

Exploring the Challenges of Initial Teacher Preparation: Voicing the Concerns from the Field

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ABSTRACT

It is widely recognized that the best education systems have the best teachers, and a school can only ever be as good as its teachers. However, the quality of a teaching force is dependent on the availability of good quality teacher education program. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of initial teacher preparation program from insiders' perspectives. Data were collected via semi-structured interview and analyzed narratively. The findings of the study revealed that failure to attract the right people into teaching, poor quality of teacher training programs, weak University and School partnership, unfair and disproportionate treatment of teacher education, policy-practice gap, poor teacher retention strategy, and poor information and communication technology integration as the challenges undermining the teacher education program. The need to attracting best and brightest candidates into the profession, strengthening teacher education programs, improving the management of teacher education, valuing teachers and improving their status are areas identified as implication of the study.

KEYWORDS

Teacher education; initial teacher education; narrative research; Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

The agenda of improving school requires the transformation of teachers learning, which as Feiman-Nemser, (2001) described, a radical idea at the center of school reform. Other researchers added (see Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Elmore, 2002) the quality of nation's schools depends on the quality of nation's teachers. Feiman-Nemser (2001) further noted what students learn is directly related to what and how teachers teach; and what and how teachers teach depends on the knowledge, skills, and commitments they bring to their teaching and the opportunities they have to continue learning in and from their practice. Hence, it is beyond shadow of doubt that teachers bear upon their shoulders a responsibility to prepare the next generation of nation's citizens. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is the first and crucial stage in teachers' professional journeys. By shaping future teachers' knowledge, skills and mindsets it lays the foundations for their capacity to lead and facilitate successful student learning. To consolidate, further develop and share best practice, teaching needs to be considered as a continuum of lifelong learning, starting with ITE and followed by an induction phase during the early stages of the profession, continuing into and throughout career development.

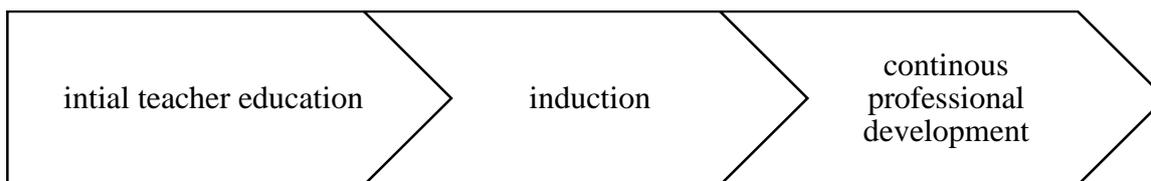


Figure 1. Continuum of the Teacher Education

Teacher Education Institutes must keep abreast of changing school climates and expectations placed on teachers. They have the ongoing challenge of ensuring their programs of study provide the necessary components to produce well prepared teacher candidates. According to Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden (2005), school of education has the responsibility to 1) furnish their teacher candidates with tools that will enable them to perform their teaching duties, 2) assure that candidates are supplied with continuous opportunities to become better teachers and more knowledgeable of best practices. Programs should assist teacher candidates in understanding proper pedagogical techniques such as how to engage students in learning over extended periods of time. Likewise, Darling-Hammond, Griffin and Wise(1992) pointed out that teacher preparation programs need to incorporate more intensive and extensive exposure to knowledge about teaching, learning, and the social milieu of education, along with more opportunities to learn to apply that knowledge under supervision and guided practice.

