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Original Research

The Status of Quality Education in College of Teachers Education in West Oromia Regional State

Kebede Nemomsa* & Feyera Beyesa

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Abstract

The study analyzed the quality of instruction at Teachers Training Colleges in the western Oromia region, focusing on colleges in Jimma, Metu, Nekemte, and Shambu. A mixed methodology was used, including surveys and comparative case studies. Data was collected from curriculum specialists, college deans, instructors, laboratory technicians, and library directors. The study found that maintaining quality education requires a robust internal quality assurance system, capable staff, an excellent teaching-learning process, dedication, material and financial resources, and student interest and commitment. The study reveals that not all case study organizations have internal quality control mechanisms. Despite 60% of graduates passing the theoretical exam, those who failed the Centre of Competence Assessment went on to become teachers. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for creating and updating the curriculum, while the Teacher Training College (TTC) is required to produce modules and participate in curriculum development. Various strategies are employed to ensure quality instruction, but research conducted by faculty members is insufficient and established labs are not functioning well. The four case study schools' quality of education was significantly influenced by student quality, inadequate facilities, low staff compensation, and the commitment of the academic community.

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*Corresponding Author:

Kebede Nemomsa

E-mail:

45477566@mylifeunisa.ac.z

INTRODUCTION

Numerous authors suggest that excellence in higher education should be understood as a multifaceted notion that encompasses all of its operations, including the equipment, community services, teaching and academic programmes, and the academic atmosphere. Improving quality requires transparent internal and external evaluation carried out by impartial experts, ideally in conjunction with global specialists (UNESCO, 2006; & Lemaitre, 2009).

Quality is a major concern for higher education institutions worldwide in the twenty-first century. It becomes more significant since, in today's cutthroat environment, human resources play an increasingly important role. "Universities must be accountable to society, employers, students, and each other, so quality in higher education is important." has the view that quality in education is a dynamic, positive, multifaceted, multidimensional, and

complicated notion, citing various research publications.

The main concerns in the quality debate surrounding higher education in many nations are how to define and measure quality; how to improve the quality and adaptability of graduates; management strategies that are likely to improve university and college outcomes; how to use benchmarking and performance indicators; and how to persuade stakeholders that institutions and systems are competently ensuring quality outputs.

The quality argument in higher education is not new, even if historically universities and government agencies used different labels such as academic standards, standards of degrees and diplomas, student assessment, and accountability. Keeping academic standards in line with national or worldwide norms, raising and maintaining teaching and learning levels, and allocating sufficient funds and other resources to accomplish high-quality higher education have also been the primary issues in the quality debate in the past.

While a lot of these issues still matter, the new quality debate focuses mostly on achieving quality outcomes, establishing suitable management procedures to track accomplishment and the degree to which predetermined goals and objectives are met, evaluating graduates' suitability for the workforce and professions, and informing stakeholders about the reliability and quality of outputs. The old and new quality debates differ significantly in that the former focused primarily on inputs and national and international academic standards, while the latter was more concerned with management procedures and their efficacy, performance monitoring and output evaluation, and the extent to which outputs satisfy employer and other requirements. However, there are also significant differences in the region's perceptions of quality issues and the relative importance that various governments and higher education systems place on addressing them. Nevertheless, quality is also becoming a significant concern in the higher education systems of Asia and the Pacific.

Higher education institutions in affluent nations have long had quality assurance programmes and policies in place to raise the standard of their instruction, research, and oversight of volunteer work. Quality assurance has acquired popularity recently in developing country colleges and universities as well. The difficulties that emerging universities face—many of which have to do with global shifts in the higher education market that these institutions must adapt to—have served as the driving force behind these advancements. Nowadays, the majority of emerging nations' higher education systems are defined by growth, resource scarcity, heightened competitiveness, enhanced stakeholder accountability, and the complexity of knowledge advancing. Simultaneously, the majority of developing nations have implemented policies that support widespread access to higher education in an effort to correct historical injustices and supply their economy with the highly educated labour needed to further economic progress.

With robust policies supporting equity and quality of educational provision as well as quick expansion of educational opportunities to previously underserved populations, Ethiopia has placed education at the centre of its development and democratisation strategies (African Union Commission, 2005;

Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994). In Ethiopia, teacher training colleges are now considered to be part of the higher education system. On the other hand, regional education bureaus, whose duties include assigning instructors, allocating funds, and ensuring that education meets standards, have the authority to hold teacher training colleges accountable. As educators, department heads, college deans, and policymakers, you may be wondering, "Why should we care about quality?" You should consider quality for other reasons than just following the college's direction; instead, quality should be a bottom-up strategy, and everyone should understand the importance of being concerned about the calibre of instruction, initiatives, and organisations.

Statements of the problem

According to Malakoff and Schwartzbeck (2001), student learning is directly impacted by the calibre of teachers, making them the most important component of education. Research indicates that the calibre of a teacher's pre-service and in-service teacher education, as well as their educational background, determine the calibre of that teacher (Sharma, 1993). Thus, attaining the objective of high-quality education depends heavily on teacher preparation. The teacher education system has significantly expanded quantitatively to meet the increasing demands of teachers at all levels, but the quality of teachers' preparation has been neglected and damaged in the process. One of the main concerns in the past and one that will remain at the core of all activities at teacher training institutions is quality.

For all icemakers, the "quality" of teachers and teacher preparation programmes has been a worry. Empirical data indicates that educators play a critical role in providing high-quality education. Analogous research conducted in Ethiopia indicates that the effects of instructor factors are noticeable. The presence of professionally qualified and morally upright educators in the system, effective educational administration, and the provision of appropriate instructional supplies and equipment are all prerequisites for quality education, according to MOE (2002a). In this case, quality is determined by the educational process, output, and input. The significance of high-quality education in the country's development endeavours is supported by the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (MOE, 1994). The country's overall development policy, as well as ESDP III and IV, have prioritised challenges related to quality education. Consequently, funding teacher development initiatives is essential given the unparalleled impact that high-quality education has on the nation's overall economic growth.

