









Teachers' Working Conditions in Primary and Secondary Schools in Ethiopia

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Keywords



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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the status of teachers' working conditions at primary and secondary schools levels in Ethiopia. The study involved 688 teachers at primary and secondary schools. Teachers' perception of the status of their working conditions was assessed using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. While the quantitative data were analyzed using independent sample-test and one-way ANOVA statistics, the qualitative data were analyzed thematically and used to substantiate and triangulate the quantitative analysis results. The results reveal that school teachers did not take any position on the overall status of their working conditions and preferred neutral positions. Although the teachers showed neutrality regarding the status of their working conditions, the qualitative results suggested that they tend to have negative perceptions towards their working conditions. The majority of the teachers at the sample primary and secondary schools indicated that they were not satisfied with their incomes and benefits. Similarly, the qualitative data shows that they had dissatisfaction with these variables. In terms of teachers' perception of working conditions, the result from one-way ANOVA analysis shows the significant mean difference among regional states for primary schools but no significant difference for counterpart secondary schools. This would mean that secondary school teachers were not satisfied with the income and benefits (IB) they earn whereas their primary school counterparts did not take any position. Concerning gender, in both schools, both male and female teachers preferred neutral positions on the perception of the working condition in the schools. The result from independent sample t-test analysis revealed that primary school female teachers perceived the condition of policy environment, management and evaluation system more positively than male teachers but secondary school male teachers were not satisfied with incomes and benefits than females. It was suggested that school management, regional education bureaus and the Ministry of Education should work jointly towards alleviating difficulties related to income and benefits.

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Introduction

One of the major resources for the effective teaching-learning process is the human capital which includes teachers, students, principals, and support staff. One of these groups is teachers who play determinant roles in the teaching and learning processes without whom quality education cannot be materialized. The effectiveness of teachers in their jobs is largely influenced not only by characteristic behaviors they are endowed with but also by school psycho-social conditions imposed on them by school environments. The psycho-social factors are expressed in terms of either of two forms: engaging and disengaging teachers' behaviors. Engaging teacher behaviors are expressed in terms of faculty with high morale characterized by supporting and caring practices. Solomon and Woldesillassie (2015: 292) argue that "a school with a high level of engaged teacher behavior will have teachers who work with pride, are friendly with students, and take extra time to help students with individual problems". Engaged teachers are committed to student success; enjoy their jobs, and support not only students but also the management and colleagues for collective institutional success. Disengaged teachers, on the other hand, are characterized by frustration and overburdened by nonteaching duties, associated with compromising with discouraging management and appraisal practices and paper works. These characteristics are attributed to a negative school climate. A positive school climate is largely associated with teachers' increased job satisfaction. To gauge the level of engagement of teachers and to mitigate their performance constraints, schools are expected to customize evaluation procedures that involve on-the-job performance and working conditions of teachers.

Working condition is one of the factors that affect the status and effectiveness of teachers in schools. Teachers working conditions are seen in terms of factors such as the nature of the physical environment of the job, the amount of work, facilities for performing a task, work schedule, time, and working space.

Today educational experts, scholars, and other stakeholders complain about the deterioration of the quality of education in Ethiopia. It is generally agreed that one of the major factors which affect the quality of education in a given context is the working conditions of teachers. In the Ethiopian context teachers' working condition, as in many other countries, is influenced by social, economic, political and motivational factors that prevail in the education system. Particularly, institutional variables such as low income or financial insecurity, lack of teaching and learning resources, poor school management inconvenient work areas, inadequate administrative and leadership support social status and respect, and the overall de-motivating working environment affect the working condition of teachers and thereby affects the quality of education provision to citizens. Many studies confirm that in the Ethiopian context teachers working conditions are not by and large conducive and are often observed as affecting the education processes (World Bank 2005; Gedefaw, 2012). Hence, this study attempts to describe the working conditions of Ethiopian teachers and tries to find answers to the following pertinent questions.

Research Questions

1. How favorable is the working condition for teachers at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia?
2. What is the perception of teachers about their working conditions at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia?
3. Are there significant differences in the working condition of teachers among regions in Ethiopia?
4. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of working conditions between male and female teachers in Ethiopia?

Objectives

General Objective

To investigate the status of teachers working conditions at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia

Specific Objectives

- To assess if there is a favorable working condition for teachers in primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia
- To examine the perception of teachers about their working conditions at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia
- To see if there are significant differences in teachers working conditions among regions in Ethiopia
- To investigate if there is a significant difference in perception of working conditions between male and female teachers at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia

Literature Review

Working condition is one of the factors that affect teaching effectiveness of teachers in schools. Bakotić and Babić (2013) pointed out that the conditions under which a job is performed can be either completely comfortable or very difficult and dangerous to workers. They indicate that working conditions include factors such as the nature of the physical environment of the job: the amount of work, facilities for performing work, light, tools, temperature, space, ventilation, duration of the work shift, work schedule, working time, and work pace, excessive straining, and workload.