In her study of seven highly successful and longstanding pre-service teacher education programs in the United States, Darling-Hammond (2006) produced interesting findings about the preparation of knowledgeable and skillful teachers. The programs she documented in the study demonstrate that it is possible to prepare teachers so they are ready to enter teaching equipped with knowledge and skills enabling them to serve diverse learners well and to learn continuously from their practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The common elements in how the programs accomplish this are: *coherence*, based on a common, clear vision of good teaching grounded in an understanding of learning; *a strong core curriculum*, taught in the context of practice; *extensive, connected clinical experiences* that support the ideas and practices presented in coursework; *an inquiry approach* that connects theory and practice; *school-university partnerships* that develop common knowledge and shared beliefs among school- and university-based faculty; and *assessment based on professional standards* that evaluates teaching through demonstrations of critical skills and abilities (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Teachers and teacher education programs are continuously under pressure to improve teaching qualities, which in turn will result in the improved student learning. In their studies covering nine countries from four continents, Conway et al, (2009) identified several challenges of an education system in an emerging society which has significant implications for teacher education. The challenges are: a) addressing achievement gaps, b) addressing proven difficulties students have in using knowledge in problem-solving contexts, c) promoting inclusion, d) extending lifelong learning opportunities, e) promoting higher-order thinking (in subject areas), knowledge generation and creativity, f) integrating new models of teaching and assessment, g) addressing system shortcomings identified in various evaluations of syllabus/ curriculum implementation, h) promoting the integration of new learning technologies in classroom teaching and learning i) working in the context of changing social relationships in families, schools communities and online settings, and j) the role of the school of tomorrow in a knowledge society. Though these challenges are common to both developed and developing nations, the acuteness of the problems are worse in developing countries engulfed in poverty, insecurity, conflict, intolerance, inequality and bad governance.

Teacher education programs in sub-Saharan African countries have been faced with more challenges as expansive interventions drive the sector in response to both domestic and international pressures (Tesema, 2007; Anney, Hume & Coll, 2012). Increased students enrolments have presented an unexpected challenge for many developing countries because they have in turn created another unforeseen problem, that of teacher shortages and recruitment of unqualified teachers (Anney, Hume & Coll, 2012). Similarly, Westbrook et al. (2013), identified the problems surfacing initial teacher training (ITE) program in developing countries in following way: outdated forms of ITE as being misaligned to the school curriculum and as overly theoretical and distanced from actual school contexts, omission of newer curriculum subjects, such as health, environment and peace education, in the ITE curriculum, teacher educators continuous use of lectures, question and answer, and basic group work rather than the pedagogic approaches promoted in schools, unguided and unsupervised practicum trainees' experiences in schools. Connell (2014) further described the sub-Saharan Africa teaching experience as knowledge transmission; entirely depend on heavily prescribed curriculum, summative model of assessment in which students are tested purely for grading purpose.

Research conducted on teacher education in Ethiopian context identified some of the challenges of teacher preparation program (Tesema, 2006; 2007). The problems identified include: mismatch of the teacher preparation pedagogy and the realities in secondary schools where televised instruction is dominant, lack of adequate preparedness and the knowledge base to implement the practicum, managerial approach to effect change, marginalizing pedagogical practitioner, and fragmentation of programs and activities. So, there is a considerable dissatisfaction regarding the teacher preparation programs. Hence, this study was intended to explore the challenges of preparing teachers for the needs and realities of the 21st century.

Teacher quality has been placed at the forefront of educational initiatives intended to provided equitable quality education for every learner. Darling-Hammond, (1999) quoting the theNational Commissionon Teaching and America's Future, succinctly put "...every child should have the right to betaught by a caring, competent, and qualified teacher, ...and every teacher should enjoythe right to high-quality preparation" (p. 223). Researchers (see, Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Elmore, 2002) further strengthened that the quality of nation's schools depends on the quality of nation's teachers. However, teacher education program has been criticized for being ineffective in preparing teachers for the changing complex world of work (Tessema, 2008; Kassa, 2014). Hence, this study intended to explore the challenges of teacher education from the perspectives of the Dean's of teacher education institutes.

Producing teachers for both local contexts and global needs require transforming teacher education program. And the transformation of teacher education program needs the critical analysis of the challenges that influence the teacher education program. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the challenges facing teacher education institution in the preparation of teachers.