The government also launched the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) in 2010 with the goal of enhancing the provision of high-quality education in five essential areas: curriculum, textbooks, and assessment; teacher development; school improvement; management and administration; and coordination, monitoring, and evaluation (World Bank, 2006). In order to support quality enhancements inside college teacher education institutions, the Educational Quality Improvement Programme (GEQUIP) has been put into place. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2004) did, however, also

note that Ethiopian colleges' teaching and learning procedures lacked quality. Similarly, national student evaluations at the grade 4 and 8 levels conducted in 2000 and 2004 revealed significant issues with quality, with a general deficiency in the acquisition of fundamental academic abilities. Quality training cannot be provided at Nekemte College of Teacher Education (Chala, 2004) because of the input and process aspects of quality education.

According to the Education Quality Improvement Programme, public trust in teacher training colleges has declined dramatically in recent years as a result of growing worries about the rapidly rising expenses, dubious learning outcomes, and the rapidly increasing number of students enrolled in higher education. The usefulness and efficacy of the Ethiopian QA system have thus been questioned.

The quality of instruction at a few chosen teacher training institutions in the Oromia regional state is critically analysed in this study. The quality of teacher training colleges in Oromia Regional State is ensured by an examination of various factors, including how much emphasis is placed on quality assurance, the extent to which quality aspects are implemented, the status of graduates in national competence assessments, the main obstacles to quality in teacher training institutions, and the effects of both internal and external quality assurance systems on education quality. The information gathered from this study will contribute to the establishment of an evidence base that can be used to assess the training schools' advantages and disadvantages as well as pinpoint areas that can benefit from modification or improvement. The following research questions serve as the study's foundation.

Research questions

Based on the above statement of the problems, the study focused on the following research questions:

1. *What systems do teacher preparation institutions employ to guarantee the calibre of instruction provided at their establishment?*
2. *How much do teacher training institutes apply quality factors to uphold the standard of instruction?*
3. *How competent are college teacher candidates currently, according to the Oromia Regional State Centre of Competence's assessment?*
4. *Do teacher education colleges differ from one another in terms of upholding the standard of instruction?*
5. *What are the main obstacles preventing teacher education colleges from providing a high-quality education?*

Objective of the study

This study looked into the state of high-quality instruction in Oromia's teacher training institutions. The goal was to encourage policymakers to create efficient institutional quality systems in order to preserve and improve the quality of education in teacher-training colleges.

Significance of the study

The lack of a thorough quality assurance system, the rising number of teacher graduates in the nation, and the relatively low amount of money that the Oromia regional state currently spends per student on educational costs have all contributed to a decline in public confidence in the quality of teacher preparation in recent years. This study makes it very evident what the state of quality education is, what standards are in place to ensure it, how important quality assurance is to enhancing it, how dedicated managers are to putting the system into place, and what the main obstacles are to quality education. Benefits of this study include the following. It may help concerned bodies identify the status of quality education in collages of teacher education instructions in Oromia regional state.

The findings might help motivate the teacher-training colleges to assess their achievement and work periodically and take remedial action for their deficiencies.

It may help concerned bodies gain some insight into the importance of providing quality education to improve the quality of education in their institutions.

Research Design and Methodology

The philosophical foundation of the study is the pragmatist paradigm. Mixed-methods researchers take into account a range of approaches for obtaining and analysing data (qualitative or quantitative), as opposed to focusing solely on one. Any research in which the investigator combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods to obtain and analyse data, integrate findings, and develop conclusions for a single study or programme of inquiry is considered a mixed-methodologies strategy, according to Tashakori and Creswell (2007).

In light of the objectives, research questions, and study conditions, the mixed-methods strategy seems to be the most suitable methodology for this investigation. We discovered that the most effective technique to answer the research issues we are now interested in is frequently through mixed-methods research. In order to get as near to the source of the issue as possible, our investigation of the state of high-quality education at West Wollega Teachers Training College used a variety of research methodologies and data gathering strategies. We employed a mixed-methods approach in this one study to collect and evaluate data, combine the results, and make inferences utilising both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Our decision to use descriptive survey research methodology was influenced by our comprehension of the problem and the kinds of data we expected to collect. Survey design provides a quantitative or numerical representation of the population's views, opinions, and trends by looking at a sample of the population.

Samples and Sampling Techniques

Four of the twelve Oromiya Colleges of Teacher Education—Jimma, Nekemte, Mettu, and Shambu—were specifically chosen based on their generation or year of founding, as well as how close they were to the researchers' working location. Because they are in the same streams and are implementing the same curriculum at the college, 10% of the instructors from each stream were chosen at random. Given that they are the sole managerial actors in the sampled

collage, the availability sampling approach also chose the deans or vice deans of the collage. Since they are the only ones with knowledge on how to use and obtain laboratory and reference materials, laboratory technicians and library heads are also specifically chosen.

Tools for data collection

Questionnaires

It is generally acknowledged that questionnaires are a useful tool for gathering data for survey studies (Wilson and McLean, 1994). This is because questionnaires can be administered remotely, provide organised, frequently numerical data, and are generally easy to analyse. In order to do this, the questionnaire's open-ended and closed-ended items were employed to elicit pertinent data from respondents. Eighty-four instructors from four teachers training colleges took part in answering a survey. 84 surveys were returned, or 100%.

