

Novice Teachers' Career Decision in Ethiopia: Implications for Teachers' Professional Identity[♦]

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Abstract: *The main objective this study was to explore career decision of Ethiopian novice teachers regarding retention and attrition and their professional identity in their early years of services. To arrive at the intended purpose, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used, and a total of 232 novice teachers and eight directors from four regions, namely: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR were involved in the study. Data were generated through survey questionnaire and interview. The results of the study revealed that there was a strong association between novice teachers' professional identity and assurance of the teaching job. Teachers were not passionate about the profession, which is strongly related to their professional identity. That is, most of the teachers joined the profession as they had no other choices. The community also gave the lowest importance and value to the teaching profession (there was strong negative relationship between teachers' professional identity and people's recommendation of teaching as a field of study. As a result, most of the teachers did not plan to upgrade themselves in the teaching profession (they continued their further education in other fields of studies). Even they would not choose the profession again if they were given a chance to choose (their professional identity has significantly associated with their professional choice). Four variables, especially, were found to be the predictor variables for teachers' career decision. These were region, gender and school location. Based on the results, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made.*

Keywords: attrition, career decision, retention and teacher professional identity.

[♦] All of the authors have an equal contribution.

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1) Background of the Study

Teacher education programs in Ethiopia took shape with the expansion of modern education. During the expansion of Western-type education in the country, there was serious shortage of teachers in Ethiopian schools, which in turn necessitated for employment of expatriates. To address the shortage of local teachers, there was a need to train Ethiopians. Thus, the first teacher training program was launched in Minilik II Secondary School. Later, certificate programs were opened in Harar, Dabirberhan, Addis Ababa and Jimma, and diploma level teacher training also started in Kotebe College of Teacher Education (now Kotebe Metropolitan University), Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy (now Bahir Dar University), Alemeya College of Agriculture (now Haremaya University) (Tsfaye, 2008).

During inception, content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge was given due attention. In line with this, Tsfaye (2008) mentioned that at the beginning of teacher education in Ethiopia, content and pedagogy courses were offered simultaneously. The 1994 Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (TGE, 1994) also stipulated, "Teacher education and training components will emphasize basic knowledge professional code of ethics, methodology and practical trainings," (TGE, 1994, p. 20). After the debut of the 1994's education policy, Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) has been launched and implemented uniformly in the country. In the program, pedagogical content knowledge has been given due attention. "TESO which came into existence as a reform program initiated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) emphasizes among other things the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of teachers and teachers' professional development," Solomon (2008, p. 4). Conversely, the implementation of TESO was suffered. There were gaps between the rhetoric of policies of the program and its practices (Kedir, 2006; Dahlstrom and Brook, 2006; Jeylan, 2006). Followed by, the new mode of teacher education entitled "Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching" (PGDT) was developed at a national level in 2008 for secondary school teachers (Berhanu, 2014).

The training of teachers for primary schools with certificate holders for grades 1-4 and diploma holder teachers for grades 5-8 was practiced till 2008. However, in 2002 E.C. (2009/10) a new directive was introduced that says a teacher has to get a diploma from Teacher Training Colleges (CTEs) to be qualified to teach in the first cycle of primary (1-4). Teachers with certificates from Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) were considered qualified until 2001 E.C. (2008/09) (MoE, 2015). In doing so, together with previously opened teacher training institutes (TTIs), several regional teacher training colleges (TTCs)/colleges of teacher education (CTE) have been opened. Nowadays, all of the TTIs are developed into TTCs and their number is increased into 35. That is, as of 2006 E.C (2013/14), there were 35 colleges of teacher education (CTE) in the country in all the regions of which 12 are in Oromiya, 10 in Amhara, 4 in SNNP, 2 in Tigray and the rest are in Afar, Harari, Somali, Gambella, Benshangul and Addis Ababa regions (MoE, 2015).

Analysis of literature shows how teachers training and quality evaluation is more focused on “how to teach” rather than “what is a teacher” “how to become a teacher” (Tateo, 2012). Less attention is given for teachers’ professional identity in the training of teachers. That is, individuals’ beliefs and experiences as well as their perceptions of what is expected in the profession, which influence teachers’ teaching practices, are overlooked. Existing studies across countries have considered teachers’ professional identity as a key factor in teachers’ motivation, effectiveness and retention. In other words, the way teachers perceive themselves influences their choice of action and judgment. Thus, understanding teachers’ professional identity is important for gaining insight into the essential aspects of teachers’ professional lives, such as their career decision making, motivation, job satisfaction, emotion, and commitment (Hong, 2010).

Furthermore, research has shown that novice teachers’ choice to remain in the profession during their early teaching careers is informed by their performance in the classroom (Sherman, 2016). Moreover, teachers’ career choices reflect personal decisions about the relative benefits of teaching versus working in other occupations. In general, teachers’ individual career choices in the aggregate have implications for teacher supply and educational policy (Anderson & Carroll, 2008).

According to Ghuangpeng (2011), teachers' career decision-making can be based upon two major theoretical perspectives of career choice and development: psychological and sociological. That is, psychological approaches seek to describe or explain the way individuals make career decisions based on individual factors which include personality, interests, abilities and job satisfaction while sociological approaches seek to develop a career decision-making process that allows individuals to consider the relevance of a variety of factors prior to their career decision-making. There is evidence to suggest that teachers' career decisions (with outcomes of attrition or retention) are potentially influenced by how teachers are prepared and by their early experiences in the classroom (Fontaine et al, 2012). This study, thus, explores career decision of Ethiopian novice teachers regarding retention and attrition and their professional identity in their early years of services. That is, the study examined why and how Ethiopian novice teachers choose the teaching profession, and what their professional identity like after they join the teaching profession.