METHOD

Leaders of teacher education institutes play a paramount role in the transformation of teacher education and making of teachers. In this study, we tried to research the lived in experiences of deans' of education about the challenges facing initial teacher education. To this end, narrative research, the study of stories, was employed to convey the stories of my participants, which is about the challenges of initial teacher education. Narrative research has its roots in the qualitative interpretative tradition and founded on constructivist approach. It aims at understanding human action, through the configuration of diverse events,

happenings and actions of humans into a thematically and unified whole story (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative inquiry is interested in exploring complexity from a human centered perspective – the perspective of students, teachers, instructors, patients, employees or others involved in such a study (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The concept of narrative can be viewed as a construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories. According to Webster and Mertova (2007):

Stories are constantly being restructured in the light of new events, because stories do not exist in a vacuum but are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives. Narrative allows researchers to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness. Narrative illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognizing that one's understanding of people and events changes. (p2)

Clandin in and Connelly, (2000) succinctly put experience happens narratively and suggest educational experience should be studied narratively. By using narrative research, we would be able to use the narratives of deans' to communicate a more holistic picture of their experience about the challenges teacher education is facing in their context. The deans' narratives are the deans' own interpretation of events within their particular context. Their narrative would help us to discover their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences (Jalongo, Isenberg, & Gcrhmcht, 1995). Our study focuses on four deans' of education narratives of their experiences on the challenges facing the teacher education program. Their stories were collected via in-depth interview. The interviews were also quite long, between two to two and half hours, so there was enough time to explore topics until we felt we had done so sufficiently.

Regarding analysis, stories collected were transcribed from the audio tapes in to texts. To examine the stories closely, analysis of narrative and narrative analysis were followed to provide a perspective of deans' and their lived experiences. In this case, our role as a researcher are twofold; a story teller and story analyst. Polkinghorne (1995) explains the two distinct categories of narrative inquiry named: analysis of narrative and narrative analysis. Narrative analysis identifies —action, events, and happenings to produce an analysis that takes form in stories or narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 6). It is about the construction of a coherent narrative or story on the basis of collected data, which in this case the selected data from interviews. The researcher's role in a narrative analysis is a story teller who sift out pertinent elements of data and reports the data in storied accounts (Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysis of narrative uses stories as data sets to glean categories or typologies to explain the meaning within the stories. It is analytic approach that examines data to illuminate distinct themes and create generalizations (Polkinghorne, 1995). It requires the researcher to become a story analyst rather than a storyteller (ibid). We choose to analyze the data from both participants' perspectives using narrative analysis and our perspective using analysis of narrative to gain insight about the challenges of initial teacher education.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of data revealed various challenges influencing initial teacher education program in Ethiopian context. The stories and experiences of our participants were illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 2. Challenges to initial teacher education (constructed from the data)

Failure to attract the right people into teaching

The top-performing school systems consistently attract more able people into the teaching profession, leading to better student outcomes (Kane, 2005; UNESCO, 2014 and OECD, 2011). Conversely, the teacher education system failed to attract the best candidates to the teaching profession. Rather, as the participants stated poorly performing students with no other options join the teaching profession. In case of primary school teacher education, low achievers who didn't pass grade ten national examinations joined the profession. All the respondents remarked that candidates with low GPA and poor academic preparations were admitted to the teacher education program. The participants felt that this practice contradicts with the rhetoric of teacher education reform that articulated best candidates are admitted to the program. It is affirmed that potential teachers who know enough about the subject matter should preferably enter teacher education programmes (Rivers, 2006; UNESCO, 2014). This is echoed by Oke (2016) which noted commitment and willing to teach is also equally important like that of subject matter knowledge.

The respondents in the study believe that low salary and poor social status/recognition are the main reasons that push away best candidates from the profession. According to the respondents, not only do teachers start lower than other professionals, but the more years they put into teaching, the wider the gap gets. They argue that in poor countries like ours the choice of the profession is tied to income/salary and pleaded for the reconsideration of teachers' salary structure. According to the respondents if an equitable salary is paid for teachers, the teaching profession becomes an attractive profession in which people are interested to stay. Otherwise, they stated the profession cannot attract and retain the best candidates with propaganda and false promises. According to the study conducted on the secondary school student Ingvarson et al (2014), the salary and status of teachers highly influenced students not to choose teaching despite they consider the profession as important. In a similar context, Fekede and Tyjala (2015) found that the low pay for teachers has a devastating effect on the whole process of education by demoralizing teachers, devaluing their work and losing teachers to better paying professions.

