolically connected to the head, heart, and hand respectively (Bruehlmeier, n.d.). For Pestalozzi, the goal of education is to educate the whole child by balancing between head, heart, and hands. In this

perspective of education, the learner should be helped to develop not only the intellectual power but also those two others in a balanced way. This has been described as well-rounded education (Jimenez and Sargrad, 2018), holistic education (Clarcken, 2006) and as education of the whole child (Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey, 2018)). Candidates for a profession should experience the same in their preparation programs: they have to be helped to think, to feel, and to do. Following this framework, the present study argued that in teacher education it is not enough to train teachers in cognitive skills the profession requires. It is not also enough to train in some technical skills of teaching. Complete education of the teacher needs to include training the heart of the teacher: a love for teaching, commitment for teaching, identifying with teachers, etc. Hence, the development of teachers' professional identity needs to be one of the essential agendas in the teacher education system, teacher education research, and practice. This is why this study is intended to address the place of professional identity development in the pre-service primary school teacher preparation system of Ethiopia.

Objectives of the study

The overall purpose of the study is to examine the place of teachers' professional identity in the teacher education system of Ethiopia, specifically in the primary pre-service teacher education sub-system. It is intended to

- Assess the place given to teachers' professional identity in the official discourses of pre-service primary teacher education in Ethiopia;
- Examine the place accorded to teachers' professional identity in the practice of pre-service teacher education in Ethiopia

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Overview

This part of the paper deals with the identification of possible theoretical lenses for studying teachers' professional identity development. To limit the scope of the paper; only four theoretical sources on the development of professional identity in general and teachers' professional identity, in particular, are consulted. These are the Gee (2000) framework (Who a teacher is); The Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2004) framework (What a teacher does); Wenger's (1998) social theoretical perspective (Community of practice and professional identity); and Leijen and Associates' (2014) pedagogies of developing teacher identity.

Gee (2000) argued 'who we are' (e.g., as teachers and as persons) determines what we do; and that the personal and the professional identity of a person cannot be separated. He described four types or categories of identity: the natural identity (this may include such markers as gender; language, height, color, etc. over which we normally don't have much say in its development), the institutional identity (are identities that are defined and maintained by a relevant institution; focus on the positions or roles fulfilled by a person); discourse-identity (is related to achievement or an ascription that a person can work to achieve, and the central idea of discourse identity is that they are recognizable by others); and affinity identity (is all about sustained group affiliation; having a shared purpose). It has to be noted that these four categorizations of identities are not mutually exclusive. Similarly, it is possible to state that Gee's framework recognizes that humans have multiple identities and prospective teachers come to teaching with those multiple identities; a combination of which shape the way teachers form their professional identities. In the context of the present study, this means that humans (candidates for teaching) have multiple identities and out of the intersection of such multiplicity of identities a certain type of identity is constructed (through a proper

teacher education program). By implication, the task of teacher preparation programs is to support the development of a professional identity out of the 'raw materials of the multiple identities the candidates bring to the setting. Gee (2000) also recognizes that identities are brought into being when recognized within a relationship or social context.

A group of three researchers (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, (2000)) described identity in terms of the factors influencing *what a teacher does* by asking teachers to allocate their expertise across three areas: content, pedagogy, and didactics. Teachers can devise their professional identity on how they saw themselves regarding these three areas of expertise. This is very essential in teacher development since teachers' sense of professional self affects their efficacy, professional development, and willingness to change and adapt to innovative ideas. Therefore, the development of a balanced professional identity [among the three areas] is a very essential domain of pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development. Beijaard and associates proposed four features of identity development – that identity development is an ongoing process; consists of sub-entities; involves agency and implies both person and context.

Wenger (1998) relates teachers' community of practice to the development of professional identity. He defines a community of practice as a group that shares common values and beliefs as well as having common sense of purpose. It is a learning team with the major goal of jointly growing one's career. In the context of the teaching profession, the ultimate purpose of the community of practice is to improve students' learning. For Wegner (1998), professional learning is a process of community building and identity formation. This researcher contends that becoming a professional teacher of a subject area involves becoming confident concerning one's profession; knowledge and experiences, one's participation in professional activities, one's membership in a range of professionally related

communities, and one's identity as a teacher of the subject. Thus, teachers' professional preparation takes more than building the individual candidate's competencies in the subject area or the technicalities of teaching. It includes socializing into a professional community of practice.