2) Statement of the Problem

The experiences and ideas of educators about their career, working conditions, prestige and achievements have a great impact on their actions, as well as on the quality and effectiveness of their teaching (Grion & Varisco, 2007). At the same time, the subjective notions of the personality are very difficult to change, being strongly linked to the self (Korthagen, 2004). Therefore, professional identity is a core factor of the development of an effective teacher (Alsup, 2006; Ross & Bruce, 2007). According to Hong's study on pre-service and beginning (novice) teachers' professional identity, pre-service teachers showed 'vague concerns' for their profession while in-service teachers have much more concrete and practical concerns such as class control, conveying content knowledge, and relations with parents, colleagues, and administrators (Hong, 2010).

Many researchers have emphasized the reality shock and conflicting emotions new teachers experience as they take on their roles as school teachers. New graduates of formal teacher preparation programs frequently encounter difficulties when they experience the practical realities of schools. They often feel pressured to conform to the

specific requirements of a school culture. This pressure sometimes isolates the novice teachers from the broader landscape of the school social setting, which in turn prevents them from perhaps developing a 'positive' professional teacher identity (Botha & Onwu, 2013). According to Day (2008) and Parkison (2008), the conflicts and dilemmas arise as a result of mismatch between personal beliefs, idealistic expectations and the reality on ground. There is a discrepancy between what they want from the job and what they get (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). The conflict between an ideal and the reality novice teachers experience when starting their first job can trigger negative emotions in the transition from student to teacher.

Teachers' development of professional identities can in turn contribute to their professional decisions. Researches showed that novice teachers' choice to remain in the profession during their early teaching careers is informed by their performance in the classroom (Cochran-Smith et al, 2012). In line with this, Sherman (2016) mentioned that novice teacher may choose to persist in the profession, migrate to another school environment, or leave the profession altogether depending on their perception of their performance, as well as the perceptions of their school administrators, colleagues, students and parents.

In fact, teachers' career decisions (the choices that teachers make when selecting their teaching career) can be influenced by different factors. For example, individual factors such as personality, interests, abilities and job satisfaction affect the way individuals behave, think and respond to making career choices. Demographic and environmental factors also influence teachers' career interest and choice. That is, demographic factors of teachers like gender, ethnicity the socioeconomic status of the family, and environmental factors, such as community values and practices, work environment, family connections, the labor market structure and the economic have influence in teachers' career decision (Ghuangpeng, 2011).

As has been said, scholars categorized the aforementioned factors into psychological and sociological theoretical perspectives. The psychological approaches to career decision-making propose that human behavior depends upon both personality and the

environment in which the persons live and the way they express themselves in order to assist individuals to find congruence between themselves and the nature of a job (Holland 1992). Holland further concludes that individuals are likely to feel more satisfied with their career when they choose work environments that match their personalities and interests, and the more incongruence between their work environment and their personalities and interests, the less career satisfaction is likely. Sociological approaches to career decision-making, on the other hand, take social learning theory as the most influential theory for the development of a variety of sociological approaches to career decision-making. That is, social learning theory forms theoretical foundations for three major theories of career decision-making: self-efficacy, social learning theory of career decision-making, and the social cognitive career (Ghuangpeng, 2011). It is important to note that even though the preceding theoretical approaches have developed from different theoretical bases, they are often combined or used in conjunction with other theories in order to understand how individuals make career decisions.

Though international studies researched on teachers' professional identity and career decisions of teachers, novice teachers' career interest and choice have not yet been well studied in Ethiopia. This may be due to the fact that the issue has been overlooked or researchers did not seem to consider teachers' career choice as priority. The researchers believe that the problem is felt by policy makers, curriculum developers, researchers and front line workers though it is hardly ever researched. From experience, specifically, the researchers understood that there are problems of novice teachers' professional identity formation and career choice which can be the result of primary school teachers' attrition. This has become the critical problem facing the country's primary school teaching-learning. The present study, therefore, explores career decision of Ethiopian novice teachers regarding retention and attrition and their professional identity in their early years of services.

3) Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to explore career decision of Ethiopian novice teachers regarding retention and attrition and their professional identity in their early years of services.

The study specifically attempted to answer the following basic research questions:

- 1) To what extent is novice teachers' professional identity associated with their assurance of the teaching job?
- 2) How are career decision and teacher professional identity linked?
- 3) What are the predicting factors for novice teachers' career decision in Ethiopia?
- 4) What are the major reasons for joining the teaching profession?
- 5) What are the major reasons for leaving the teaching profession?

4) Significance of the study

It is expected that this piece of work can serve as a bridge between the country's teacher education programs in retrospect and future developments by generating knowledge about career decision of Ethiopian teachers and their professional identity. It also provides policy options for recruitment and training of primary school teachers in Ethiopia. From such a condition, teacher trainers and institutes could be aware of factors that influence the formation of professional identity of novice teachers in their early career and take necessary measures. Teachers could also develop their positive sociological and psychological beliefs in schools and commit to teaching. Most important, the findings of the study can guide further research and curriculum development work in the area of teacher education and teacher professional development.