Poor quality of teacher training programs

Studies found that teacher education programs can make a difference to student achievement depending on the type of education program and support that is put in place. Ingvarson et al. (2014) avers that the effective preparation of teaching workforce depends highly on a country's teacher preparation system. Dilshad (2010) added, quality of school education

largely depends, among other factors, on quality of teachers prepared in teacher education institutions. Conversely, the interviews we held with participants of the study signified that the way teachers have been trained in the teacher education institutes are infamous. According to the participant, it was too easy to join and complete the teacher education program without adequate preparation but, this practice was against the principles of teacher education program (Dilshad, 2010). The data show several issues that contributed to the poor quality of teacher training programs. It was explained that the program was under financed and ill-equipped with facilities (references, textbook and laboratory equipment). The participants added; poor assessment strategies, limited school based practicum experience, inadequate support, low commitment of teacher educators, overcrowded classroom, and negative attitude of students' toward the profession as a factor for poor teacher training program. According to Bouders (2016), however, motivating environment plays significant roles in creation of good quality teacher training program and in enhancing professional development.

The participants went on to explain that the summer program was damaging the quality of teachers as it was not properly handled. They argue that the time allocated for the program was inadequate and inappropriate. In most cases, as participant described, the training time was not more than one month. Owing to this, the participant reported, the teaching practice was lecture dominated and emphasize portion coverage. The participant noted that the ministry of education instructed the colleges on issues like when to admit and disperse teachers'. This often clashed with the design of the program and the university schedule. There were occasions when the ministry of education interrupted the summer program in a way it compromised quality, participants stated. The data show that the regular program was also facing similar problem. Participants explained teacher candidates were expected to attend the training for ten months, but this was not realized. The academic calendar varies from five months to eight months. Sandhya (2017) revealed that since the teachers play a major role in education of children who will be the future adults, their own education becomes a matter of vital concern. Otherwise, incompetent and unprepared teachers fled the public schools.

The misconceptions and negative attitude about the post graduate diploma in teaching (PGDT) program was another area of concern raised by the participant as a damaging factor in teacher education programs. The participant articulated that the PGDT program was not a requirement to get a teaching job. Furthermore, as reported, it didn't result in to rise in salary of a teacher. There was no value for PGDT grade in any aspect, be it recruitment or promotion. Owing to this, the participant explained the teacher education developed a wrong view of the PGDT program. If the PGDT program and grade earned during training has no value for promotion, recruitment or career structure of the candidates there was no reason to be motivated and to work hard, the participant discussed. Because of this the teacher education candidates didn't ask for their student copy when they graduated. Our participants added that there was no any difference between those who trained in PGDT and those who didn't in terms of benefit, which they thought degraded, the value of the program.

The participants of the study remarked that the teacher education curriculum as a defect and plead for its revision. One participant noted that the curriculum emphasized general pedagogy and overlooked the integration of content and pedagogy. The participant further explained "it didn't show mathematics teacher candidates to teach the concept of mathematics for high schools". It was argued that the content taught, the example taken, the activities performed should be linked with the candidates subject area. With regard to primary school teachers' curriculum, the participant remarked that there was a mismatch between the content and the time allotted to complete the courses. Hence, the courses were bulky and difficult to complete within the allocated time framework. According to the

participants, the fundamental weakness in the teacher education curriculum was that it over emphasized the practicum, overlooking the content knowledge. Criticizing the less emphasis given for content knowledge, the raised a question “in a situation where teacher candidates didn’t know well what to teach why are we worried about how to teach?” It was also reported that science courses didn’t give adequate laboratory experience for the teacher candidates.

Weak university and school partnership

New designs for teacher education will need to rest on strong partnerships in the context of meaningful involvement by key stakeholders in the education process. Successful partnerships not only start with sufficient government support and resources but also attract resources from the private sector to continue and deepen the partnership among university faculties, schools and teachers and relevant stakeholders outside education. According to Robinson (1999) key strategy for enhancing the potential of a pre-service teacher education programme is to institutionalize a process of ongoing dialogue and communication between the university and the schools. OECD (2011) also acknowledged the importance of school-university partnership. Improve partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools in order to provide teacher trainees with a more integrated experience. Best practice principles for teacher education must consider more than the content and organization of university courses. The successful preparation of a high-quality teaching workforce depends on close attention to, and the alignment of, all elements of a country’s teacher preparation system (Ingvarson et al, 2014). Though the current model of initial teacher training includes school based experience, data from this research indicated that the collaboration between university and schools in the making of teachers were weak. In this regard, Zeichner, Payne and Brayko (2015) argue that neither schools nor universities can educate nation’s teachers alone. Rather, as they claim, neither schools nor universities must assume shared responsibility and joint ownership of the program and access the expertise that exists in the communities that are supposed to be served by schools in order to educate teachers well.