Another group of researchers, namely, Leijen, Kullasepp, and Anspal (2014) portrayed that teachers' professional identity formation is a central concern in the preparation of teachers for schools. Hence, Leijen and associates elaborated different pedagogies that support the development of the professional identity of pre-service teachers. They identified three variations of professional identity: the *professional* aspect of teacher identity; the *personal* aspect of teacher identity and the integration of the personal and professional aspects of teacher identity. The professional aspect of teacher identity constitutes the internalization of the 'professional role of teachers,' which includes the acquisition of fundamental professional knowledge and relevant experiences as well as the interaction of theory and practice. The personal aspect of teacher identity refers to (or constitutes) the personal conceptions, beliefs, and experiences that influence the professional understanding of oneself. It is the notion of the self that is revealed when a teacher narrates or tells stories about himself/herself while reflecting on his/her growth process or experiences (e.g., as a practicing teacher in a classroom). For Leijen and associates, (2014), both these aspects of teacher identity need to be nurtured through proper pedagogical practice during pre-service preparation. Not only nurturing but also a need for proper integration of the two aspects of identities is the other important concern of the authors. According to the writers, this calls for the dialogical perspective whereby the two selves (i.e., the personal and the professional selves) are negotiated. Among the pedagogies involved in this process are the pedagogical reasoning approach; value clarification; guided reflection; unlocking beliefs through metaphors; critical consideration of alternative teaching approaches; as well as a nexus between theory and practice.

These four theoretical conceptions of teachers' professional identity development, namely, Gee (2000) framework (Who a teacher is); The Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2004) framework (What a teacher does); Wenger's (1998) community of practice and professional identity; and Leijen and Associates' (2014) pedagogies of developing teacher identity have served as theoretical frames of the present study. It has been asserted throughout the study that candidates for teaching come to the Ethiopian teacher education classroom with multiple identities and it is up to the teacher educator to develop an acceptable teacher identity out of the intersection of those identities. Similarly, teachers need to help the candidates negotiate between content knowledge and pedagogical skills to become competent teachers of their subjects. Developing teachers as members in a learning community of teachers is the other important variable that teacher education colleges and teacher educators should deal with. This is a process of building teachers' agencies so that they can rely on themselves and colleagues. Taking teachers' professional identity development as an essential agenda in pre-service teacher education; it is also very essential that appropriate pedagogies are applied in due process of the training. Negotiating between personal and professional identities is a very important mark in the development of teachers.

Overview of Lessons from Research on Ethiopian Teacher Education

Some research work on Ethiopian teacher education is selected for review because they directly relate to teacher professional identity development. Two studies from the Ministry of Education revealed that professional commitment and work ethics are not demonstrated both from the teacher educators and from their graduates as desired (MoE, 2003, 2009). Note that these two types of research led to two different interventions (or program changes) - the former to TESO - teacher education system overhaul (2003) and the latter to PGDT (2009), (i.e., replacement of TESO). So, the problem persisted; showing possibly that the policy change could not bring about change in practice or there

is an unidentified challenge that is an active determinant of the development of teacher commitment.

There has been a declining attractiveness of teaching from the time some kind of teacher education started in Ethiopia (in the 1940s) when secondary school graduates with good academic performance were attracted to teaching (Eyasu, *et. al*; 2017). According to these writers, the most frustrating decline in the interest to continue as teachers started during the late communist-oriented government period. Teacher education research in Ethiopia should take why this happened as one of its principal agendas.

A study by Aweke, *et al* (2015) disclosed that teachers' motivation is a very important problem in primary schools in Addis Ababa - benefits; student misbehavior, poor administration support, and social status of teaching are among the reported reasons. It is not difficult to imagine what impacts this situation would have on the professional self-identification of those intending to become teachers.

