

Attitude of Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) Trainees towards the Teaching Profession in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study explored the attitude of trainees in postgraduate diploma in teaching towards the teaching profession. The study had a descriptive survey design. Two hundred and fifty-eight trainees participated in the study. Proportionate stratified random and simple random sampling were used in the selection of the study participants. Quantitative data was collected using a standardized questionnaire developed by Renthlei and Malsawmi (2015). Percentages and Stanine scale frequency distributions were used to analyze the data and report the findings. The study revealed that a lack of other better job opportunities was the main reason for the trainees to choose teaching as their future profession. Most also expressed the interest to quit the training and join any other better job opportunity the moment they get the chance. Overall, the majority had a low attitude towards teaching as a profession. Such a low trainees' attitude towards teaching and their intention to quit the training or leave the profession any time the opportunity comes their way, puts the government's plan to expand the coverage of education in jeopardy. Clearly, an increase in schools cannot be achieved without a parallel increase in the number of qualified teachers. Finally, implications of the findings were forwarded to pertinent bodies in teacher education programs.

Keywords: *teaching profession, teachers' attitude, trainees' attitude*

Introduction

Teachers are the building blocks of the educational system (Barber & Mourshed 2007; Sunbul, 2001). The provision of quality education requires qualified and motivated teachers. In connection with

this, Sahin (2004) states that teachers guide individuals and the society at large towards changing their behavior to improve the quality of life.

Teaching has an emotional dimension that directly and significantly affects success. This is one major quality that makes teaching different from other professions (Eraslan and Cakici 2011). Teachers' attitudes to and perceptions of their profession affect their professional competence and achievement (Güneyli& Aslan 2009). This is perhaps why Durmusoglu et al. (2009) state that teachers' attitudes towards their profession are crucial to the success of their teaching performance. Baysal (1981) defines attitude as a cognitive, affective, and behavioral response organized based on experience and knowledge. Attitude is a state of an individual's readiness that is shaped through experience. It influences the individual's response to a stimulus. An individual's response (i.e., attitude) to stimuli can be favorable, neutral, or negative depending on the underlying experience of the individual.

Attitude is made up of three components: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. It acts as an instrument of individual behavior (Feldman, 2002). Ajzen (2005) and McMillan (2000) conceptualize attitude as a learned tendency to respond in a constantly favorable or unfavorable way to an object, person, institution, or event. Attitude is also considered as an acquired and psychological variable that directs an individual's behavior towards a situation, an incident, an object, a person, a place, or an idea (Tavşancıl, 2014; Papanastasiou 2002; Eagly&Chaiken 2007; Tavsancil 2006 and Temizkan, 2008).

Teachers' attitude towards teaching is a broad concept that incorporates several dimensions (Haser & Nasser (2003) and Yaakub (1990)). It has a crucial impact on the extent to which teachers fulfill the requirements of their profession. In addition, teachers' attitude reflects their commitment to their job. It also shows teachers' awareness of the necessity and importance of their job for society. Teachers' attitude determines their beliefs about the need to develop themselves for their profession. On the whole, teachers' attitude is a general reflection of the status of teachers' liking for the job.

A relationship has been observed and reported between teachers' attitudes towards their profession and their effectiveness in teaching (Lapido 1984; Lubis 1988, Williams (2003) and Stronge (2002). Eggen & Kauchak (2001) on their part note that positive teachers' attitudes to and perceptions of teaching are central to effective teaching. Eggen & Kauchak further state that

teachers' positive attitude and perception of teaching affect their classroom practices and influence student performance. Ispi (2010), on the other hand, associates positive teachers' attitude towards teaching with effective teaching and a low feeling of fatigue.

Kreinter and Kinicki (2007) have identified three components of attitudes: affective, feeling or emotion. The cognitive component of attitude deals with beliefs or ideas, and the psychomotor component reflects behavior towards someone or something. These components appear together and shape a teacher's classroom posture through direct and indirect interaction between the society, school, and teachers (Kreinter and Kinicki 2007).