5) Review of Related Literature

This section surveys relevant literature works from the major subject fields underlying the study to justify its various conceptual foundations. It presents a brief description of teaching profession, teachers' professional identity and teachers' career decision, and attrition and retention of teachers. Then, conceptual model of the study is spelt out based on the literature works reviewed.

5.1 Teaching as a Profession

The teacher is the single most significant and priceless element in the teaching-learning process. The concept of teaching is mostly unthinkable without the teacher. She/he plays a great role in the education world. While many things can be done to create a context for a good teaching, it is the teacher who ultimately determines the success of a program. To strengthen this thought, Richards (n.d.) stated that a good teacher can often compensate for deficiencies in the curriculum, the materials or the resources he/she makes use of their teaching. The teacher is also considered to be an autonomous. That is, teaching profession recognizes the teacher's prior knowledge as well as his/her potential to know not only how to teach but also know how to act autonomously within the academic and administrative constraints imposed by institutions, curricula, and textbooks. In such conditions, the teacher can promote the ability of how to analyze and evaluate his/her own teaching acts, how to initiate change in their classroom, and how to monitor the effects of such changes (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Moreover, the act of teaching implies the transmission and translation of knowledge from one to the other. To teach one must know. Educational scholars and teacher educators acknowledge that subject matter and pedagogical knowledge are crucial to good teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge is useful to translate the subject matter in to classroom teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge embodies the working knowledge teachers use to plan, organize and guide their teaching (Schempp and Manross, 1998). In fact, literature works on teachers' profession nowadays consider the

teacher as classroom manager and facilitator of learning (Ellerani and Gentile, 2013). It is to say teaching is seen as much more than the transmission of knowledge. One consequence was that subject matter knowledge became a neglected issue in research on teacher knowledge. A renewed research interest in subject matter knowledge, especially its transformation into teachable knowledge, was inspired by the work of Shulman (1986).

It is generally agreed that teachers require a deep and full understanding of the subject area (Calderhead, 1996). In line with this, Hashwech (1987) found that teachers with subject matter knowledge better understand students' preconception of the material, describe a range of demonstrations, analogies, and models to accommodate students' preconceptions and difficulties. Hashweh's (1987) work illuminated connection between teacher subject expertise and teaching. Having experts in a subject body of knowledge does not make one an expert teacher, but allow one to be a better teacher.

In this era of technology, teacher educators are beginning to stress the need for Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) development in teacher preparation programs. Thompson (2005) indicated that TPACK will have a profound impact on pre-service teacher education. Harris et al (2009) also asserted that using TPACK as a framework for measuring teaching knowledge could potentially have an impact on the type of training and professional development experiences that are designed for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Hence, there is a continual need to rethink the preparation practices in the teacher education field and propose new strategies that better prepare teachers to effectively integrate technology into their teaching.

In general, professional teachers are expected to complete a teacher education/ training program and certify in specialized knowledge. And they should have the necessary knowledge and skills to be independent in their work and decision-making based on knowledge and predict the possible consequences, evaluate their own activity (Torres, in Živković, 2013). They are also expected to be committed on duty. That is, teachers need to have the essential competences they require in order to be effective in the

classroom is one of the keys to raising levels of pupil attainment. Providing new teachers with initial teacher education of the highest quality, and encouraging serving teachers to continue developing and extending their competences throughout their careers, are vital in a fast-changing world.

5.2 Teachers' Professional Identity

According to Epstein (1978) as cited in Komba, Anangisye & Katabaro (2013), identity is essentially a concept of synthesis, integration and action that represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his status and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self. It is a result of practice, reflection on that practice, and continuous professional development. In particular, identity has five dimensions (Wenger as cited in Komba, Anangisye, & Katabaro, 2013): (i) identity as negotiated experiences; (ii) identity as community membership; (iii) identity as learning course; (iv) identity as nexus of multi-membership; and (v) identity as a relation between the local and the global.

Along this line, Mead and Erikson in as cited in Žogla & Rutka (2011) described self identity as a developing concept which changes over time being nurtured by the interactions one experiences throughout life. It is continuously reconstructed through social interactions and intra- and inter-personal negotiations, as the self interprets who he/she is and how others identify him/her in any given context. Part of the self-identity is the professional identity, which refers to the question: "Who am I, or what am I as a professional person?"

Žogla & Rutka (2011) further stated that professional identity determines the paths teachers choose for their professional development (increasing teachers' awareness of teaching profession, how it works and how they can improve their work, and the professionalization of teaching and its impacts on their attitudes towards educational changes and reforms.

In the same vein, Smit, Fritz, and Mabalane (2010) noted that values, beliefs and norms of school cultures influence teachers' professional identity. Žogla & Rutka (2011) also stated that the formation of teachers' professional identity is influenced the following four factors. These are teaching context (the culture of the professional community- perceptions, norms, expectations, and values), previous experiences as a teacher (which impact the teacher's sense of professional efficacy), personal biography (including previous encounters as a student) and time context (of external or internal upheavals at different times. Moreover, teaching context, teaching experience, and biography of the teacher influenced teachers' professional identity (Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt, 2000).