Interviews

According to Henning (2004), the primary goal of an interview is to learn what people think, feel, do, and have to say. The interview examines the opinions, experiences, and feelings of the participants. These one-on-one, semi-structured interviews focused on the state of the art in Oromia's teacher training colleges, how they ensure the quality of their education, how they create, modify, and assess curricula, and the main obstacles they face in maintaining the quality of their education.

We read and reread the qualitative information gathered from respondents for this study, then we segmented the information into relevant analytical units. Numerous sources, including college records and dean interviews, provided the narrative data. The first themes that emerged from the transcripts of the interviews were enumerated as individual words, phrases, and sentences. We merged and arranged these topics, and we classified connected themes using either our own descriptive language or selected terms and important phrases from the book. The data's categories and those from earlier, relevant investigations were combined.

Following the emergence of major themes, themes recurrent in all sample colleges were chosen and categorised in accordance with the research questions; individual common themes from all sample teachers training colleges were then pooled together; and lastly, extensive super categories that incorporated multiple categories—from more specialised categories to more expansive ideas and concepts—were examined and interpreted through the use of quotes and people's thoughts and feelings summarised in a succinct manner.

Document Analysis

In addition to the data acquired from the respondents via the questionnaire and interview, this study includes document analysis on government policies, strategic plans, curriculum, research activities, COC results, laboratory records, and other materials.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire was edited, categorised, tabulated, and finally published using a range of statistical techniques. One-way ANOVA and descriptive statistics were both used to assess the quantitative information gleaned from the closed-ended survey. This allowed for the statistical comparison of the sampled colleges' educational quality. The qualitative

portion of the material was analysed using thematic analysis techniques, while the quantitative portion was collected through interviews and document analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to look into the state of quality education in teacher training colleges, the methods used by these institutions to maintain their level of instruction, the involvement of relevant parties, and the difficulties that these institutions encounter in doing so. The combined data from college deans, stream heads, teachers, laboratory technicians, and library heads is the main source of information presented here. The data was obtained from documents, key informant (KI) interviews, and a survey questionnaire.

The study's guiding questions were: What procedures do teacher training colleges follow to ensure the quality of education provided there? How much do quality aspects get implemented in teacher training colleges to maintain the quality of education? And what is the Oromia Regional State Centre of Competence's current assessment of college teacher trainees' competency status? Do teacher education colleges differ from one another in terms of upholding the standard of instruction? And what are the main obstacles preventing teacher education colleges from providing a high-quality education?

Infrastructure and Learning Resources

Infrastructure that is well-organized and provides ample learning resources (input) can enhance the quality of education in teacher-training colleges. A questionnaire with three agreement levels—Good = 2, Satisfactory = 1, and Poor = 0—was used to collect data from respondents. As seen in Figure 1, the institutions can provide high-quality teaching and learning because they have enough financial support (M = 1.4), physical facilities (M = 1.28), and resources. The more significant barriers to the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning at the college level are, however, the library resources (M = 0.96), the first aid clinic and counselling services with available rooms (M = 0.56), the computer facilities and internet access for students (M = 0.67), and the learning resources like course materials, current books, and references (M = 0.9). The researchers inspected the laboratory rooms, chemicals in the laboratory, computers used for lab equipment, libraries, and reference materials in the library with regard to infrastructure and learning resources such as the laboratory, library, and ICT services. Additionally, chiefs of the libraries and ICT departments as well as laboratory personnel were interviewed.

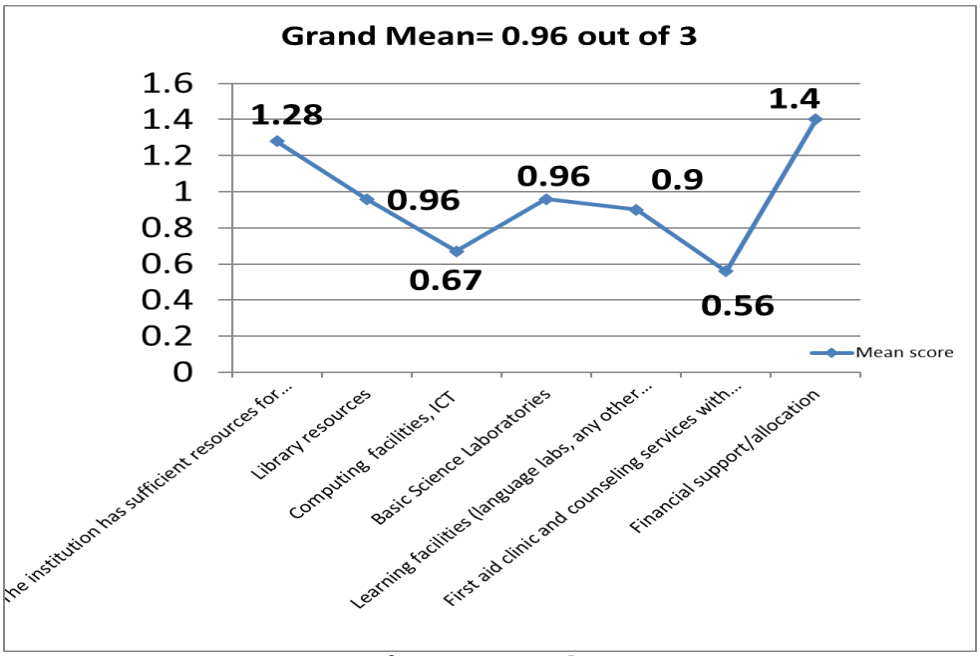

Figure 1 *Infrastructure and Learning Resources*

Four teachers training colleges had established biology, chemistry and physics laboratories; technicians were assigned to each laboratory; the laboratories were equipped with a biker, a digital PH meter, funnels, flasks, distillations, a science kit and a few chemicals. All of the laboratory technicians held a Bachelor of Science degree in the laboratory field from the university. Despite the fact that the college has laboratories, lab technicians, lab equipment, and some chemicals available, the laboratory technicians from all teachers training colleges claim the following issues:

i. Insufficient laboratory chemical supplies

ii. Lack of water in the lab classroom Lack of funds to purchase chemicals iv. Lack of a dark area to keep chemicals; chemicals spoil if they are kept in the wrong place

iii. Insufficient materials used in the lab

iv. Laboratory technicians receive meagre pay, which deters them from doing their jobs well.