Hence, studying the attitude teachers in pre-service training have towards the teaching profession is a crucial activity needed to obtain information that decisively determines the fate of the country's educational objectives. The present trainees are the future implementers of the education policy that has been designed to achieve the country's educational objectives. Regardless of its nature (whether positive, neutral, or negative), the attitude of teachers in the training program determines their professional behavior (Temizkan, 2008). Teacher candidates who have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession can be expected to have higher academic success during their training (Terzi & Tezci 2007). Similarly, trainees who have a negative attitude towards the teaching profession can be expected to show a limited effort that results in a low academic performance during their study in the training program

Different studies have examined the impact of attitude on the teaching profession and the factors which have a bearing on attitude. Devi (2005) found that success in teaching depends on the attitude teachers have towards the profession. A study by Suja (2007) reported that teachers' attitude towards teaching, their interest in the profession, and their teaching experience significantly influence their job commitment. Mathai (1992) also suggested that attitudes towards the teaching profession correlate with success in teaching. Cornelius (2000), on the other hand, also confirmed that teachers' intelligence, attitude, academic achievement, and attitude towards teaching contribute to making them competent or incompetent in their profession. Many studies have also noted that the attitude practitioners develop towards a profession is the most important predictor of success in that profession (Cakir 2005; Durmusoglu et al. 2009). Teacher candidates' gaining of occupational morals and attitudes, argues Cetin (2006), is as necessary as the requisite knowledge needed for effective teaching performance.

A large body of the literature consulted in this regard suggests that success for the teacher in the profession requires patience, dedication, and a willingness to embrace the profession. In this context, teacher candidates' attitude towards the profession has a significant role to play in the success of their future career. Teacher training /education programs have thus an essential role to play in helping pre-service teachers to develop a positive attitude towards their future profession.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the attitude of trainees in the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (locally known as PGDT) towards the teaching profession. College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University, was the study setting. The findings of the study are hoped to provide the MOE and the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau with information on the attitude of pre-service teachers towards the teaching profession and the implication this may have for the decisions to be made related to the status of the profession as well as the selection, recruitment, and deployment of teachers in the secondary schools.

An Overview of Teacher Education in Ethiopia

Coherent literature on the history of teacher training or teacher education in Ethiopia is scanty. However, pieces of evidence available here and there categorize teacher training/education programs in the country roughly into three phases. The first phase of the teacher training program, known as the Haileselassie I phase, ran from 1944/45 to 1954/55. This training program started in 1944/45 in Minilik II Secondary School. The training was one-year long and was often known as a 6 + 1 teacher training program. Students who wished to become teachers had to complete grade 6 and attend a one-year-long teacher training program. The 6+1 teacher training program was replaced by a 10+2 program sometime in the early 1960s and ended in 1974 (Tirusew, 2006; Tesfaye, 2014).

The second phase of the teachers' training program, known as the 'Derg' phase, was in place between 1978 and 1991. The teacher training program had different modalities during the Derg regime. There was a one-year-long program to train primary school teachers at Teachers Training Institutes. A two-year-long college program was also there to train teachers to teach at the junior high school level. There was yet another four-year-long university-level program that trained teachers to teach in secondary school. Admission to the training programs was mainly determined by the student's score in ESLCE. The third teacher training phase was introduced along with the New Education and Training Policy in 1991. The current teacher education program is an

extension of the program introduced in 1991. It should, however, be noted that the credit for taking the initial initiative to open a secondary school teacher education program goes to the Department of Education, Addis Ababa University, formerly known as Hailesallassie I University (Tirusew, 2006; Tesfaye, 2014).

As discussed above, the foundation for teacher education in Ethiopia was laid in the former emperor's period. Several scholars consider the period as the Golden Age of the teaching career in Ethiopia. Teaching, in Tesfaye's (2014) opinion, was considered a noble profession in the society during the emperor's regime. Teachers were not only paid better but they also enjoyed high prestige and status relative to most civil servants at the time (Tesfaye & Admassu, 2004; Tekeste (2006)).