From these reviews, one can learn that there are interconnection among teacher professional identity (involving specialized knowledge, moral integrity, and expertise in teaching) professional standards (e.g. norms and values), commitment to the standards (i.e. teacher professionalism), and ability to develop within the profession (i.e. teacher professional development- which is continuous professional growth shaping and enriched professional teacher identity). It can also be said that professional identity is a key driver which could affect how teachers teach, how they develop professionally and how they approach educational changes (Noi, Kwok and Goh, 2016).

5.3 Teachers' Career Decision

Individuals make career decisions based on their internal (individual) and environmental (external) factors. In relation to this, **Watters and Diezmann** (2015) mentioned that the reasons for any career decisions include both internal and external factors. The internal factors include a range of issues from job interest, satisfaction, and life style (Holmes & Cartwright, as cited in Watters and Diezmann, 2015; Hof, Struple, and Wolte, 2011). They address the individuals' connection and attraction to a profession (Tsakissiris, 2015). Hogg et al. as cited in Watters & Diezmann (2012) highlighted two theoretical perspectives on identity theory. One of the perspectives was that a person's social behavior emerges through reciprocal relations between self and society. The other alternative perspective of identity draws on social identity theory which argues that people have a repertoire of discrete group memberships (e.g. nationality, political affiliation, religion, teacher, and parent) that vary in relative overall importance in their self-concept. Social identity theory, similarly, highlights that professional identity draws upon the primary motivation behind identifying with a group to enhance one's pride and self-esteem. Thus, the role identity of being a teacher might emerge through the socialization and cultural experiences of the school staffroom or classroom.

According to CfBT Education Trust (2008), teachers join the teaching profession because many had had good experiences when at school, and had seen their own teachers as good role model, or had a teacher in the family or were otherwise interested in teaching, interest and commitment to the profession. In agreement with this, Watters and Diezmann (2015) asserted that personal beliefs about teaching ability, issues of job security, time for family and social utility values were influential motives for teachers for choosing and staying in the teaching profession. Conversely, teachers join the profession as a result of their negative experience; they become teachers due to lack of a better opportunity. Some persons join the profession since there is no other option of employment with their credentials, the only route for higher education with their low GPA (CfBT Education Trust, 2008). Generally, teachers' career decision can be varied from person to person. As has been mentioned, individuals develop their career interest

through the interaction of their learning experiences, self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Ghuangpeng, 2011) or through both positive and negative experiences they faced that influence their career interests and choices.

5.4 Attrition and Retention of Teachers

Many reasons have been evoked for teacher attrition (teachers leaving the teaching profession). Kane, Duquette & Savoie-Zajc (2012), for example, stated the following causes for teacher attrition: (a) family reasons (raising one's own children); (b) personal (health, returning to school); (c) professional (promotion, career move, opportunities for professional development); or (d) job dissatisfaction (low salary, lack of administrative support, school facilities, experience with students and colleagues). Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015) also identified that inadequate pay, lack of support, excessive workloads, lack of professional development opportunities, the need for change, and disruptive student behavior are among the reasons for teachers to change their teaching profession. Furthermore, many teachers leave the teaching profession due to weak incentives (CfBT Education Trust, 2008). Incentives for schools and teachers in the public education system to perform well are frequently weak due to ineffective incentives and sanctions. Early retirement or resignation (voluntary) or resulting from age retirement, retrenchment, or death (involuntary) can also be the possible causes for teacher attrition (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015).

Studies on Ethiopian teacher attrition reveal that teachers leave their profession because they were not respected and valued (Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) International (n. d.). Workneh and Tasswesw (2013) also identified that primary and secondary school teachers in Ethiopia change their career because of inadequate salary, parents' negative attitudes, and excessive work overload.

Parallel to the research on teacher attrition, studies concerned with the identification of factors that contribute for teacher retention (factors that have an influence on teachers' decisions to stay in teaching). As to Fontaine et al (2012), retention factors can be linked to internal and external conditions. Internal conditions include factors related to

teachers' personal characteristics, such as number of years before retirement, age when entering the teaching profession, family status, education background, work experience inside and outside the education system, perceived self-efficacy and motivation to teach. External factors, on the other hand, include: (a) work environment and access to induction programs; (b) benefitting from mentoring and coaching; (c) obtaining support of administration; (d) opportunities for promotion and personal development; (e) job status (part-time vs. full-time) and associated feelings of safety and security; (f) school size; and availability of teaching resources.

According to Howes & Goodman-Delahunty (2015), teachers stay in the teaching profession for three reasons: personal fulfillment, practical considerations and barriers to change. Personal fulfillment refers to love for the teaching, the teaching career being stimulating, being personally suited to the teaching role, and enjoyment of the teaching profession and contributions to young peoples life. Practical considerations include for staying in teaching careers include financial needs, job security, having employment and steady income, having time for holidays and family life. The third factor barriers to change include lack of alternatives or a dearth of perceived alternatives and the path of least resistance. In Ethiopian case, Workneh and Tassew (2013) found the reasons why teachers decided to stay in the teaching profession. Their findings suggested that teachers want to stay in the profession because they sow knowledge in the human brain, produce doctors and professors and continue to learn and improve their ability.

5.5 Conceptual Model of the Study

The following conceptual framework was used in the study as a model which has been generated from literature sources. The model represents a number of variables which were investigated in the study. These variables are interrelated to each other as demonstrated by arrows in the model (Fig. 1).