The science laboratories which are established at college level were not working effectively; the trainees are not exercising laboratory activities during the laboratory sessions, one KI said that

> *We are wasting time because there is nothing to do in the laboratory classroom; students are not performing laboratory tasks; 40–50 students show up at once; the laboratory equipment is inadequate; and we are just sitting there. He went on to say that one of the most crucial pieces of lab equipment utilised by elementary school instructors for laboratory work is the "science kit." However, due to subpar procedures followed at the college level, graduates were unable to use science kits in elementary schools when they entered the teaching profession.*

The "three backbones" of a college education are teaching personnel, teaching facilities, and teaching equipment, in addition to librarians. Libraries at education colleges serve as an extension of the classroom. They serve as the

pupils' second class. College students can enhance and broaden their knowledge by utilising libraries, which house abundant resources, provide peaceful and orderly study spaces with a refined aesthetic, and foster a refined reading atmosphere. Information about the services offered to students, the availability of computer services and reference materials, and other relevant information was obtained from the heads of the ICT and libraries at each of the sample teacher training colleges. As per KIs' perspective, there existed an imbalance between the quantity of students enrolled in the college and the accessibility of reference resources. One reference material is shared by five or six students, who take notes in the library at a ratio of one to ten. Many reference materials have three, four, or five copies each. Students were not given the opportunity to read the reference materials on their own, and the library was lacking in computers, internet access, light (samples only available at Shambu Teachers Training College), and light.

Based on the data presented above, we can draw the following conclusions: the library resources (M = 0.96), the first aid clinic and counselling services (M = 0.56), the computer facilities and internet access for students (M = 0.67), and the learning resources, which include course materials, current books, and reference materials, were insufficient. Every sample teacher preparation college Laboratories for physics, chemistry, and biology were established. Each laboratory had a technician assigned to it; the lab was equipped with a few chemicals, a bike, a digital PH meter, funnels, flasks, distillations, and a scientific kit. The trainees were not practicing laboratory operations during the laboratory sessions, and the chemicals were insufficient, thus the established laboratories were not operating efficiently. In addition, there was a discrepancy between the college's student body size and the amount of reference resources available. Five or six pupils take notes in the library together while sharing a single reference book.

Curriculum Development, Revision, and Evaluation

The calibre of the academic programmes or courses of study that students take is one of the most important factors influencing the calibre of student learning. A new programme can begin anywhere (from the government, academic commission, departmental council, students, or stakeholders). All relevant parties are involved in the structured process of designing and redesigning the curriculum; a functional curriculum committee oversees the curriculum; regular evaluations of the curriculum are conducted; revisions to the curriculum occur over a reasonable period of time; and adequate quality assurance is provided (DAAD, 2010).

Colleges have the authority to create, modify, assess, and reorganize the curriculum to reflect the needs of the global community and to update the programme in accordance with local needs and cultural and historical requirements (such as the Gada system, Erecha, etc.). The overall mean score (M = 2.33) of the study shows that curricular activities are substantially less important than in primary schools. However, the teachers are authorized to translate the already-developed curriculum into the local tongue in order to execute it at the national level.

Regarding curriculum development, revision, and evaluation, an interview was conducted with college deans, stream heads, and curriculum specialists from the Oromia Education Bureau. As a result, they said, specialists from the MOE sent them to certain developed nations to choose the modality or share their experiences when the MOE wished to alter or amend the current curriculum. In light of this experience, the MOE convenes with the deans of all colleges and select subject matter experts from all teacher preparation institutions to

deliberate on the new curriculum, create a course catalogue (i.e., select course subjects), and establish the structure (modular approach). Based on the agreed course catalogue or the MOE directive, regional education bureaus decide which colleges to distribute the prepared course modules to for each subject matter, as well as pre-requisite courses, sequence semester distribution of the courses, course credit hours, duration of training, entry and graduation requirements, and course preparation. Finally, the Oromia Education Bureau invites curriculum specialists, college deans, and subject matter experts from teacher training colleges in the vicinity to validate the module. They believed that there were no established protocols or systems for developing, revising, and assessing curricula at the college level. The Teachers Training College did not have a committee for curriculum review and evaluation either. The modules were validated without the involvement of external stakeholders. The needs of society, instructors, and learners were not taken into consideration before the curriculum was developed. The curriculum was also not regularly evaluated, and revisions were made in response to MOE interests.

A KI from the college deans offered the following feedback on the concept:

> *In actuality, the MOE has created a variety of curricula for teachers training colleges in various modalities, with numerous course modules additionally created by subject matter experts. The majority of curricula and modules are either adapted from other countries' curricula or are copies of earlier content. College teachers assign assignments with little thought and little time allocated to their preparation of the modules. The calibre of the curriculum suffers as a result. At the national and institutional levels, there is no benchmark by which we can evaluate the calibre of the curriculum.*

The majority of the quantitative and qualitative evidence supported MOE's authority to create and amend the current curriculum; however, no official system was in place to assess the college-level working curriculum. The institutions are tasked with implementing the national curriculum that has already been prepared by translating it into the local tongue; the curricula do not align with the primary school curriculum. Its applicability to resolving social issues is similarly debatable.