Educational expansion and the resulting shortage of teachers have always been there throughout the history of Ethiopian education. As a result, several alternative solutions were taken (tried out) to curb problems of shortage of teachers. Among the solutions tried were importation of expatriate teachers, recruitment of *digoma* (paraprofessional or untrained school dropouts) for teaching; opening and expansion of teacher training colleges (which at times resulted in a shortage of experienced teacher educators); shortening of years of pre-service training from four to three for secondary school teachers; and deployment of untrained teachers both for primary and secondary schools, particularly in remote areas (Koye, 2014; MoE, 2003; Eyasu, Aweke, Kassa, Mulugeta and Yenealem, 2017; Kedir, 2007; Ambissa et al, 2008). Some of these solutions involved compromising the quality of teaching.

Studies indicated that teacher preparation programs have always been problematic in Ethiopia. For instance, there has been continued swinging of focus between academic and pedagogical courses. The pre-2003 school teachers' education program was blamed for excessive focus on the subject matter at the expense of the pedagogical training/education. Then TESO was introduced with due focus on pedagogy by 2003. That was replaced by the PGDT program (the program that was meant to provide basic pedagogical competence to candidates who have a good subject base from their undergraduate study) in 2009. The balance between theory and practice has been equally challenging and perplexing. From the last over two decades of teacher education system reform experience in Ethiopia, it is possible to note that there was no time a good balance is maintained in teacher education modality as well as curriculum emphases (Eyasu, Aweke, Kassa, Mulugeta, and Yenealem (2017); Kedir (2007)). Other studies also underscored that teacher preparation programs focused on theory (content delivery) via the most direct and teacher-centered approach. TESO was to change this situation to school-based and student-centered learning; practice-oriented training; and self-preparedness for the teaching profession (MoE, 2003). Most student teachers have no good attitude towards the teaching profession (Eyasu et al, 2017). As a result, it was discovered that the attrition proportion was very high. For example, the completion rate was examined for the 2011 and 2015 academic years entry to the college of Education PGDT (postgraduate diploma for teaching) program at Addis Ababa University. The result indicated that a total of 179 candidates (41.92%) graduated from among 427 candidates who were enrolled in the 2011 academic year. Similarly, in 2015, from the total of 268 candidates, only 118 candidates (44.03%) graduated. Consequently, 50.08% and 55.97% of the candidates left the training in the 2011 and 2015 academic years respectively. The study also shows that candidates were not interested in the program since most of them joined the program because of a lack of any other job opportunities.

The PGDT students believed that teachers and the teaching profession receive low social respect from other professionals and they joined the teaching profession because of a lack of other options, but not because they liked it (Aweke, *et al*, 2017). A study conducted earlier by Koye (2014) indicated that unmotivated teachers are in the profession till they get other options and use teaching as a springboard to look for other career options. For the researcher, such teachers may not exert their maximum effort to make sure learning among the students.

Post-graduation assignment was often at odds with expectations: the novice teachers (i.e., PGDT graduates) were often assigned to teach in primary schools (Aweke *et al*, 2017); the level which they were not prepared for. This is also one element of de-professionalization. This situation was said to have resulted from two sources: the candidates' lack of confidence to teach in the higher grades (i.e., in the secondary schools); and at the same time the educational leadership lacks confidence in the competence of those graduates to handle [teach] school subjects in the higher Grades.

These sample findings from selected researches on Ethiopian teachers (and teaching) indicate that the teacher education practice in Ethiopia cannot support the development of strong teachers' professional identity. Much effort is desired to re-track the teacher development system to its proper course.

Methods and Materials

This qualitative study is based on two important methods of garnering data: document review/analysis and individual interviews. The documents reviewed and analyzed included selected theoretical literature from the works of theorists on professional identity development; research reports on Ethiopian teacher education and policy/strategy documents such as (the 1994) Ethiopian Education and Training policy; framework for pre-service teacher education curriculum

[primary schools]; teachers' professional standards; and Teacher education system overhaul. The interviews were conducted with:

- three teacher education (teacher development) experts from three different regional education bureaus (Addis Ababa, Amhara, and Oromia); whose minimum qualification was first degree with experience ranging from 18 to 31 years.
- six primary school teacher educators (two from each of Asella, Debreberhan, and Kotobe Colleges of Teacher Education); whose minimum qualification was first degree with experience in teacher training ranging from 10 to 19 years.
- six primary school teachers who have served as mentors to practicing teachers whose minimum qualification was diploma with teaching experience ranging from 15 to 26 years. These teachers were taken from schools in the vicinities of the three CTEs.