The Derge period (1974-1991), which replaced the emperor's regime, declared a national campaign commonly known as Development through Cooperation shortly after seizing power in 1975. Many training systems and education programs fell apart due to the closure of secondary schools, colleges, and the university. The resumption of school after the two-year development campaign was met with an acute shortage of qualified teachers to teach particularly in the primary schools. As a tentative solution, the Ministry of Education recruited untrained high school graduates to fill the gap in teaching. This unwise decision, according to Tekleselassie (2005), has since then, had an implication for the low status of the teaching profession. Teachers' training institutes and colleges were reinstated in 1979/80. In the reinstated teacher training program, the former 10 + 2 training program was replaced by a one-year (12 + 1) primary school teacher training program (MOE, 2005).

After the downfall of the Military Regime in 1991, teacher education institutions were upgraded to diploma-offering colleges. Several other new teacher education colleges were also opened in the country since then (Tesfaye, 2014). The introduction of Teacher Education Systems Overhaul (TESO) was another development seen in the recent history of education in the country. Space would not allow me to dwell more on the details of the program here, but suffice it to say that the program was mainly an element of a donor-supported Teacher Development Program designed to achieve the objectives of the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) (UNESCO 2005).

However, after six years of implementation, Teacher Education System Overhaul came to an end. The cause of this untimely termination of the program was the inadequate performances

of the graduates of the program. Poor subject-matter knowledge, inability to implement the teaching and learning methods recommended in the school curriculum, and low career commitment were a few among the qualities of graduates of Teacher Education System Overhaul that led to the termination of the system (MOE, 2008b). The new Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching was introduced in 2011. The need for the program appears to have arisen from the recognition of the gap that TESO left behind. The program (PGDT) is being implemented in 10 public universities in the country. The trainees are given a one-year-long professional and practical training before their employment in secondary school teaching (MOE (2013)).

Clearly, the history of teacher education in Ethiopia has passed through various forms of reforms over the past years. Yet, there are still abundant problems associated with the profession. Issues related to the trainees in PGDT are the case in point in the present study. It is common to hear disappointments that colleagues who work in the universities that host the PGDT program have about the trainees in the PDGT in their respective universities. One aspect of their disappointment is connected to the trainees' lack of enthusiasm to receive training and become teachers. However, no empirical study has so far been carried out to tell us enough about what the trainees think about the PGDT program and the profession they are getting prepared to join – teaching. This study has been designed to fill this gap. The PGDT program in the College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University is the setting of the present study.

Statement of Problem

Any occupation becomes a profession when organizations such as universities, states, and the public accept the system (Wise, 2005). Due to the complex nature of the task of teaching as a profession, individual trainees or newcomers to the field need to possess the right information about the profession. A study conducted by Schutz, et. al. (2001) indicated that the goal of becoming a teacher emanates from four different sources of influence: family influence, teacher influence, peer influence, and teaching experience.

New people often join the teacher training program with already established beliefs. The source of their belief could be one or the other of the four sources of influence mentioned earlier. The pre-service teacher training programs help in shaping the attitude of such trainees by providing a series of experiences incorporated into their curriculum. Srivastava (1989) states that a favorable student-teachers attitude is formed at the end of a teacher training program. Yadav (1992), on his

part, revealed that training has a significant influence on pre-service teachers' self-concept, social maturity, and attitude towards the teaching profession.

Very few studies have been conducted on PGDT trainees in general and their attitudes towards the teaching profession in particular in Ethiopia. Koye's (2014) study is among the few. Koye (2014) conducted a study in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Haramaya University. Similarly, Adugna (2012) assessed the attitude of prospective teachers enrolled in a postgraduate diploma in teaching at Wollega University. Koye and Yonas (2013), on the other hand, studied the selection and admission processes of PGDT candidates at Haramaya University. Kindie (2015), on his part, studied prospective teachers' perception of stakeholders' experience in a practicum at Bahir Dar University while Yirgalem, et.al.(2014) studied the experiences and sources of stress among practicing student-teachers at Haromaya University.