The Teaching - Learning process

The rigour of an institution's teaching and learning processes impacts the quality of delivery in addition to ensuring programme development. Since it affects students' learning, this is regarded as an educational institution's cutting edge. Institutional agendas now prioritise improving teaching and learning as a result of academic audits. Additionally, they have aided in defining who is accountable for raising the standard of instruction at the individual, faculty, academic unit, and institutional levels.

According to the research findings, college instructors were very committed to putting the curriculum into practice by employing student-centered teaching methods (M = 2.47) and providing their students with relevant feedback on their learning through formative and summative assessments in the subjects they taught. Similar to this, student participation in practical experience (M = 2.31) and student counselling and support systems to maximise academic performance (M = 2.02) have greatly facilitated teaching and learning in the colleges and improved the quality of education offered.

According to the results of the interviews, the case study institutions' most popular methods for ensuring the quality of instruction and learning include student evaluations, departmental staff monitoring and assessments, active learning teaching strategies, student counselling, tutorial classes, and homework from the students. All case study institutions view active learning approaches as philosophy that must be used. Using various active

learning techniques is how they primarily achieve their goal of making teaching and learning more dynamic.

While all case study teachers undergoing college training adhere to the learner-centered approach, all instructors are encouraged to employ active learning techniques, even though the gaped-lecture method remains the most popular teaching style. One KI from Nekemte Teachers Training College gave the following explanation of the reasons: "Staff spoke of having no choice rather than using the gaped lecture method and lecture because the class size is large." The number of students is more than anticipated in certain instances. The majority of instruction involves lecture presentations that are aided by whiteboards and, less frequently, chalkboards." Every case study institution followed the ongoing assessment policy. For the purpose of establishing continuous assessment in their different institutions, they each developed their own protocols. The case study institutions employed three distinct forms of continuous evaluation: mid-examination (20%), continuous assessment (40%) and final examination (40%), all of which appeared to be fairly similar. Nonetheless, there was consistency in the degree to which each institution used continuous assessment. Another popular technique that all case study schools employ to raise the calibre of student learning is team-based learning. College deans and stream heads 1-4 believe that team-based student learning is essential to the teaching and learning process in teacher preparation programmes. The students were divided into groups of one to five, and they worked on homework and practiced class work in the classroom.

Most higher education systems around the world include quality assurance activities such as the creation of clear quality assurance policies, the construction of quality assurance structures (such as ad-hook committees or quality assurance offices), and the routine assessment of institutional performance. Both at the national and institutional levels, these transformations are happening. Internal quality assurance systems are implemented in the majority of Ethiopian higher education institutions, both public and private. Quality assessments, both internal and external, are underway. College deans believe that the institution lacks an ad-hook committee and internal quality assurance procedures that assess the calibre of the teaching and learning process in all teacher training colleges. HERQA is mandated to carry out external quality audits with other institutions of higher learning; nevertheless, HERQA did not undertake an evaluation of their establishment.

Research Development and Outreach Activities

The amount and calibre of research output are two factors used to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher preparation programmes in colleges. A questionnaire with five agreement levels—5 for always, 4 for most of the time, 3 for occasionally, 2 for not frequently, and 1 for never—was used to collect the data.

The one-way ANOVA study between the teacher education colleges' outreach and research development initiatives is displayed in Table 1. In terms of research practices and output, such as the availability of sufficient facilities, funding, and a clearly defined research agenda for academic staff, publishing research reports, community service projects, and chances for active participation in national and international research conferences, the results ($F > 0.02$, $df = 3$, and $P > 0.05$) showed that there were statistically no differences amongst colleges in teachers' education.

Table 1

One Way ANOVA of Research Development and publication of the colleges

S. No	Items		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P-Value
1	Availability of adequate facility, budget and co-coordinator to support research.	Between Groups Within Groups	1.674 103.31	.55 1.29	.43	.73
2	Availability of clearly set research agenda for academic staff as well as to students	Between Groups Within Groups	3.355 87.53	1.11 1.09	1.02	.38
3	The college produces/Publishes research report and research articles	Between Groups Within Groups	1.596 51.39	.53 .64	.82	.48
4	Research and community service activities are taken into consideration in appointment and promotion exercises	Between Groups Within Groups	2.31 75.24	.77 .941	.81	.48
5	The opportunity for active participation of staff in relevant professional conferences, seminars, workshops and other academic activities at national, regional and international levels	Between Groups Within Groups	2.05 67.75	.68 .84	.80	.49
6	National and international recognition of academic staff members (e.g., journal editorship, service as peer reviewers, consultancy, and expert group and committee membership	Between Groups Within Groups	2.57 61.66	.85 .77	1.11	.34
7	Integration of research outputs into teaching/learning	Between Groups Within Groups	.44 58.22	.14 .72	.202	.89
8	The college serves the community in social issues, gender disparities, effective teaching learning, inclusive education, educational leadership, research outputs and other issues	Between Groups Within Groups	3.94 233.86	1.31 2.92	.449	.718