Qualitative data were obtained from these sources. The objectives of the study were used as major screening criteria in determining the relevance of the bulk of data collected and to organizing the results.

Results and Discussion

As stated earlier, the present study deals with the space accorded teachers' professional identity development in the pre-service primary teacher education system of Ethiopia. This section is devoted to presenting results from analysis of the data collected from the selected sources.

Teachers' Professional Identity in the Official Discourses on Teacher Education

Two important sources of data are used to look into the official discourses on teachers' professional identity in Ethiopia: official documents on pre-service primary teacher education and discussions with teacher education experts.

To start with, the *Ethiopian Education and Training Policy* recognizes that teachers are expected to be equipped with the “*ability, diligence, and professional interest, and the physical and mental fitness appropriate for the profession*” (The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, (TGE) 1994). This statement communicates the Ethiopian Government's recognition that teaching is a profession, and that teacher preparation is not to be limited to cognitive and technical training alone. ‘*Diligence, professional interest, and mental fitness*’ go far beyond such cognitive and technical conception of teacher preparation. It also seems to recognize that such non-cognitive and non-technical attributes as teacher identity development, which speak to the heart, can be inculcated through carefully crafted pre-service training/education programs.

Other documents developed based on the policy such as the teacher education curriculum framework contained more explicit assertions which rather strengthen the above point. For instance, the 2013 Curriculum Framework for Primary Pre-service Teacher Education contained, among others, ‘basic principles that guide the primary teacher education program.’ Five basic principles listed below have been identified:

- anchor the pre-service program in the primary school curriculum;
- emphasize pedagogical principles from the primary school curriculum;
- value practical experience in teacher professional development;

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- develop good professional primary teachers with strong professional identity and commitment;
 - link practice at the college with the schools and communities (MoE, 2013:8-9).

Therefore, 'developing professional primary school teachers with strong professional identity and commitment' was identified to be one of the guiding principles for primary school teacher education. This has been operationalized in the framework as constituting:

- emphasis on the critical importance of the professional component;
- reflective practice in all program activities;
- development of the community of practice at the college level whereby the key local stakeholders are apart; and
- emphasis on college leaderships' role in creating a harmonious and purpose-driven community of dedicated professionals.

This may be taken as a great shift given the absence of such assertions in the earlier curriculum frameworks of primary teacher education programs. The training process used to operationalize the principle of '... strong professional identity... (emphasis on professionalism, reflective practice, building community of practice, ...) concords with Leijen, et al's (2014) pedagogy to develop teachers' professional identity and Wenger's (1998) community of practice perspectives reviewed earlier. So, if taken to the classroom (or any other teacher preparation site for that matter) through well prepared and committed teacher educators; these can be essential opportunities to be used for the inculcation of proper professional identity among prospective teachers.

Similarly, the following two objectives are contained in the curriculum framework for pre-service primary school teacher education (MoE, 2013:7):

- Create awareness of teaching as a respected profession in which each effective teacher educator and teacher can grow and succeed in a life-long career.
- Enable pre-service students to become reflective practitioners who will analyze and improve their practice as they mature as professional teachers.

The process of developing teachers' professional identity includes not only helping the candidates learn the teaching of the role involved but also supporting them learn what the profession is and how to become a professional teacher. The first objective is about supporting the candidates to learn what it means to be a teacher, what teaching means, and what it takes to be a professional teacher. It is also about helping the candidate that teaching involves a process of 'becoming' as a lifelong commitment. The second objective is about professionalism which also contains the professional identity (Leijen et al, 2014), and identifying feature of professionalism is learning. A reflection is a tool for that (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, these objectives are within the theoretical frames discussed earlier (please refer to Wenger (1998); Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2004) and Leijen, et al (2014)]. These frameworks recognize that professional identity development (and becoming a professional teacher) is an ongoing process; that the candidates' agency is central in the process and that pre-service teacher education is an essential step to form the foundations of such process of becoming.