Unfair and disproportionnate treatment of teacher education

Participant with whom we spoke during an in-depth interview reported that the teacher education program was marginalized and regarded as less important. They complained that the program was not considered as important as other programs. They explained that the vehicles and other resources given for the teacher education program were not used in the program; rather, they were used to run other programs. They blamed the ministry of education for not closely monitor and follow the program. As Ronfeldt (2010) revealed, in order to get pass and strive for quality teaching, administrative support and leadership follow up matter for the effectiveness of the program. According to the participant, teacher education candidates were not admitted into the university unless there was adequate space for students in other fields of study. Owing to this, they believe that the teacher education was not considered as a priority for the university and the ministry of education. As a result, abler students are not attracted to teaching profession. As study in Australia indicated, salary prospects and status were the main reasons why abler students were not choosing teaching, even though they regarded it as an important profession (Ingvarson et al, 2014). Depending on international trends, OECD (2011) also confirmed that status of occupation, work environment, sense of personal contribution and the financial rewards available for teachers influenced the attraction of candidates toward teaching profession.

Ineffective leadership and support

In the course of conducting an interview with the participants, we realized that poor management and support was wrecking teachers and teacher education program. According to the participants, the teacher education program was handled carelessly and ineffectively at different hierarchical structures, where the ministry of education taking lion shares. Participants strongly complained about the centrality of power to make decision on matters of teacher education [admission, procedures, guideline, resources, not considering PGDT program in teachers' career structure, and negative attitude of students toward PGDT program. They thought the misery surrounding teacher education administration reduces teacher morale, lower teacher commitment and damage the teacher education program. Various studies have shown that proper support and effective leadership play significant roles in the preparation of teacher education program. Berry (2008), for instance, revealed that problems of providing effective teaching is less about problems with individual teachers and more about the problems with the systems in which teachers are embedded. So, how teachers are supported by good administrators and sound teacher recruitment and preparation policies matter in teachers' effectiveness. Berry (2010) argued that effective teaching cannot be actualized just by teachers' knowledge, skills and disposition but also as result of proper support from leadership side. Another scholar Ronfeldt (2010) also added about the crucial of better administrative support by stating that quality teaching can thrive and get passed by sound support of administration. According to Richardson & Orphanos (2009), continuous instructional improvement requires skillful leaders who guide the educational system. Poor management potentially create dissatisfaction among teachers which increase turnover of the initial teacher (AEE, 2008). Ingersoll & Smith (2003) stated that the new condition force teachers to leave the profession early unless proper support and effective leadership is exercised. Unlike that of the above theoretical concepts, the findings of this study revealed that the teacher education program was not properly supported by leadership and there is mishandling and leadership ineffectively functioning at different hierarchical structures the system.

Policy – practice gap

The gap between the policy and practice is an issue of concern in teacher education programs. The result shows that there was a mismatch between the rhetoric of teacher education policy and the practices. The participant complained that the teacher education program was not enacted as planned. Owing to this, they faced difficulty to evaluate the effectiveness of the current teacher education program. All the participants unanimously noted “the rhetoric of the teacher education program document was not fully implemented”. They claimed this policy practice gap as a major problem of the teacher education. Explaining the issues further the participant noted teacher candidates have a very limited practical experience. It was described that the teacher education document demands 30% of the university courses to be practical experiences. Conversely, the data show that the teacher candidates have either very minimal or no practical experience. Though the school based practicum is considered as one of the major components of the teacher education, the data revealed that the candidates had two -three weeks of practicum experience during the entire training time. It was believed that this is against the design of the program and inadequate to produce the teacher our country needs. Hence, theory-practice linkage was not as prescribed by the program. The other issue raised during a conversation about the teacher education was that though the program is meant for regular program; it was also implemented in the summer program. Moreover, teacher education candidates were not admitted at the beginning of academic year rather the admission was unplanned and at any time of the academic year. The participant argues that without fully implementing the package of

teacher education reform one cannot simply talk about the modality deficit. In one of such conversation the participant raised “in a situation where we didn’t fully implement the package of the reform how can we claim that the challenges we are facing is a modality problem? He argues that no one is in position to boldly conclude that the problems are modality defect. In this regard, OECD (2011) stated that the practice of policy improve the general status of teaching profession.