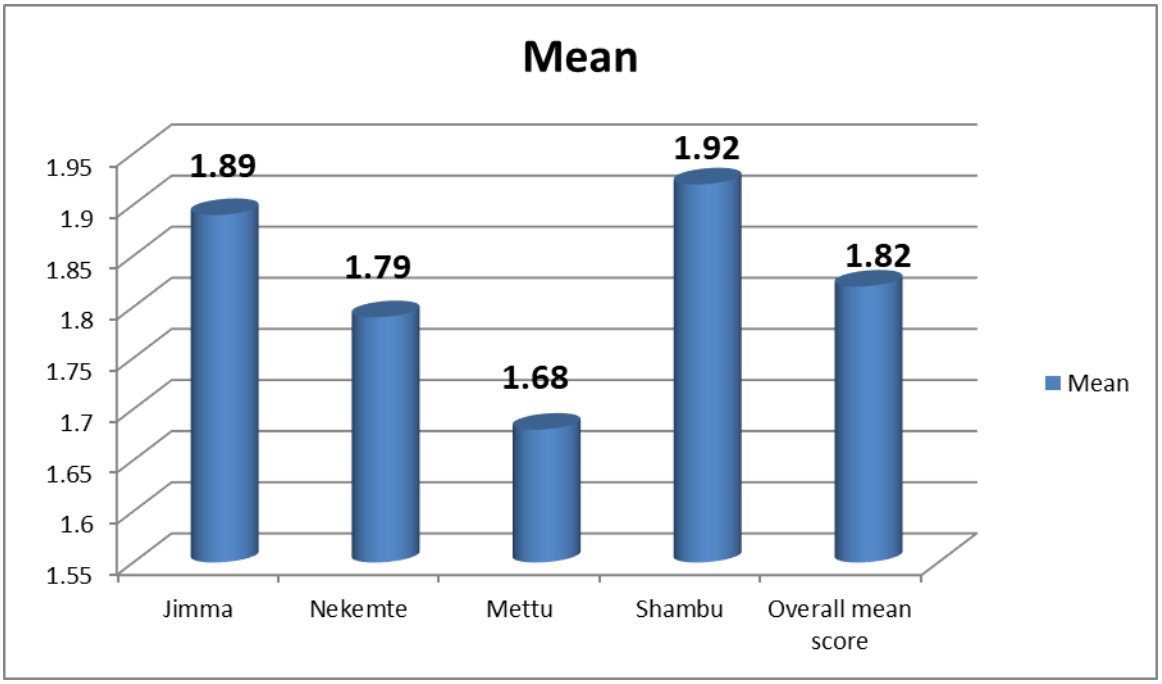

Figure 2 *Mean score of Research Development and publication of the colleges*

With mean scores of M = 1.89, M = 1.79, M = 1.68, and M = 1.92, respectively, Figure 2 illustrates the research involvement of Jimma College of Teacher Education, Nekemte College of Teacher Education, Mettu College of Teacher Education, and Shambu College of Teacher Education. As a result, Jimma and Shambu College of Education are presumably in a better position than Mettu and Nekemte College of Teacher Education. This suggests that there is a mean difference among the colleges. In a similar vein, the overall mean score (M = 1.82) indicates that the quality of research and outreach activities practiced by teachers across all colleges was extremely low.

Stream heads and college deans provided qualitative data in addition to quantitative data. Policies and procedures were in place at all four teacher training colleges to support staff members' publication and research endeavours. According to the policy, 75% of the teaching faculty at a teacher training college should be involved in teaching and learning activities, and 25% should be working on outreach and research projects. But throughout the previous three years, no research had been carried out and published by academic personnel; no research output had been released by any teacher training colleges; action research, on the other hand, had only been carried out by HDP candidates. College deans cited a number of factors, including the lack of a budget and an official promotion system at the university level. Overall, based on both qualitative and quantitative data, it appears that there were no notable variations in the amount of research produced by universities. As a result, college deans and the Oromia Regional Education Bureau ought to move to involve faculty members in outreach and research initiatives (Figure 3).

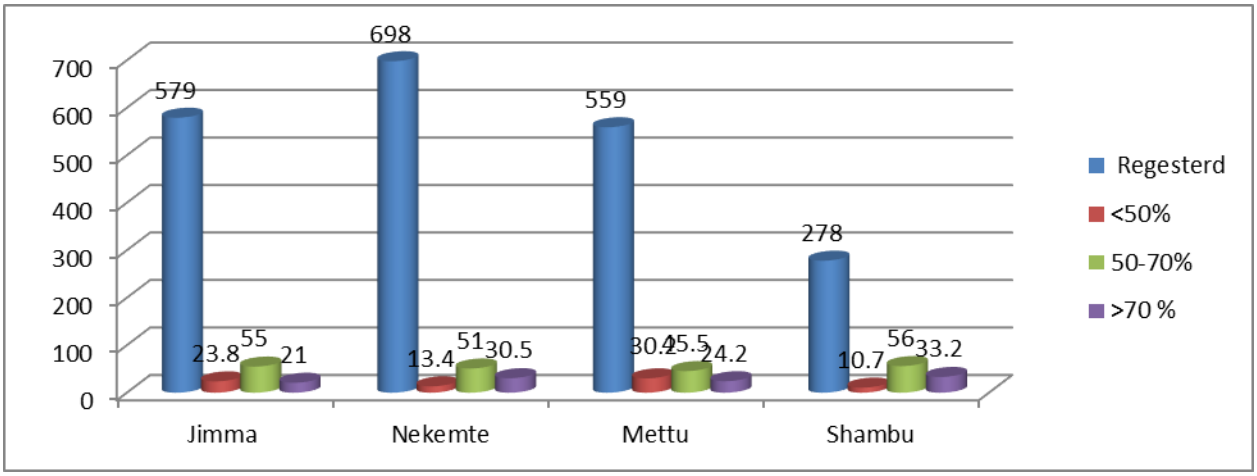

Figure 3 *The COC results of Oromia Teachers Training College (2007-2008 E.C)*

Employers profit from competency-based assessment since the results are used to determine hiring and promotion decisions. Competency-based assessment is the process of gathering information about an individual's knowledge, abilities, and attitude. It involves confirming that the employees possess the necessary skills and knowledge of safe work procedures (COC, 2011). Within the Ethiopian context, each regional education bureau administers the Teachers Training College COC test to its graduates through its occupational competency assessment and certification centre. After a competence-based assessment, the information or evidence acquired using assessment tools—which essentially consist of both knowledge and practical tests—is used to rate or react as either competent or not yet competent. A candidate must successfully complete all assignments and projects in the practical test and receive at least 50% of the possible points in the knowledge test in order to be rated as competent. Graduates who possess the abilities, know-how, and mindset necessary to perform their jobs well and comprehend why they operate are considered competent. For teacher preparation programmes, the COC assessment is significant since the program's efficacy is evaluated using the assessment's results. A graduate will only receive certification and be eligible for employment or other opportunities after passing the test. The Ethiopian Qualification Framework, which was created at the national level, serves as the foundation for the COC exam (OCOC, 2011).