Besides, the Teacher Educator Profile in the same document identified five areas of qualification, namely academic qualifications; professional preparation; teaching experience; ethical considerations; and some general considerations (such as research capacity and understanding of primary education as a professional area) (MoE, 2013:9-10). In line with the purpose of this part of the paper; ethical considerations are very important. It constitutes being a role model for the novice; honesty; and demonstrating hard work and commitment, as well as kindness and humanity in dealing with others.

A related point worth stressing from the pre-service primary school teacher education framework is what is contained in the *graduation requirements*. The graduate (novice teacher) is *required to develop a portfolio that demonstrates knowledge, skills, and interest in teaching* (MoE, 2013:12). Teacher educators can use this as a further appraisal of the candidates' growth towards becoming a fully-fledged teachers.

Accordingly, it is possible to say that there are elements of teachers' professional identity development in the primary pre-service teacher education curriculum framework. Hence, if well thought out, it is possible to use these as opportunities to include mechanisms (and methodologies) that support the development of a strong professional identity among the would-be teachers. The question is, therefore, to what extent teacher educators and leaders of teacher training colleges practice such great assertions.

To further understand this issue, the discussion was made with three teacher education experts from three different education bureaus (i.e., one each from Addis Ababa, Amhara, and Oromia). The focuses of the discussions were twofold: (i) whether the experts are aware of the issues of 'teachers' professional identity development' contained in the curriculum framework cited above; and (ii) their confidence in the capacities and commitment of the teacher education colleges to work on teachers' professional identity development. Regarding the first point, it was learned from the individual interviews that two of the experts were not aware of the details on professional identity issues contained in the pre-service primary teacher education curriculum framework. Here are responses from these teacher education experts:

I remember that the issue of teacher identity was raised in one of the discussions during the framework development. However, I am not sure whether that has got space in the final curriculum framework document. (Exp. 1)

That is a good idea. However, I don't think it is in the curriculum framework. We will consider it during the revision. (Exp. 3)

Thus, it was only one of the experts who could talk about the place accorded to teachers' professional identity development in the curriculum framework for primary school teacher preparation. However, this teacher education expert also doubted the capacities as well as interests of the colleges (and their teacher educators) to implement the propositions contained in the framework. He also doubted the interest and preparedness of the candidates for such rigorous training and education activities. Here is an instance of what this particular expert said when asked about the situation:

Let alone developing a professional identity, it would be a amazing achievement if 50% of the candidates could adequately demonstrate the skills required to teach their specific subject area.

Therefore, if teacher education experts who are supposed to lead the process of teacher development are not well aware of what is contained in the curriculum framework and still if they lack confidence in the abilities of the teacher educators to fully implement what is contained into the curriculum framework, there is enough reason to doubt the space according to teachers' professional identity development in the pre-service primary teacher education program. This situation seems consistent with Eyasu and others (2017) finding that most of the essential reform initiatives in Ethiopian teacher education were not implemented.

Teacher Professional Identity in the Practice of Pre-Service Primary Teacher Education

Six teacher educators were asked about the situation of the development of teachers' professional identity development in the pre-service teacher education program they implement. Generally speaking, all the teacher educators interviewed believed that

supporting the development of teachers' professional identity must be the function of teacher education programs. Here are sample responses:

It is when they accept teaching as their career, i.e., when they identify with it, that the new teachers commit themselves to teach. Therefore, there is no question on the importance of teachers' professional identity development. I believe pre-service training plays a pivotal role in the development of such an identity. (TE-A)

Teachers' professional identity is very important for teacher effectiveness as well as attachment to teaching. And, I believe, teacher education colleges have the duty to develop that in their trainees [TE-E]

In any profession, the professionals have to accept that they belong to that particular profession. We, as teacher trainers, have the duty to inculcate such belonging. [TE-C]

As mentioned above, these responses indicate that the teacher educators accept that teachers' professional identity is a worthwhile attribute to be developed in teacher trainees. The teacher educators tended to see it in terms of a sense of belonging, commitment as well as attachment to teaching which they think would result in on-the-job effectiveness as teachers. Unfortunately, none of the key informants tried to define what professional identity is direct. They rather opted to describe it in terms of the above attributes (i.e., *sense of belonging, commitment, and attachment*). The teacher educators tended to believe that teachers' professional identity can be inculcated during the pre-service preparation program. However, none of them indicated that he/she recognizes teachers' identity development is something not limited to pre-service training years only. Would this situation (added to the key informants' failure to define professional identity rather directly) indicate the teacher educators' lack of adequate awareness of professional identity development?