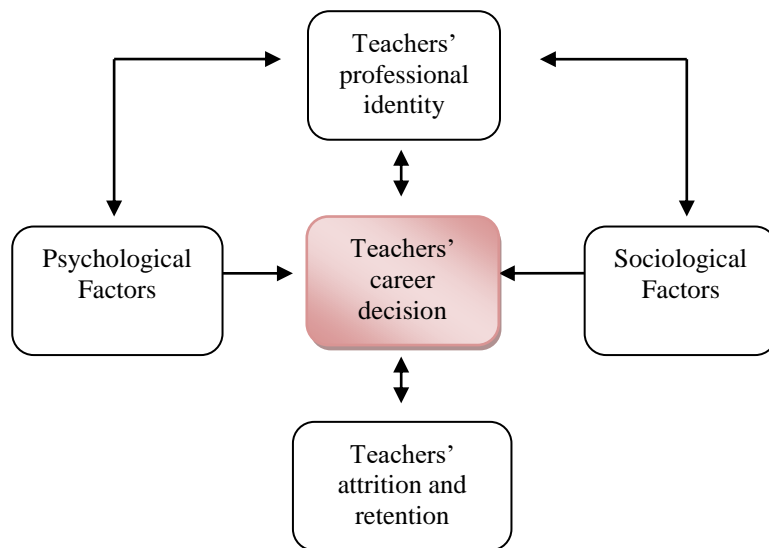


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Teachers' development of professional identities can contribute to their professional decisions. It is assumed that teachers' perceptions of their professional identities have an influence on their sense of self-determination, including their sense of autonomy, competency and relatedness. In line with this, Žogla & Rutka (2011) claim that professional identity determines the paths teachers choose for their professional development and it impacts their attitudes towards educational changes and reforms. Teachers' interest and choice of their teaching career can also in turn contribute to teachers' professional identity development.

As was said, teachers' career choice and development are made based on psychological and sociological variables. They are also related to teachers' professional identity formation. The study, therefore, attempted to assess psychological factors, such as novice teachers' personality (self-efficacy), interests, abilities and job satisfaction, and their sociological factors include gender, ethnicity, and the socioeconomic background, school environment, community values and practices, family connections, the labor market, career structure and the economic environment. The study, moreover,

addressed issues associated with teachers' attrition and retention in connection with teachers' professional development and career decision-making.

6) Research Methods

5.1 Design

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. In the use of the quantitative approach a descriptive design, particularly the survey method, was used to collect data on identity and career choice of novice teachers. Along with the survey method the embedded qualitative design was used to collect data and to triangulate the data obtained.

5.2 Participants

The participants of the study were novice teachers (teachers with three and below years of experience) from four regions, namely Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR. A total of 232 novice teachers were involved in the study. From each region, both private and government schools were included, the study also included participants from various ethnic groups including the Amhara, Gurage, Hadya, Kambata, Oromo, Tograway and Wolaita

5.3 Instruments

The instruments used in this study were teachers' questionnaire which dominantly contains demographic variables, teachers' professional identity scale and teachers' career decision scale. The interview guide was used to collect data on professional identity and career decisions of teachers from school principals and novice teachers in each region. From the four regions, **five educational officers** and **16** teachers were participated in the interview.

5.4 Procedures

Novice teachers serving at most three years were identified from each school by consulting the school principals. Then, all novice teachers found in each school filled in the questionnaire. Moreover, from each **region**, **four** novice teachers and **one education offer on teachers' professional development** were selected and interviewed.

From the teachers' professional identity survey instrument, two scales were emerged. One of the scales was teachers' professional identity (TPI) scale and the other was teachers' career decision (TCD) scale. The TPI and the TCD scales were re-coded as low (scores one standard deviation below the median scores), medium (between the median scores and the scores at one standard deviation below the median) and high (scores one standard deviation above the median scores). The TPI scale and TCD scale were validated by comments and suggestions of senior researchers at the Institute of Educational Research (IER). The TCD scale contained 13 items that was rated on five point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Similarly, the TPI scale contained 13 items that was rated on five points scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability of the TCD and TPI instruments were checked with Chronbach alpha method and were 0.65 and 0.76 respectively.

5.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the qualitative data was organized by merging with quantitative data. Most of the analysis was done by the use of chi square where demographic variables were cross-tabbed with selected career choice and identify development variables. Multiple regression analysis was also used to analyze the relationship between professional identity and career decision and the contribution of demographic variables and professional identity for career decision.

7) Data Analysis and Interpretations

6.1 Demographic Variables

Table 1 presents the demographic variables of the participants who completed the survey instrument. The demographic variables included were region, ethnicity, medium of instruction, gender, qualification, and school type and school location. From the distributed questionnaires, 232 useable novice teachers' responses were collected. In analyzing and discussing of data, only valid results were used, missing values were disregarded. For this reason, the total number of respondents might be varied. Table 1 below summarizes the respondents' background information.