According to graph III, the graduation rates from Jimma, Nekemte, Metu, and Shambu Teachers Training College were 3.8%, 3.4%, 30%, and 0.7%, respectively, with a score of less than 50%. 55%, 51%, 45%, and 56% of graduates received scores between 50 and 70%; additionally, graduates from Jimma, Nekemte, Metu, and Shambu Teachers Training College received scores of 21%, 30.5 %, 4.2%, 4.2%, and 3.2%, respectively, scored above 70%.

The head of the Oromia Center's competence assessment department conducted an interview with the researchers to discuss the process of competence evaluation, how certificates are issued, and how the department

integrates its graduates into the teaching profession. He explained that it should have both theoretical and practical components, with the theoretical component making up 80% and the practical component 20% of the policy established by the Ministry of Education and the Reserve Bank of England. Those who passed the COC with flying colors will go into teaching and work as primary school teachers. Those who failed the exam will have the opportunity to retake it up to three times and won't be able to work as primary school teachers until they pass it. However, the COC test provided to teacher training college graduates concentrated on the theoretical and knowledge components; the graduates were not given the COC on the practical parts (per the police); those who did not pass the COC were also hired as primary school teachers. The respondents said that the lack of instructors in primary schools and the notion that graduates could make up for their knowledge gaps by engaging in continuous professional development (CPD) in schools were the main reasons why those who failed the COC were hired as teachers.

Approximately 77%, 81%, 59.2%, and 49.2% of graduates from Jimma, Nekemte, Shambu, and Metu teachers training colleges, respectively, passed the COC, according to the data. However, 3.8%, 3.4%, 0.7%, and 30% did not receive a passing score on the COC, meaning they received a score below 50%. Despite the fact that COC for teacher training college graduates began in 2004 E.C., the practical part is disregarded. Those who did not pass COC are also working as teachers. As a result, there is a discrepancy between the policy's requirements and their actual application.

Major challenges that affects Quality of Education

Undoubtedly, there exist variables that impact the calibre of schooling. The components could originate from a variety of variables, such as those related to leaders, students, teachers, intuition, etc. In light of this, instructors were asked to rate their degree of familiarity with key factors influencing college education quality using closed-ended questions. Very high = 5, high = 4, medium = 3, low = 2, and very low = 1 were the agreement levels.

The data presented in Figure 4 indicates that the least factors influencing the quality of schooling are intuitional support and commitment (M = 2.98). Government involvement in the internal affairs of educational institutions (M = 3.59), inadequate compensation for faculty members' additional teaching responsibilities (M = 3.8), programme or curriculum quality modality (leaner, cluster, focus, generalist) (M = 3.34), academic community commitment to quality (M = 3.64), lack of an internal quality assurance system (M = 3.5), students' commitment to learning (M = 45), and lack of research experience (M = 04).

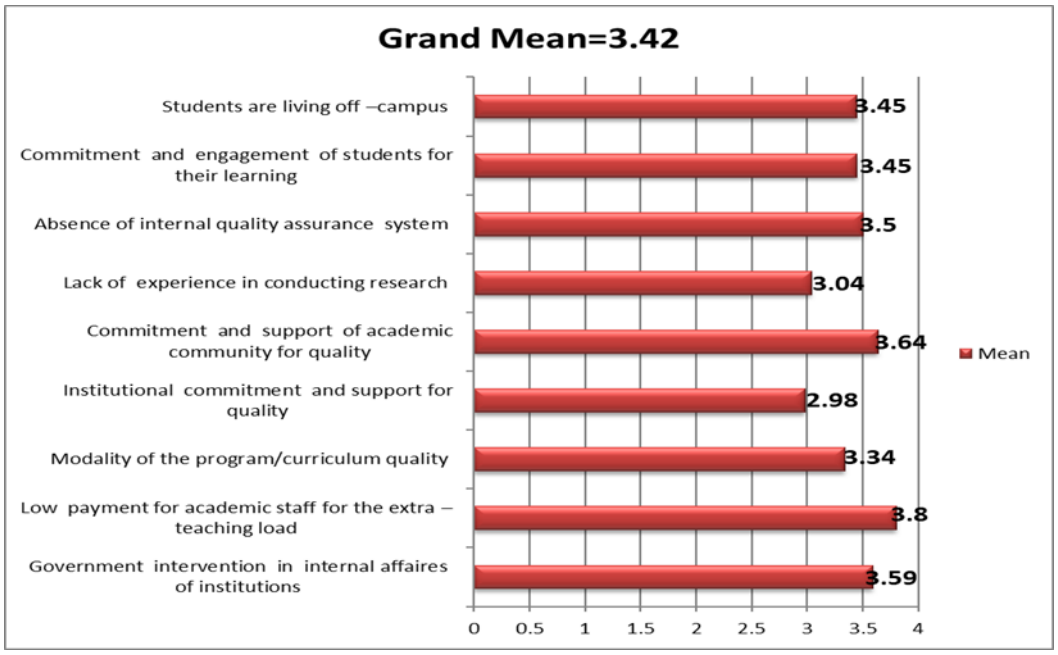

Figure 4 *Factors that challenges quality Education*

The interviewees from the four teacher preparation colleges emphasised that the library does not have any reference materials. Instructor commitment: most of the time, they assess themselves against the rewards offered to professors at universities. Students' readiness to read and perform a lot—they require quick success and knowledge of the students' backgrounds. Generally speaking, the following problems are the main causes of low educational quality in case study institutions:

Poor Facilities and Equipment

This demonstrates how inadequate and bad the internet, libraries, and labs are. Ensuring that all students in education colleges receive high-quality education is contingent upon the supply of appropriate educational facilities and equipment. Nonetheless, a significant obstacle to ensuring academic quality assurance at the college of education has been the inadequate condition of the building and its equipment.