The teacher educators were also asked whether there are program components that can be used as opportune moments to support novice teachers' professional identity development. Some of the responses are cited hereunder:

Speaking all the components of the teacher education program contribute to the development of teachers' professional identity on the part of the trainees. So, there is no doubt over the presence of the opportunities. The question is rather this: to what extent do we intentionally use the program components to help the candidates accept that they are going to be teachers. (TE-D)

Asked to further specify program components that are most relevant to support teachers' identity development, the key informant mentioned pedagogy courses, and the school practicum.

On the same issue, another teacher educator said:

I think all the courses provided are useful to support the development of professional identity among the candidates.' (TE-B)

Asked if there are program components that are most relevant to be used as opportunities to develop teachers' identity development, the teacher responded *I think all are relevant*, possibly showing a tendency of not wanting to go further into discussing the issue.

Almost similarly, a third interviewee said,

As you know, through the courses the candidates are taught about the subjects, the children they are going to teach, how to teach the specific subjects and about the school and community they are going to work in. All these can be taken as opportunities to instill a sense of acceptance for teaching. (TE-C)

Asked whether there is anything special that the teacher educator has to do to support the development of professional identity apart from course offering, the particular key informant said that *the teacher educator should make sure that the candidates are mastering the role of a teacher and are growing to be one.*

However, the key informant tended to overlook my probe to understand his specific feeling on how such 'growing to be a teacher is ensured.

Based on the representative responses from the discussions with the teacher educators, it was possible to learn that there was no such intentional effort to develop the candidates' professional identity. Even though the teacher educators are well aware that their major calling as teacher educators is to produce competent teachers who would opt to continue to teach; in practice, there is a general tendency to focus on course offering and accomplishing the requirements of the program (including supervision of candidates during practicum). The teacher educators mentioned several internal challenges including class size, workload, candidates' weak academic background, candidates' poor effort in their learning, the weak linkage between colleges and hosting schools (for practicum programs), and poor administrative support. Besides, there is a general tendency to equate academic performance to professional competence and to assume that the overall competency training would bring professional identity.

To further examine this situation a guideline was prepared and used to check while the discussion took place with the teacher educators. There were ten points or a list of pedagogical actions meant to support the development of teachers' professional identity based on Leijen and her associates' (2014) framework to develop teachers' professional identity. Here is the list.

As a teacher educator you:

- Try to understand the assumptions candidates hold on teaching for corrective intervention
- Initiate value clarification on professionalism as part of the classroom dialogue
- Use critical moments to talk about the social purpose of teaching
- Try to understand each candidate at the personal level to provide the necessary support
- Try your best to serve as a role model for the candidates
- Use practicum programs as an opportunity to instill teachers' professional identity
- Frequently discuss with teacher mentors at school during practicum to support the progress of the candidates
- Support candidates to narrate (write personal reflection) about the practicum vis-à-vis their attributes.
- (Often) use reflective seminars as follow up to practicum programs
- Demonstrate that teacher preparation includes ethical/moral education and value clarification.

The checking was done while the interview took place with all the six teacher educators.¹ Looking through the result, it was learned that:

1. Most of the teachers doubted their practices in implementing these pedagogical actions.
2. Only one teacher reported that he implements five of the ten pedagogical actions.
3. Pedagogical actions marked as #2, #6, #8, #9, and #10 in the above list are not reported to have been enacted by any of the teacher educators.
4. Three of the six teacher educators reported having enacted none of the ten pedagogical actions identified above.

¹ Please refer to the Annex for details.

The result reported here clearly demonstrates that even if the teacher educators believe that there are opportunities to inculcate professional identity among the candidates, in practice, there is no visible attempt. This is consistent with the opinion expressed by the teacher education experts above - who doubted the competence and commitment of the teacher educators as well as the capability and interest of the candidates.