Table 1: Demography of respondents

Region	N	%	Gender	N	%
Addis Ababa	60	26.0	Male	138	59.7
Oromia	69	29.9	Female	93	40.3
Amhara	50	21.6	Total	231	100.0
SNNPR	52	22.5	Qualification	N	%
Total	231	100.0	Certificate	20	8.6
Ethnicity	N	%	Diploma	182	78.4
Kenbata	2	1.0	Degree	30	12.9
Gurage	4	1.9	Total	232	100.0
Amhara	79	38.2	School type	N	%
Oromo	68	32.9	Non governmental	18	7.8
Hadiya	2	1.0	Government	213	92.2
Tigraway	2	1.0	Total	231	100.0
Wolayita	50	24.2	Medium of instruction	N	%
Total	207	100.0	Amharic	124	63.6
School Location	N	%	Afan Oromo	44	22.6
Rural	89	38.5	Other	27	13.3
Urban	142	61.5	Total	195	100.0
Total	231	100.0			

The participants were from four regions, namely Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara and SNNPR. As shown in Table 1, 26.0% from Addis Ababa City Administration and 29.9% from Oromia 21.6% from Amhara and 22.5% from SNNPR regional states were participated in the study. The participants were mostly from the Amhara (38.2%) and the Oromo (32.9%) ethnic groups. The remaining (28.9%) were from the Kenbata, Gurage, Hadiya, Tigraway and Wolaita. Of the respondents who identified the medium of instruction in their schools, the majority of the sample schools used Amharic as a medium of instruction (63.6%) which includes schools from the Amhara region, Addis Ababa City Administration, and the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR). Afan Oromo was used as a medium of instruction by 22.6% of the respondents, and 13.8% of the respondents used other languages, such as Wolaitigna and Hadiyigna as medium of instruction.

Gender wise, 59.7% of the respondents were males whereas 40.3% were females. In the sample schools, participants with three types of qualification were involved in this study. From the total participants, 78.4% were first diploma holders while respondents with first degree consisted of 12.9% and most of them taught in government schools (92.2%) that were located in urban areas (61.5%) and in rural areas (38.5%).

Table 2: Relationship between teachers’ professional identity and job assurance with a teaching qualification

TPI	Score	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Low	Observed	32	9	3	3	47
	Expected	17.4	8.3	12.3	8.9	47.0
Moderate	Observed	42	22	37	25	126
	Expected	46.8	22.2	33.1	23.9	126.0
High	Observed	8	8	18	14	48
	Expected	17.8	8.5	12.6	9.1	48.0
Total	Observed	82	39	58	42	221
	Expected	82.0	39.0	58.0	42.0	221.0

$\chi^2 = 34.56, P = 0.00$

Table 2 shows the crosstab of three levels of teachers’ professional identity with teachers’ assurance of the teaching qualification. It also shows the association between teachers’ professional identity and teachers’ assurance of the teaching job given that they have qualification for it. The chi-square statistics indicates there is strong association between teachers’ professional identity and assurance of the teaching job with a teaching qualification ($\chi^2_{(6)} = 34.56, p=0.00$). Teachers with low professional identity were observed to strongly disagreed with the statement “with a teaching qualification I am assured of a job” than teachers with high professional identity. Responses of teachers and educational experts to interview items seemed to support the same. The majority of teachers replied that since they were not sure of the teaching profession, they intended to change the profession; they had a plan to join other professions like law, accounting and finance. They also wanted to start their own business. Most of them reported that being a ‘bajaj’ (auto rickshaws) driver was better

than being a teacher in job assurance. The educational offers' responses indicated the same.

Table 3: Relationship between TPI and recommendation of teaching as a field of study by people (relatives/friends)

TPI		Teaching provides a good salary.				Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Low	N	32	12	2	0	46
	%	14.6	5.5	0.9	0.0	21.0
Medium	N	62	42	13	6	123
	%	28.3	19.2	5.9	2.7	56.2
High	N	25	12	7	6	50
	%	11.4	5.5	3.2	2.7	22.8
Total	N	119	66	22	12	219
	%	54.3	30.1	10.0	5.5	100.0

Table 3 presents the observed and expected frequencies of teachers with low, moderate and high professional identity (PI). The majority of the teachers responded that they strongly disagreed with the view of recommending teaching as a field of study. Considering the present low status of teaching, people did not recommend teaching as a field of study. Teaching as a field of study was chosen because it was a guarantee to get a job. That is, teachers with different level of professional identity viewed that people negatively recommend teaching as a field of study. The data obtained through the interview items also supported this. All respondents were interviewed how the community valued and judged the teaching profession. Most of the interviewees articulated that the society gave the lowest importance and value to the teaching profession. For example, the subsequent responses were obtained (where $T_1 = \text{Teacher}_1$; $T_2 = \text{Teacher}_2$; $T_3 = \text{Teacher}_3$, etc. and $E_1 = \text{Expert}_1$; $E_2 = \text{Expert}_2$; $E_3 = \text{Expert}_3$, etc):

Everyone feel pity for those who are teachers. The teaching profession is degrading. I never say to others that I am a teacher. I am ashamed of being a teacher. I am in the profession since I do not have any alternative. If I get any alternative, I will leave the profession by tomorrow [T₁].... They [the communities] disrespect the profession very much [T₂]....The status and values given to teaching profession by the community is very low. The community does not wish their children to join the teaching profession. In the community, people do not wish his/her daughter to marry a teacher [T₃].... The society advised us to participate in the coble stone project rather than being a teacher so who will have the courage in this profession. The profession is degraded even by daily laborers [T₄].... The status and value given to teaching profession in the community is not only low but also, I can say, it is already died. When you tell the community member that you are working in teaching profession, they show you a feeling of sorrow as if you were working in low prestigious and valuable profession [E₁].... The societies do not give proper value and status to teachers and the teaching profession [E₂].... The community at large does not appreciate the teaching profession. The community overlooks the contributions of teachers [E₃]....