Examination Malpractice

Examinee misconduct has taken many different shapes and sizes. Typical instances include posing as someone else, carrying prepared notes and textbooks into the testing room, bringing information about clothes and cash, buying off invigilators and supervisors, and so on.

Quality of Students

The calibre of pupils entering the system these days is poor. This is due to the fact that many of them passed their exams by mainly depending on examination misconduct, they received automatic promotions, and their primary and secondary education was inadequate. Students do not have a work ethic. It becomes more challenging to encourage

pupils to learn, explore, conduct research, and work independently. In the end, it is no longer guaranteed that pupils will be of a high calibre.

Commitment of academic staff

An additional factor in high-quality education is the dedication of the academic personnel. It is crucial that they support and counsel the students, stay current on their subject matter, employ a range of teaching strategies, include students in teaching and learning activities, and promote autonomous work. The majority of the instructors, however, were demoralised because they were not eligible for scholarship beyond master's level, they lacked the necessary funding for research, and they were not promoted from assistant professor to associate professor (lack of scholarship).

The main factors influencing the quality of teachers training colleges were generally inadequate facilities and equipment, unethical examination practices, student quality, dedication of faculty, inadequate compensation for faculty members' additional teaching responsibilities, support from the academic community for quality, government involvement in institutional internal affairs, and lack of an internal quality assurance system. As a result, the problem's level of severity differs across institutions. The data suggests that, despite the fact that the severity of the issue is the same in all four case study institutions, the following four factors are most likely to have an impact on the quality of education: inadequate facilities and equipment; the calibre of the student body; inadequate compensation for academic staff due to their additional teaching responsibilities; and the dedication and support of the academic community.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the most important issues facing Ethiopia's higher education expansion is the dichotomy of quantity vs quality. The Ethiopian government also acknowledges that the expansion of higher-level public and private education is inversely proportionate to the growth in educational quality. Several initiatives from the Netherlands are assisting Ethiopia's higher education sector to grow, including the Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP). Its goal is to keep the college's teacher preparation programme at a high standard throughout the four years that it runs from 2005 to 2008. Graduates with training that meets the demands of their chosen occupations, the expectations of the workplace, and national priorities are produced via high-quality and pertinent education. A national agency for higher education relevance and quality was established concurrently with the EQUIP initiative, and its primary function is to conduct external audits of public higher education institutions. According to the study's research findings, all of the case study institutions have embraced professional and management approaches, have clear missions, ambitions, and goals, and have generally sufficient financial resources to raise the standard of instruction at the colleges. The leadership and staff's dedication to enhancing student learning, however, fell short of expectations. This has an adverse effect on the standard of instruction provided to aspiring teachers in college. Deans of colleges, lab

technicians, ICT coordinators, and heads of libraries reported that in every sample teacher preparation college Laboratories for physics, chemistry, and biology were set up, and each lab was given a technician. The trainees were not practicing laboratory operations during the laboratory sessions, and the chemicals were insufficient, thus the established laboratories were not operating efficiently. In addition, there was a discrepancy between the college's student body size and the amount of reference resources available.

All case studies at TTC included helpful policies and procedures for teaching and learning delivery, as attested to by the documents and interview data from each case study institution. This facet of college life is heavily emphasised by the colleges under study. In the case study institutions, the most popular methods for ensuring the quality of teaching and learning are student evaluations, departmental staff monitoring and assessments, active learning approaches, student advice, tutorial classes, and student assignments. The case study institutions view active learning teaching methodologies as obligatory. Every case study institution followed the ongoing assessment policy. For the purpose of establishing continuous assessment in their different institutions, they each developed their own protocols. The case study institutions appeared to use a very similar kind of continuous evaluation: final examination 40%, continuous assessment 40%, and mid-examination 20%. But there is no difference amongst institutions in terms of how much continuous assessment is used. The curriculum has not been reviewed on a regular basis; instead, it has been reviewed and altered in accordance with the MOE's priorities, according to curriculum specialists from the Oromia Education Bureau, college deans, and stream heads. The only entity tasked with starting the process of creating a new curriculum and updating the one that already existed was the MOE. The TTC's mandate has been to create modules using the curriculum framework established by MOE and to take part in conferences for curriculum development and revision when asked by MOE. The Teachers Training College and the Oromia Education Bureau collaborate to validate the training modules. Over the previous three years, the research carried out and published by academic personnel in all teacher training colleges was insufficient. The lack of funding and an official framework for academic advancement at the college level was one of the arguments put forth by college deans. The following were the main factors that had a significant impact on the quality of education in teacher training colleges: inadequate facilities and equipment; dishonest examination practices; the calibre of students; the dedication of academic staff; the low compensation for the additional teaching load that academic staff received; the support and dedication of the academic community for quality; government intervention in institutional internal affairs; and the lack of an internal quality assurance system.

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DECLARATION

The authors declare that there is no competing interest regarding the research.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The necessary data are available within the article materials.

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