Poor teacher retention strategy

Retaining experienced teachers to serve growing numbers of students is one of the key challenges currently facing the education in the study area (UNESCO, 2014). As the responses of the teachers included in the study show, the teaching profession, not only failed to attract the best candidates to the profession, but also couldn’t able to retain well qualified and experienced teachers. They explained that teachers are tirelessly looking for other better paying profession and not willing to stay in the profession. Furthermore, the participants of the study stated that income is one of the major criteria that influence teachers’ decision to stay or not to stay in the profession. They added, with better income, social status and respect comes. Hence, they plead for equitable salary structure for the teaching profession. One of the respondents explained the issue with examples in the following way “at previous time general practitioners (Medical Doctors) are not interested to become a university teacher; rather, they go to hospital because of a better salary. However, with the current improvement in the salary structure of a teacher they are joining the university as a teacher.” They respondents unanimously believe that paying teachers’ better salary will attract and retain the best and brightest people into the teaching profession. UNESCO and ILO (2016) explained conditions related to teachers retention as follow:

“As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.”

Affirming what has been said, OECD (2011) go further and mentioned some mechanisms of retaining teachers, accordingly, fee waivers, scholarships and forgivable loans are some of the financial incentives being provided to attract people into teacher education; and salary bonuses and recognition of work experience also play significant roles. AEE (2008) added that increase in salary improve retention of teachers.

Poor information and communication technology integration

Advances in information and communications technologies (ICT) need to become a part of the knowledge and skills that everyone need to possess in an increasingly complex world. Accordingly, students leaving school should be confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society (Pearson, 2003). If students are going to be prepared for a technological society, as Brand (1998) argues, they must be taught by confident and skilled teachers. Hence, teacher should be capacitated to use ICT during their pre-service training to increase learning opportunities, enhance learning activities, and improve learning outcomes for students. Emphasizing the importance of ICT in enhancing the teaching learning process, all the participants of the study, remarked that it was not well utilized in the schools. They stated that inaccessibility of ICT facilities seems to have been an important factor behind poor use of technology in schools. The participants concluded that it was difficult to maximize ICT usage as long as the schools have no ICT facilities. Furthermore, participants pointed out that inadequate preparation of teacher candidates as a

barrier to use ICT, which they think rectified through training. This finding is supported by Alias & Alias, (2010), who further argues that pre-service teachers hardly use technology to enhance the teaching of conceptual knowledge since there was a mismatch between what is being taught in teacher education program and what is practiced by teachers in the actual classrooms. In order to reverse the situation, Pearson (2003) cautioned that learning with ICT should be emphasized, rather than about ICT, in teacher education courses. Arguing the need to integrate technology in to pedagogy in teacher education, Mishra and Koehler (2006) propose the term technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), which they describe as the connection and interaction between the three types of knowledge-content knowledge (subject matter that is to be taught), technological knowledge (knowledge about both standard and more advanced technologies) and pedagogical knowledge (theories, practices, processes, strategies, procedures, and methods of teaching and learning).

CONCLUSION

Education is widely recognized as an important contributor to the nation's economic competitiveness and development. Given this fact, our country, like others, is striving to deliver equitable quality education for every learner. To this end, our country needs to have high-quality teachers more than ever before. As dozens of research and international experience show, the quality of the education system will be no, better than the quality of the teaching force (Berry et al, 2010; Ingvarson et al, 2014; UNESCO, 2014 and Sandhya & Bhardwaj, 2017). Teacher education reform is top of the agenda of almost every country in the world. Likewise, we examined the issues of teachers and teacher education with the intention to improve the teacher education system. The result revealed that there was a widespread discontent about the teacher education system. In our study, we found that the teacher education was ineffective and not up to its promises due to the following reasons: the gaps in policy implementation, low salary and social disrespect of the profession, loose (permissive) screening/recruitment criteria, poor leadership, inability to attract and retain the best candidates in to the profession, inadequate and poor quality of teacher training programs, scarcity of resources, poor usage of technology and mistreatment of the teacher education program.