Table 4: Association between teachers’ career development and the contribution of teaching for further studies

TPI	Score	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Low	Observed	33	7	5	2	47
	Expected	15.0	10.7	11.1	10.2	47.0
Moderate	Observed	31	35	31	31	128
	Expected	41.0	29.0	30.2	27.9	128.0
High	Observed	8	9	17	16	50
	Expected	16.0	11.3	11.8	10.9	50.0
Total	Observed	72	51	53	49	225
	Expected	72.0	51.0	53.0	49.0	225.0
$\chi^2 = 45.88, P = 0.00$						

As shown in Table 4, about one third 74 (32.3%) of the novice teachers strongly disagreed that teaching provides a good opportunity to further study. Besides 51 (22.3%) disagreed that teaching provides a good opportunity for further studies. On the

negative side of the observed frequencies were by far greater than the expected frequencies showing novice teachers disagreement to the view that teaching provides a good opportunity for further study. The chi square test for the crosstabs of high, moderate and low TPI with the agreement –disagreement of teaching provides good opportunity for further study for teachers resulted in significance differences ($\chi^2_{(6)} = 45.88, p=0.00$). This shows teachers’ professional identity is strongly related to viewing negatively that teaching provides good opportunity for further study for teachers. In support of this, most of the interviewed teachers hoped that they would continue their further education in other fields of studies in the continuing and distance education programs. Most of them did not plan to upgrade themselves in the teaching profession.

Table 5: The influence of teachers’ salary on career decision

TPI		Teaching provides a good salary.				Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Low	N	19	0.0	0.0	0.0	19
	%	8.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5
Medium	N	132	13	1	0.0	146
	%	58.9	5.8	0.4	0.0	65.2
High	N	35	21	1	2	59
	%	15.6	9.4	0.4	0.9	26.3
Total	N	186	34	2	2	224
	%	83.0	15.2	0.9	0.9	100.0

The data in Table 5 presents the influence of teacher’s salary on career decision. The overwhelming majority of the teachers (98.2%) viewed that the teaching profession did not provide good salary. This shows that teachers associate teaching with poor salary. This implies that salary has an important variable in influencing teachers’ decision to join and stay in the profession. The data obtained through the interview items also supported this. Most of the interviewees articulated that low salary that teachers earn was not motivating novice teachers to stay in the profession. For instance, a teacher mentioned, “Teachers salary and living standard is low even our students do not wish it.” Another respondent also added, “I am ashamed of to be called a teacher because

people judge you with the salary you gain.” Similarly, a respondent said, “The society undermines the teaching profession based on the salary teachers get and the government itself doesn’t care about teachers.”

Table 6: The influence TPI on teachers’ career decision

TPI	Score	Yes	No	Total
Low	Observed	45	3	48
	Expected	35.7	12.3	48.0
Moderate	Observed	101	26	127
	Expected	94.4	32.6	127.0
High	Observed	22	29	51
	Expected	37.9	13.1	51.0
Total	Observed	168	58	226
	Expected	168.0	58.0	226.0

$\chi^2 = 37.30, P = 0.00$

The data in Table 6 presents the influence TPI on career decision of teachers. The overwhelming majority of the teachers (74.3%) agreed that their professional identity has significantly associated with their professional choice ($\chi^2_{(3)} = 37.30, p=0.00$). This implies that teacher professional identify was an important variable in influencing teachers’ decision to join and stay in the profession. Responses of teachers in the interviews seemed to strengthen this. Most of the teachers had pessimistic feeling about being a teacher. It reads as:

I do not feel happy being a teacher. I am in the profession because I have no any other chance. I will leave the profession as soon as I earn another degree [T₁].... I am not happy being a teacher if I had had a choice I wouldn’t have been joined the teaching profession [T₂]. [I am] totally disappointed. I lead my life simply because it enabled me to sustain from the meager income [T₃]. I would be happy if I could get another job instead of teaching, if could get one. But I don’t mind continuing teaching; I like the job [T₄]. I do not feel good. I never tell people that I am a teacher [T₅]. I feel ashamed of being a teacher and never tell my job to people [T₆]. I feel headache when people ask me my job and I feel inferior [T₇].

What is more, almost all of the teachers in the interview mentioned that teaching was not their first choice. They joined the teaching profession merely by a matter of chance and since there had no any strong competition to be a teacher. Moreover, all of teacher and educational officer respondents underscored that most teachers joined the profession as they had no other choices. Those who joined teaching were students who were not able to join preparatory schools for higher education.

Table 7: Relationship between TPI and teachers being passionate about the profession

TPI	Score	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Low	Observed	38	8	0	1	47
	Expected	22.5	16.1	5.7	2.7	47.0
Moderate	Observed	61	51	15	3	130
	Expected	62.2	44.7	15.8	7.3	130.0
High	Observed	11	20	13	9	53
	Expected	25.3	18.2	6.5	3.0	53.0
Total	Observed	110	79	28	13	230
	Expected	110.0	79.0	28.0	13.0	230.0

$\chi^2 = 52.10, p = 0.00$

The majority of the teachers (N= 189, 82.17%) believed that teachers were not passionate about their profession. Teachers being not passionate about their profession were strongly associated with their professional identity ($\chi^2_{(6)} = 52.10 p=0.00$).