Mentor teachers in cooperating schools were asked to comment on the situation from their vantage point. As mentioned earlier, six teachers who have served as mentors to practicing student teachers were involved in such discussions from the vicinities of the three teacher education colleges. One of the questions raised to the mentor teachers was 'how they support the student teachers during the practice season'. Here are sample responses:

The student teachers come to the school to practice what they studied in their course work. Therefore, I allow them to observe my class and answer their questions if they have one after the sessions. If they want to practice teaching, I leave my class to them for some sessions. Then I do the marking and send my result. That is what we used to do year to year. (MT1)

The very conception of the purpose of student teaching which the teacher holds seems to be erroneous when seen in terms of the current theory of teacher education: student teaching is not just where and when the candidates practice the list of teaching skills studied in the college classrooms. It is also where/when they derive their practical theory (Aglazor, 2017), i.e., when they identify what works for them. Another interviewee stated:

As you may know, student teaching is what the students are expected to do if they have to complete the training and become teachers. So, it is a mandatory program. My role is to assess

how well the student teacher teaches. I then send the result to the college through the coordinator. That is all. (MT4)

This mentor reported nothing about what he did to support the professional growth (socialization) of the student teachers assigned to his care. He saw the program as just a requirement for the candidates to complete their training and become teachers. Similarly, another interviewee said the following:

The college sends students to our school at various times. There are programs for school observation; classroom lesson observation and practicing teaching. They normally come to me when they want to observe my lesson and when they are assigned to practice teaching in my class. So, I give them materials for teaching and mark their work since the college requires that. It is almost routine. We do it a year to year and I have never seen a student teacher who failed to graduate because s/he failed to practice well. (MT5)

In general, it is possible to learn from the opinions of the mentors that student teaching is seen as something less serious matter and rather ceremonial; a situation reported years back by Marew et al (2000). Regarding the conception of teacher education, they hold that student teaching is a program wherein the students just practice the principles of teaching which they studied at the college. This goes with the behaviorist perspective of teacher education; and fails short of the current inquiry model which transpires throughout the pre-service primary teacher education curriculum framework (MoE, 2013).

A very important follow-up question raised to the teacher mentors during the interview was what they used to do to help the development of the student teachers' professional identity. Unfortunately, none of the teacher mentors affirmatively responded to this. Most of them commented about the declining quality of the candidates; growing disinterest toward teaching and the student teachers' lack of proper

effort to learn the profession. The general response from two of the key informants is this: *We do our level best*. I could not see any sense of proper commitment on the part of the mentors regarding bringing up (training) teachers who love their work and who commit themselves to the profession. This is consistent with Girma's (2008) finding which states 'the cooperating teachers [now referred to as mentor teachers] are unprepared to provide student-teachers with clear specifications of how their teaching behavior must change.

Student teaching is built on the professional relationships among three major players: university/college supervisor, mentor (cooperating) teacher, and the candidate (Aglazor, 2017). Continued discussion among these bodies is very essential for the professional growth of the candidate. The mentors were asked whether they have had any discussion with college supervisors regarding the professional growth of the student teachers. Except for two teachers, the rest reported that they did not discuss with the supervisors. They take the formats from the College's student teaching coordinator who will come back to collect the marks toward the end of the student teaching period. The two teacher mentors who said to have had some discussions with the supervisors reported:

Some of the supervisors ask me about the behavior of the student teachers. They also request me to orient the students in my class so that they don't disturb the trainees. (MT3)

Some supervisors from the college create a good rapport with me. They ask me about the seriousness of the student teachers; request me to provide the student teachers with the necessary materials and sometimes come back toward the end of the season to get my comment on the whole process. (MT5)

These responses by no means indicate a presence of a strong co-working relation between College Supervisors and Mentor Teachers. And, above all, they never hint at what the two worked together to

inculcate a sense of positive professional identity among the novice. This situation once again strengthens the fact that student teaching is taken as routine and as something ceremonial meant to mark the completion of the course of study.