Studies by Koye (2014) and Adugna (2012) focused on PGDT trainees' attitudes towards the teaching profession at Haramaya and Wollega Universities, respectively. However, the PGDT trainees in the two universities were drawn from the same region i.e. Oromia Region. All are expected to be assigned as secondary school teachers in any government school in the region. However, the PGDT trainees of the present study were drawn from the College of Education and Behavioral Studies of Addis Ababa University. Graduates of this program are often assigned to teach in government secondary schools in Addis Ababa. The difference in the place of assignment after graduation could be a cause for differences in the attitude of the PGDT trainees.

Besides, both Koye (2014) and Adugna used self-made questionnaires with varying lengths of items in their questionnaires. The current study, however, adopted a standardized questionnaire developed by Renthlei and Malsawmi (2015) to the local context and used it to collect data on the prospective teachers' attitude towards the teaching profession. The questionnaire had acceptable content validity and reliability coefficient measured using Cronbach alpha (r). The remaining local studies reviewed and reported above focused on different issues of their interest related to the PGDT program. They differ in many ways from the present study. Hence, there was a felt need to study PGDT trainees' attitude towards the teaching profession at the College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University. This was among the rationale for the present study.

The study was guided by the following basic questions:

1. What were the reasons for PGDT trainees to join the teaching profession?
2. What are the future career plans of the PGDT trainees?
3. What is the perceived attitude of PGDT trainees towards the teaching profession?

Scope of the Study

Despite having a not-so-long history, teacher education in Ethiopia has passed through various challenges that hampered its achievement of success. In response to the persistent challenge, the government initiated Post-graduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching program. A Postgraduate Diploma in Education is awarded to candidates who satisfactorily complete a one-year long course in the School of Education and pass the university examination given at the end of the study period.

The PGDT program has been in place since 2010 in ten universities in a summer school mode. The initiative behind the program was the need to fill the gap left behind by the terminated teacher-training program of Teacher Education System Overhaul. Contrary to the government's expectation, the teacher-training program under Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) had a short life span in the history of teacher education in Ethiopia. The main reasons for the failure of the program have been reported in brief elsewhere in this paper. A brief note on the beginning and end of the program will suffice here. The program started in 2003 and ended in 2010.

This study was delimited in scope to PGDT trainees enrolled in the College of Education and Behavioral Studies of Addis Ababa University in the 2018/ 19 academic year in the summer in-service program. The study was also delimited to two groups of PGDT trainees, i.e. proper PGDT trainees in the years I and II and others enrolled in the years V and VI. Hence, the findings of this study can be generalized only to these groups of respondents. In addition, the study was delimited to identifying the attitude of PGDT trainees toward the teaching profession. Future research can be recommended to find the causes behind the PGDT trainees' attitude reported in the present study.

Significances of the Study

The findings of the study might help the College, MoE, and Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau in designing a regular system of evaluating the PGDT trainees' attitudes and practices. The information hoped to be gained from the regular program evaluation will help in

making informed decisions related to the future fate of the teacher education program in the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Operational Definition (of what?)

PGDT trainees' attitude in this study refers to the average responses of the PGDT trainees towards the teaching profession using a standardized questionnaire developed by Renthlei and Malsawmi (2015) to measure the attitude of teachers toward the teaching profession.

Research Design and Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used to conduct this study. A descriptive survey design is appropriate to unveil prevailing situations. It is an appropriate design when researchers want to describe the current situation and try to investigate people's attitudes, behaviors, and feelings using questionnaires or interviews (Gay, et.al.,2012; Leary, 2001).

Sampling Technique

The sample respondents for the study were drawn from a total of 1304 PGDT in-service trainees enrolled in the 2018/2019 academic year in the college understudy. Out of these trainees, a total of 322 sample respondents were selected using proportionate stratified random and simple random sampling techniques. The sample size was determined based on the recommendations given by Cohen et.al, (2007). The authors recommend around 321 sample respondents for a total population of 1300 at a 95 % level of confidence.