Table 8: Association between TPI and teachers' low prospect for promotion

TPI		Low prospect for promotion				Total
		Not obstacle at all	Minor obstacle	Medium obstacle	Serious obstacle	
Low	N	0	0	3	42	45
	%	0.0	0.0	1.4	19.1	20.5
Medium	N	3	8	23	92	126
	%	1.4	3.6	10.5	41.8	57.3
High	N	3	5	12	29	49
	%	1.4	2.3	5.5	13.2	22.3
Total	N	6	13	38	163	220
	%	2.7	5.9	17.3	74.1	100.0

As shown in Table 8, teachers with low, moderate and high professional identity believed that the teaching profession is characterized by low promotion (N = 163, 74.1%). That is, teachers associate their professional identity with its prospect for promotion.

Table 9: Correlations matrix of determinants of career decision (N = 171)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Career Decision (1)	1.00										
TPI Scale scores (2)	0.27**	1.00									
Teacher Attitude (3)	-0.04	-0.06	1.00								
Region (4)	0.17*	-0.01	-0.10	1.00							
Ethnicity (5)	0.09	-0.18**	-0.09	0.66**	1.00						
Gender (6)	-0.15*	0.09	-0.01	0.03	-0.08	1.00					
Service (7)	-0.03	0.00	0.12	0.15*	0.18**	0.00	1.00				
School type (8)	0.00	-0.05	0.04	-0.13*	0.10	-0.01	0.13	1.00			
School location (9)	-0.14*	0.16*	0.11	-0.39**	-0.27**	-0.04	-0.03	-0.19**	1.00		
Educ. Qualification (10)	-0.03	-0.10	-0.06	-0.15	-0.18**	-0.12	-0.05	-0.04	0.01	1.00	
Medium of Instruction (11)	-0.03	-0.30	-0.10	0.57**	0.78**	-0.16*	0.03	0.09	-0.26**	-0.18**	1.00

* P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01

In Table 9, the correlation matrix presents the relationship among the variables that predict teachers' career decision. As shown in the Table 9, ten independent variables were used with the enter prediction model to predict the dependent variable career

decision. Four of the ten predictor variables were significantly related the dependent/criterion variable. These variables were TPI scale scores ($r = 0.27, p = 0.01$), region ($r = 0.17, p = 0.05$), gender $r = -0.15, p = 0.05$), and school location $r = -0.14, p = 0.05$). The remaining six predictor variables were not significantly related to career decision. The negative relationship between school location and gender shows the urban teachers were decided more than the rural teachers to be a teacher and female teachers more than male teachers decided to be teachers. The analysis of variance showed that prediction model was significant ($F_{(10,159)} = 3.54, p = 0.00$) which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. About 18% of the variation in career decision is explained by the combination of the dependent variables. The next table presents the contribution of the dependent variables to the prediction of career decisions.

Table 10: Career Decision Predictor Variables

Predictor Variables	B	Std. Error	Std. B	t	p
(Constant)	19.38	2.42		8.01	0.00
TPI Scale	0.33	0.06	0.36	5.78	0.00
Region	1.05	0.35	0.20	2.99	0.00
Gender	-1.65	0.73	-0.14	-2.26	0.03
Location of the school	-0.92	0.81	-0.08	-1.13	0.26
R ²	0.17				
F	11.52				
p	0.00				

The TPI contributes more to the model with absolute standardized coefficient ($B = 0.33$), followed by region ($B = 1.05$), gender ($B = -1.65$) and school location ($B = -0.92$) The t-test showed that the contribution of these three variables were statistically significant.

Different factors can influence teachers' professional identity and career decision. As was discussed in related review section, psychological and environment factors contribute in this regard. During the study, efforts have been made to identify major challenges novice teachers encountered since they joined the teaching profession. Based on the data obtained in the interviews, disrespecting of the community to the profession, students' misbehavior and lack of interest in learning, cliquish behavior of teachers, poor salary, inadequate support provided by school leadership, frequent visits to the nearby communities to enforce drop out students to come to schools, identity crises of teachers (being a teacher is perceived as a curse by most of the teachers), and problems in adjusting to the situations and living conditions in the new environment were major challenges that impede novice teacher to stay or leave the profession.

8) Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that most of the teachers joined the profession as they had no other choices. They were not passionate about the teaching profession which is strongly related to their professional identity. As a result, most of them did not plan to upgrade themselves in the teaching profession (they continued their further education in other fields of studies). Even they would not choose the profession again if they were given a chance to choose.

Region, gender and school location were identified as predictors of career decision of novice teachers. What is more, novice teachers' dissatisfaction towards the teaching profession (psychological factor) and the community's disrespect of the profession (sociological factor) have been found to be the major factors that impede novice teacher to stay or leave the profession.

In general, it can be said that novice teachers' career decision is linked with the development of their professional identity.

9) Implications

The findings of the study have significant implications for teachers' development programs in Ethiopia. Since teachers' beliefs, experiences and expectations in the profession influence teachers' teaching practices, attentions must be given for teachers' professional identity in the training of teachers.

The findings of the present study, particularly, provide some implications for novice teachers' career decision and their retention and attrition in the profession. That is, much has been done to socialize and to familiarize novice teachers with school and public environments in their early years of services. Attentions must also be given to uplift the community's attitude towards the teaching profession; the community must respect and value the profession.

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