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following major implications are identified for intervention.

Attracting best and brightest candidates into the profession

One important implication associated with the findings of this research is the need to get top achievers in to the teaching profession. Research studies conducted in various context on high performing school system revealed that they all consistently get the right people to become a teacher and develop those people in to effective teachers (Berry et al., 2010; Connell, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wei, et al., 2009). Moreover, Ingvarson et al. (2014) coined how high performing countries treat teaching profession as follow:

High-performing countries recognize that quality teachers are the key to quality teaching. They have pursued deliberate policies to attract the most able people into teaching with salaries and working conditions that enable teaching to compete with other professions. Some have been particularly effective in raising the status of teaching as a career, making entry to initial teacher education highly competitive, and encouraging very able secondary school leavers and university graduates to apply for entry into teaching. P3

Hence, it is imperative for the ministry of education and teacher education institutes to attract and recruit the top achievers in to teaching through rigorous and selective criteria.

According to AEE (2008), recruiting and developing high-quality teachers—and then retaining them serve as providing equitable education to children. Otherwise as research study remarked, failure to get the right people in to teaching will result in an educational loss which is largely irreversible. Moreover, an effective retention strategies need to be in a place to retain experienced and well qualified teaching force.

Strengthening teacher education programs

The second implication of the results was the need to strengthen teacher training program. Any effort to reform and develop education must commence from the teacher education programs, where prospective teachers gain a foundation of knowledge, skills and dispositions required for teaching job. Scholes et al, (2017) stated that the role of the teacher training program need to transcend simplistic skills, knowledge and what is deemed in curriculum by helping pre-service teacher to promote continuous learning as a teacher. These days, in the 21st Century, teachers need to be equipped with the skills of transforming their learners. Hence, the teacher education programs need to be strengthened, well resourced and equipped with the required facilities. An intervention is also needed to ensure that teachers receive proper, adequate and relevant training program. Moreover, as education is a lifetime process the teacher education programs need to renew their teaching concepts to promote lifelong and self-regulated learning in the student teachers. The teacher education program, of great importance to beginning teachers, is the comfort of supportive professional networks, targeted, ongoing and individualized stimulation processes and the development of intrinsic factors (Kelly et al., 2015). Furthermore, Scholes et al. (2017) affirmed that quality of teaching and educational outcomes are focused internationally and this is achieved by the quality of training delivered by teachers. Therefore, strengthening and well furnishing teacher education programs is an ideal means of up scaling the program.

Valuing teachers and improving their status

The third implication of the results was the need to value teacher and improving their status. As the findings of the study revealed the teaching profession was low paid and disrespected profession. Hence, the government needs to lift the status of its teachers by developing a competitive and equitable salary structure. UNESCO and ILO (2016) recommend that making teaching profession as competent as highly regarded profession is imperative so that it is placed as preferable profession. Oke et al, (2016) added that remunerations and allowances payment contribute a lot in making teachers to like the profession. As the practice from Finland showed, increasing social status of teachers, improving working conditions and raising the status of the profession in generally is recommended (OECD, 2011). Kelly et al, (2015) further indicated that financial rewards or incentives through future benefits need to be exercised to improve status of teachers. This in turn attracts and retains talented, well-prepared and effective teachers; and makes teaching an attractive and high-status profession.

Improving the management of teacher education

The fourth implication of the results was improving the management of teacher education system. The government and the university need to ensuring the availability of effective leadership that provide ongoing support and encouragement to the teacher education program. For the success of teacher education system as Scholes et al, (2017) recommended supportive leadership effective system. Moreover, a significant level of authority and responsibility need to be granted for the teacher education deans to decide on matters of teacher education. Richardson & Orphanos (2009) pointed out that organized leadership system creates mutual respect and strong professional knowledge. Therefore, the

management of education program needs to improve its approach of handling the functionality of the program at each level of implementation.

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