According to the PGDT coordination office of the college, the PGDT trainees were grouped into two in the academic year the data used in the present study was collected. In the first group were proper PGDT trainees in years I and II. This group had 400 trainees. In the second group were trainees enrolled in the summer program of PGDT. This group had 904 in-service trainees in years V and VI. The total population was stratified into two based on this classification of the trainees. A proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select sample trainees for the study. The proportionate sample size was determined for both groups. Accordingly, out of the total 322 sample respondents, 99 of them were drawn from the proper PGDT trainees of years I and II. The majority (i.e., 233) were selected from the in-service PGDT trainees in years V and VI. After stratifying and determining the sample sizes of the two groups of trainees, individual

respondents were selected from the list of each group. Simple random sampling or the lottery method was used in the selection of individual sample trainees for the study.

Data Gathering Tool

Data for the study was collected using a standardized questionnaire developed by Renthlei and Malsawmi (2015). The questionnaire had two parts. The first part contained six questions set by the researcher. This part had multiple-choice items designed to solicit the profile of the study participants (sex, year of enrollment, and fields of specialization and university origins), their reasons for joining the teaching profession, and their future career plan. The second part of the questionnaire contained 22 five-point Likert scale items. The items in this part asked the study participants to rate the attitude statements from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (0) against each item. Twelve of these items were stated positively while the remaining ten items in the questionnaire were negatively stated. The validity and reliability of the items in the questionnaire were checked by the developers and reported as valid and reliable. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be Cronbach alpha($r= 0.81$) and greater than the minimum (r -value of 0.70) suggested by Pallant (2010).

The questionnaire was administered to sample respondents in each section with the help of instructors assigned to teach the trainees in the College understudy. Two hundred and fifty-eight PGDT trainees returned the completed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was first edited and entered into a computer using SPSS 20 software. The scoring for each item of the Attitude Scale was done by giving a score of 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 for positive statements, and 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 for negative statements. As per the recommendations made by the developers of the questionnaire, the raw scores obtained by all 258 PGDT trainees were transformed into the Stanine scale by organizing them in frequency distribution and then giving the percentage of each Stanine score points according to the normal distribution curve. This way, norms for interpreting the raw scores were prepared with the help of Stanine grade. Accordingly, Stanine 1 indicates very low attitude towards the teaching profession, Stanine 2 and 3 indicate low attitude towards the teaching profession, Stanine 4, 5, and 6 indicate moderate attitude towards the teaching profession, Stanine 7 and 8 indicate high attitude towards teaching profession and Stanine 9 indicates very high attitude towards teaching profession. Percentages were

used to report the status of PGDT trainees' attitudes toward the teaching profession, their reasons for joining the profession, and their intention (if any) to leave the teaching profession.

Results and Discussions

The Study Participants

Out of the total of 332 sample respondents, 258 (77.71%) respondents returned the completed questionnaire. The number of male and female PGDT trainees who returned the completed questionnaire was nearly the same. This indicates an improvement in female teachers' participation in secondary school teaching. The increase seen in the number of secondary school female teachers since the beginning of the PGDT program is encouraging.

Table 1: PGDT Trainees' Reasons for Joining the Teaching Profession

Reasons for joining the teaching profession	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Peer influence	13	5.0	5.2	5.2
Parents influence	16	6.2	6.3	11.5
own interest	120	46.5	47.6	59.1
Valid Lack of job opportunity	93	36.0	36.9	96.0
Other reasons	10	3.9	4.0	100.0
Total	252	97.7	100.0	
Missing 99.00	6	2.3		
Total	258	100.0		

Data in Table 1 indicates PGDT trainees' reasons for choosing the teaching profession. It is interesting to see that 46.5 % of the trainees joined the teaching profession based on their interests. However, the second larger group (i.e., 36 %) reported a lack of other job opportunities as a reason for joining the teaching profession. This implies that teaching as a profession was not attractive to such a large pool of applicants. A frustrating situation was that the majority i.e. 178

(69 %) of the PGDT trainees were planning to leave the profession if given the chance to do so as reported in Table 2. This result is similar to the result of the study (2014) conducted by the MOE and reported in the ESDP IV document. The study carried out by the MoE and released in the ESDP IV document (2014) reported that 70% of teachers considered in the study would, if given an equivalently paid option, leave the teaching profession (MOE, 2015).