Working conditions could become conducive when the administration of an organization provides workers with a safe and healthy environment furnished with all necessary equipment and infrastructures. Hence, according to *Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)*, managers should be able to make the working conditions safe, healthy, adequately furnished and attractive workers use their utmost potential, knowledge, skills, and creativity effectively to develop their organization (VSO, 2002). In other words, working conditions harm the job performance of workers since any worker prefers physical surroundings that are safe, clean, and comfortable to work effectively in all his capacity (Robbins, 2005).

Teachers' working conditions

Working conditions under which teachers perform their job is not different from what has already been mentioned above. According to Berry, Smylie, and Fuller (2008) working condition refers to both material and non-material conditions that are necessary for teachers to carry out their work successfully. These conditions include important elements such as the structural and physical aspects of a school and school organization, social relationships among the school community, school climate and culture, the politics of the workplace, the presence of quality resources, the financial conditions of work, the volume and complexity of workload and leadership and administrative practices (Berry et al., 2008).

The working condition determines the effectiveness of teachers in job practices which in turn affects the quality of education. To deliver high-quality education, schools must attract, develop, and retain effective teachers. To this end, the working conditions of the schools play an important role. According to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), schools that can offer a safe, pleasant, and supportive working environment and adequate compensation to their teachers are better able to attract and retain good teachers (NCES, 1996).

Recent studies conducted in Africa point out a strong correlation between teachers' working and living conditions and their teaching effectiveness. According to a study conducted by Bennell and Akyeampong, the major working conditions that negatively affect teachers effectiveness are workload, unfavorable classroom and school conditions, lack of collegial and management support, poor living arrangements, and distance to work and travel costs especially in rural areas (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). The following sub-sections describe some aspects of teachers' working conditions that affect teachers teaching effectiveness in schools.

Work Load

Teaching workload has several dimensions, including the amount of time spent working, the number of classes taught, and the number of students in each class (NCES, 1996). According to Leithwood and Mcadie (2010) both the volume and complexity of teachers' workloads have a significant effect on teachers' effectiveness in their teaching practices. To the workload volume, the scholars indicate that teachers work an average of 50 to 53 hours per week performing a long list of tasks throughout the school year. About half of their time is devoted to actual classroom instruction. To workload complexity, for instance, teachers are required to teach in areas for which they are not certified or are otherwise ill-prepared, and while in some cases their students are uncooperative in which case they hardly become successful in the teaching-learning processes (Leithwood & Mcadie, 2010). In addition, many secondary school teachers are also expected to play the roles of counselor and career advisor, apart from teaching their subjects. Furthermore, they are engaged in day-to-day activities related to continuous professional development programs, lesson plans and teaching aids preparation, teaching, documenting portfolios, and many more.

Compensation

Payments and the criteria used as a basis for salary increments at schools are important aspects of teachers' working conditions (NCES, 1996). Salaries and incentives of teachers are major issues that determine teachers' working and living conditions. Bennell (2004) indicates that teachers are paid considerably less than the 'mainstream professionals' such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers. In addition, benefits such as housing provision and transport allowances, pension, holidays, health insurance and compensation for after-hours' work are often less than they feel less satisfied with their lives which is likely to spill over to their effectiveness in their job performance (Artz, 2010). Studies indicate that teachers in many African countries are working in challenging conditions that are coupled with poor remuneration, delay in payment of salaries, allowances, and promotions, scarce teaching, and learning resources; and disrespect from government, parents, and the community at large (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

Support for Teachers Professional Development

To provide high-quality education, schools not only hire well-qualified teachers, but also must help them sustainably update their professional skills, stay abreast with the latest advancement in their fields, and learn about new teaching methods (NCES, 1996). Access to meaningful professional development is one of the most important contributing factors that would improve the effectiveness of teachers in their job and thereby would enhance the quality of their working conditions (Leithwood & Mcadie, 2010).

School Decision Making

The extent to which teachers participate in decision-making processes about school policies, management, and social and educational issues in the school as well as the autonomy they have in the classroom reflect school climate which is critical to teachers' working conditions (NCES, 1996). When teachers are less involved in decision-making processes and remain powerless to improve the learning experience of their students, they feel ignored which boils down to their desire and enthusiasm for educational development at their schools (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Moreover, the quality of communication, the school's plans for improvement that considers teachers' views, and regular feedback to teachers about the focus and quality of their progress all affect teachers' effectiveness in their work (Leithwood & Mcadie, 2010).