Challenges: The teacher educators were asked if there are challenges to be named as limiting the implementation of proper pedagogy for the development of teachers' professional identity. The following were among the most repeated responses:

- The candidates came to teaching as a last resort for not having another alternative career.
- Most candidates are academically weak or not prepared for the level
- Many of the candidates do not show any observable commitment to improving their academic skills irrespective of efforts made by some teacher educators to support them. There is a tendency to look for the certificate as a guarantee to get some kind of employment.
- Many of them do not appreciate becoming a teacher. As observed on several occasions, they want to leave teaching as soon as they get any other opportunity.
- As a result of the above situation, many teacher educators are disheartened and see no hope in many of their student teachers becoming professional teachers who love teaching.
- School teachers, who host the candidates during the practicum, are not serious about their support to the practical training component. They tend to see the practicum program as something ceremonial and their own (often unattractive) work situation tended to color what they do for/with the novice.
- It is very unlikely that many of the candidates get useful role models whom they can learn from. The mentoring relationship expected to be the case is reduced to some nominal arrangement with no sense of accountability.

These challenges overlap with some of the results of the local studies reviewed earlier in this report. Given that, it is not very difficult to conclude that the development of professional identity among pre-service teachers is in jeopardy. Yet, should these challenges be allowed to stop teacher educators from trying their level best to nurture professional selves among the candidates? If they think that preparing teachers for Ethiopian schools (and Ethiopian children) is their calling; no challenge should curb the teacher educators from trying their best to inculcate positive teachers' professional identity.

Conclusions and Implications

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the place of teachers' professional identity in the teacher education system of Ethiopia, specifically in the primary pre-service teacher education sub-system. A review of both theoretical and research literature [of local and international scale] indicated that there is standard literature on issues of teachers' professional identity development. Research on teachers' professional identity development as well as a modality for inclusion into teacher education systems can be approached from multiple perspectives. Who the teacher is; what teachers do; teachers as the community of practitioners and pedagogies of teachers' professional identity development can be considered as theoretical frames both to study teachers' professional identity development and to design programs targeting teacher identity construction through pre-service and in-service teacher development programs. The data collected from human sources; examination of teacher education documents of Ethiopia as well as further analysis of data on which selected researches on teacher education of Ethiopia revealed that teacher identity development has not been explicitly targeted, at least in practice. There is a tendency to see that teacher identity is something that is default present in the process of equipping competent teachers in the basic skills of teaching. Teachers' professional identity development has not been a very well visible area in research on the Ethiopian teacher education system. At the same time, the situation of

teachers' work life seemed to have undesirably impacted upon the candidates' growth to becoming professional teachers. These and many other findings of the study implicate that there is a need to problematize issues of teachers' professional identity development in Ethiopia. Sensitization of teacher educators (and related stakeholders) on the subject of teachers' professional identity is also much desired. Understandably, this study is based on data collected from a few individuals (and institutions) selected from three different regions. While the results obtained are very essential there is a need for rather large-scale research programs on teachers' professional identity development in Ethiopia.

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Annex : Teachers Utilization of pedagogical actions that support teachers' professional identity development

The teacher educators:		Discussant					
		TE-A	TE-B	TE-C	TE-D	TE-E	TE-F
1)	Try to understand the assumptions candidates hold on teaching for corrective intervention	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted
2)	Initiate value clarification on professionalism as part of the classroom dialogue	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted
3)	Use critical moments to talk about the social purpose of teaching	Yes	Doubted	Doubted	Yes	Doubted	Doubted
4)	Try to understand each candidate at a personal level to provide the necessary support	Doubted [in a few cases]	Doubted	Doubted [in a few cases]	Yes	Doubted	Doubted
5)	Try their best to serve as role models for their teaching candidates	Yes	Doubted [in a few cases]	Doubted [in a few cases]	Yes	Yes	Doubted
6)	Use practicum programs as an opportunity to instill teachers professional identity	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted
7)	Frequently discuss with teacher mentors at school during practicum to support the progress of the candidates	Yes	Doubted	Doubted	Yes	Doubted	Doubted

8)	Support candidates to narrate (write personal reflection) about the practicum vis-à-vis their attributes.	Doubted [Just final report]	Doubted [Just final report]	Doubted [Just final report]	Doubted[Just final report]	Doubted[Just final report]	Doubted[Just final report]
9)	[Often] use reflective seminars as follow up to practicum programs	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted
10)	Demonstrate that teacher preparation includes ethical/moral education and value clarification.	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted	Doubted