Table 2: PGDT Trainees Intention to Leave the Teaching Profession

If you get the chance of employment in other organizations with the same salary, would you leave the teaching profession?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	178	69.0	69.5	69.5
	No	45	17.4	17.6	87.1
	Can't decide	33	12.8	12.9	100.0
	Total	256	99.2	100.0	
Missing	99.00	2	.8		
	Total	258	100.0		

Perceived Attitude of PGDT Trainees towards the Teaching Profession

Table 3: Score Range, Stanine Grade, and Interpretation of Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession for PGDT Trainees

<i>St.No</i>	<i>Score Range</i>	<i>Stanine Grade</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
9	Above 80	0	Very high attitude
8	77-80	0	High attitude
7	74-76	1	
6	70-73	3	Moderate
5	66-69	11	
4	62-65	20	

3	59-61	19	Low attitude
2	55-58	37	
1	Below 55	167	Very low attitude

Tables 3 and 4 show the score range, Stanine grade, and interpretation of the attitude scale used to measure PGDT trainees' attitudes towards the teaching profession. As can be inferred from the data in the tables, the attitude of the majority of PGDT trainees' i.e. 223 (86.43%) toward the teaching profession was unfavorable. This was represented by low and very low attitude scores as indicated in the table. Only one candidate was found within the high attitude category while none of the PGDT trainees had a very high attitude towards the teaching profession. The data further indicates that about 34 (13.18 %) of the respondents had a neutral attitude towards the profession.

This finding disagrees with the findings of the studies conducted on the attitude of PGDT trainees at Haramaya University by Koye (2014) and Adugna (2012). Koye reported that the PGDT trainee's attitude in the study was nearly undecided although the trainees had favorable statements on the teaching profession. Adugna, on the other hand, reported that PGDT trainees considered in his study had a moderately positive attitude towards the teaching profession. This means the trainees' attitude was at an average level which is not strong enough to negatively influence the processes of teaching and learning in schools.

Table 4: Attitude of PGDT Trainees towards the Teaching Profession

<i>Groups</i>	<i>No of Teachers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Very high attitude	0	0.00%	0.39% (favorable)
High attitude	1	0.39%	
Moderate attitude	34	13.18%	13.18% (Neutral)
Low attitude	56	21.71%	86.43% (Unfavorable)
Very low attitude	167	64.73%	

Total	258	100.00%	
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Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusions

As can be understood from the findings of this study, the trainees' attitude toward the teaching profession in the College was very low and low. This means that the trainees had an unfavorable attitude towards teaching. A large number of the trainees joined the teaching profession only due to a lack of other job opportunities. Even worse is the story that the larger proportion of the trainees had intentions to leave the profession given the opportunity.

Teaching, as a noble profession, requires teachers who join the profession to have a positive attitude, interest, and readiness to dedicate themselves to the profession. Trainees in the PGDT program considered in the present study had an unfavorable attitude towards the teaching profession. This implies the mental and psychological readiness of the trainees to become teachers, not just secondary school teachers. In general, these trainees' lack of interest and enthusiasm towards the profession from the outset means that it would be difficult for the education sector particularly for secondary schools, to get competent and qualified teachers to facilitate the provision of quality secondary education. This, seen in the light of the government's plan to expand the coverage of secondary schools with qualified teachers, poses an insurmountable obstacle if the existing practice is allowed to continue without appropriate intervention.

Policy Implications

The current state of PGDT trainees' attitude towards the teaching profession implies that there is still a heavy workload ahead to raise the status of the teaching profession in the eyes of society.

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