School Safety

It is true that after one has substantially satisfied his/her basic or biological needs, the safety or security needs emerge to direct his/her behavior. These safety needs include the need for protection from danger, deprivation, pain, the threat of physical attack, lack of savings, and failure to medical services, etc (Mullins, 2005). These are also true to teachers and safety in a school environment would create comfort and enhance the motivation of the school community in general and that of teachers in particular. Neither teachers nor students can perform at the utmost of their potential if they do not feel safe. In addition, schools, where teachers do not feel safe, are likely to experience difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers.

Teachers' safety needs could manifest in terms of demands for fair treatment from school management such as the principals, and department heads, safe working conditions in schools as well as in the community they live in. By the same token, the provision of adequate fringe benefits, fair and quality supervision, and job security would contribute to the safety and security of teachers. This would also mean that where the safety and security of teachers are well protected and positive working conditions have thrived, teachers will have strong trust in their job environments and they would work with their utmost potential and professional capacity which in turn would have a significant effect on the academic success of the student population.

Respect for Teachers

In any discipline, respect refers to the dignity owed to persons for their diligent and exemplary behaviors in the community as well as in working environments. Respect for teachers is believed to emanate from the social values attached to their teaching profession. It is argued that the level of public respect for teachers is likely to affect the attractiveness of the teaching profession and the quality of new teachers (NCES, 1996). There is wide variation from country to country in the percentage who thinks that secondary teachers are "very respected" or "fairly well respected" as professionals. As indicated by the Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), among 10 European countries and the United States, an average of 9 percent of persons thought that secondary teachers were "very respected," and another 48 percent thought they were "fairly well respected." In the United States, 20 percent thought they were "much respected," and 48 percent thought they were "fairly well respected" (CERI, 1995). Similar views seem to prevail in the developing world. Looking closely at the condition of teachers and teaching in African countries, it is apparent that teachers' fundamental role is not always valued or prized. The worth of teachers is very low, due to poor recognition given to the teaching profession as explained by various de-motivating factors (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

The situation in the Ethiopian is not different from what is stated above. Practical observations and research findings in the country unanimously show that teachers generally experience unattractive working conditions and that teachers do not reportedly enjoy their professional lives (Anberbir, 1971; Manna & Tesfaye, 2000). Teachers' working conditions in Ethiopia have been seriously compromised and the attitude of the society towards teaching has been severely eroded (Getachew, 1999; Tesfaye & Demewoz, 2004).

As a result, teachers generally feel that they have less social recognition and status as opposed to civil workers in most other professions. They may also develop frustration, low self-esteem, job dissatisfaction, low productivity, and a tendency to leave the profession (Manna & Tesfaye, 2000). Therefore, for teachers to play their roles responsibly, it is necessary to improve the living and working conditions of teachers and establish a condition that would enable them to develop a positive attitude towards the profession.

Effects of Working Condition on Teaching Effectiveness

It is clear from the above evidence that teachers' working conditions play an important part in the quality of education that comes out of schools (Leithwood, 2006). Whatever reforms are proposed, ultimately their effectiveness depends, for the most part, on the teachers who implement them (Leithwood, 2006). Most obviously, working conditions within the classroom affect teaching effectiveness, particularly those that are related to workload volume and workload complexity (Leithwood, 2006; Leithwood & Mcadie, 2010).

A good working environment will determine the quantity and quality of knowledge children receive; the type of skills to enhance the development of young minds; and the sense of security children feel (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Markel (2004), looking at the condition of teachers shows that working conditions have continually played a large role in teacher decisions to migrate or leave the profession. Reasons for remaining in teaching or leaving are strongly associated with how teachers view administrative support, available education resources, teacher input regarding decision-making, and school climate (Markel, 2004).

Many studies in the past 20 years on the working conditions of teachers and teaching have concentrated on identifying the main characteristics of effective teaching to pupils' learning outcomes. However, the status of teachers, as well as the environment in which they operate, has been deteriorating over the years. Research indicates that many countries are facing a crisis in the teaching profession. It is thus important that if schools must work well, there is a need to provide workable strategies that will improve the conditions of teachers and teaching in the schools (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

Methodology

Research Design and Method

A descriptive and exploratory research design was employed for this study. This is because researchers want to investigate and understand the existing situation and describe the working conditions of teachers in the study areas. The dominantly used approach was quantitative and the qualitative approach was used to support the quantitative data.

Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for this study were primary, secondary, and preparatory school teachers and school leaders. A total of 688 participants from 16 Teacher Education Institutions (TEI) and 32 schools were involved in this study.

Sampling

The population of this study was school teachers in Ethiopia primary, secondary and preparatory schools. To select samples from the population of the study, a multistage sampling technique was used. The federal government of Ethiopia consisted of nine regional states and two city administrations. First, four regional states were randomly selected to make the study as representative as possible. From among the regions, 16 Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and 32 schools were selected by using a simple random sampling technique. The schools that are involved in this study were selected from those that are located around the TEIs in the selected regions. Most of these schools were also used as cluster centers by the TEIs for practicum purposes in their teacher education programs. Proportional sampling (quota) was used to select the schools from the respective regions. All voluntary teachers in the schools were involved in the study.

Table 1

The type and number of respondents from each are indicated in the table below.

Sample	Regions				Total
	Amahra	Oromia	SNNPR	Tigray	
Teacher Educators					
• Colleges	2	2	2	2	8
• Universities	2	2	2	2	8
Total	4	4	4	4	16
School Teachers					
• Primary	2	2	2	2	8
• Secondary/ Preparatory	2	2	2	2	8
Total	4	4	4	4	16
Managers					
• Primary Schools	2	2	2	2	8
• Secondary /Preparatory Schools	2	2	2	2	8
Total	4	4	4	4	16

Research Instruments

For this study questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data of both quantitative and qualitative parts. The questionnaire was designed for school teachers and developed by the researchers to collect data from the sources. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was to obtain data about the demographic variables of respondents. The second part was to collect data about the study problem and these were composed of 5 points Lickert Scale type items for students. Each questionnaire had one open-ended item to elicit free responses from the respondents.

The interview guide was also prepared to help generate data from school leaders about teachers' working conditions. The items in the interview guide were generally related to the school conditions, school recourses, salary, incentives, and administrative issues. All items about working conditions were prepared based on the literature review.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Initially, drafts of instruments were prepared based on a literature review by a group of researchers involved in the study. Then they were given to members of the research group and other professionals for review for face and content validity. Comments were incorporated and presented in a one-day validation workshop. The contents were well commented and improved before they were tried out in the field. A pilot test was conducted at Sebeta College of Teacher

Education and attached schools to see if the questionnaires were valid and reliable. Based on the pilot test results, some items were modified while others were removed from the final version of the instruments. To estimate the liability of the instruments, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used. The reliability of the different sets of questionnaires is presented below.

Table 2
Reliability of Questionnaires

No.	Type of Questionnaire	Cronbach Alpha Reliability
1	Working condition Questionnaire-Primary School	0.92
2	Working condition Questionnaire –Secondary School	0.72

As presented in the table above the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of questionnaires which was greater than 0.70 were in an acceptable range for generalization. However, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was very high for primary school teachers than for secondary school teachers.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected using the instruments mentioned above were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Data collected through questionnaires were uploaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. Data collected with a questionnaire were found normally distributed and hence parametric tests such as ANOVA and t-test were used. Comparisons were made among regions, Primary, Secondary preparatory Schools based on responses collected from teachers and school leaders. Results were presented in tables and figures which were immediately followed by interpretations.

Data collected through interviews from school leadership through one-on-one encounters held face-to-face using voice recorders which helped maintain exact words of the interviewees without missing main points were transcribed by each team member who collected the data and translated into English language and made ready for analysis. They were then categorized into emergent themes and qualitatively analyzed using narrative descriptions. The narrations sometimes included direct quotations of views of a particular interviewee where it was deemed appropriate. Open-ended items in the questionnaires were also analyzed using qualitative descriptions. To reduce the number of table presentations, the classroom observation results were also described by including observations personal notes maintained while observing classroom lessons.

Results

The quantitative data analysis was conducted after checking the normality of the data. Since that data was normally distributed, the research team used parametric statistics such as independent t-test and one-way ANOVA to analyze the data in terms of general perception on working conditions among regions and subthemes such as Income and Benefits (IB), Professional Self Development (PSD), Policy environment, management and Evaluation system (PEMES), Safety and School Community relationship (SSCR). Similarly, the qualitative data were analyzed thematically and used in the result under these sub-themes with relevant emerging subthemes.

The first and the second research questions of this study were about the presence of favorable working conditions for teachers at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia and their perception. The descriptive statistics result (Table 3) showed that primary school teachers have an average (Mean = 3.25) and secondary school teachers have an average (mean = 2.95) of perception on working conditions. Generally, the mean obtained for the perception of

teachers on working conditions for primary and secondary schools implies that school teachers did not take any position on the status of their working condition with a mean of 3.25 and 2.95 respectively preferring a neutral position. The table below shows the result of descriptive statistics by region.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations comparing primary and secondary school teachers perception of their working condition

Region	Primary School Teacher Working Condition				Secondary School Teacher Working Condition			
	N	M	SD	SEM	N	M	SD	SEM
Tigray	14	3.17	.65	.17	26	3.10	.69	.13
Amhara	116	3.43	.62	.06	74	2.85	.60	.07
Oromia	95	3.15	.75	.08	170	2.94	.89	.07
SNNP	75	3.15	.72	.08	56	3.04	.57	.08
Harari	62	3.21	.49	.06	----	---	---	----
Total	362	3.25	.67	.04	326	2.95	.77	.04

The third research question of this study was about whether there is any significant difference between regions in terms of perception about working conditions. Table 3 shows that the mean for primary school teachers' perception of working conditions in Tigray (3.17), Amhara (3.43), Oromia (3.15), SNNP (3.15), and Harari (3.21) and the mean for secondary school teachers perception on working condition in Tigray (3.10), Amhara (2.85), Oromia (2.94), SNNP (3.04). From the results obtained, the means within each of the regions look somewhat different. To check whether they statistically differ or not, one-way ANOVA was conducted. The result from one way ANOVA analysis (table 4) shows that there was a significant mean difference between the regions in teachers perception on working condition $F(4, 361) = 3.116, p = .05$ for primary school but no significant difference between regions in teachers perception on working condition $F(3, 325) = 1.004, p > .05$ for secondary schools. The mean perception of Amhara regional state teachers on their working conditions was significantly different from that of others.

Table 4

One-Way analysis of variance summary table comparing in terms of regions

Regional		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Primary school	Between Groups	5.442	4	1.360	3.116	.015
	Within Groups	155.852	357	.437		
	Total	161.294	361			
Secondary school	Between Groups	1.783	3	.594	1.004	.391
	Within Groups	190.631	322	.592		
	Total	192.414	325			

The items used to collect data about working conditions in schools were categorized into components such as Income and Benefits (IB), Professional Self Development (PSD), Policy environment, management and Evaluation system (PEMES), Safety and School Community relationship (SSCR) as mentioned above. When teachers perception of their working conditions was compared in terms of these components, the result of the descriptive statistics (Table 5) shows that primary school teachers seem to have average (Mean = 2.72 (IB); 3.13 (PSD); 3.63 (PEMES); 3.48 (SSCR) and secondary school teachers have average (mean = 2.32 (IB); 3.15 (PSD); 3.17 (PEMES); 3.41 (SSCR)) of perception on working condition. From these statistical results, it is possible to infer that secondary school teachers disagree with the IB they gain with

a mean of 2.32 whereas primary school teachers did not take any position on this component with a mean of 2.72. This implies that secondary school teachers were not satisfied with the income and benefits they gained in the teaching profession. On the other hand, primary school teachers agree with PEMES and SSCR of the school with a mean of 3.63 and 3.48 respectively whereas secondary school teachers did not take any position on these components with a mean of 3.17 and 3.41 respectively. This implies that there was a positive perception on the policy issues, management and evaluations systems, safety, and school community relationships among primary schools teachers than secondary schools teachers. Moreover, teachers in both primary and secondary schools did not take any position on PSD issues with a mean of 3.13 and 3.15 respectively.

Table 5
Means and standard deviations comparing primary and secondary school teachers perception of their working condition to IB, PSD , PEMES, and SSCR by Region

Region	Primary School								Secondary School									
	N	IB M	SD	PSD M	SD	PEMES M	SD	SSCR M	SD	N	IB M	SD	PSD M	SD	PEMES M	SD	SSCR M	SD
Tigray	14	2.43	.76	2.64	1.14	3.62	.72	3.51	.81	26	2.32	.82	3.15	.87	3.17	.78	3.40	.77
Amhara	116	2.75	.66	3.17	.82	3.87	.82	3.76	.78	74	1.82	.70	2.69	.89	3.04	.65	3.18	.75
Oromia	95	2.64	.84	3.18	1.09	3.49	.87	3.36	.92	170	2.19	.97	2.92	1.06	3.05	.97	3.17	1.08
SNNP	75	2.74	.70	3.11	.99	3.51	.87	3.24	.82	56	2.64	1.07	2.79	.87	3.08	.63	3.36	.59
Harari	62	2.81	.57	3.13	.76	3.53	.58	3.43	.61	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	362	2.72	.71	3.13	.94	3.63	.82	3.48	.82	326	2.32	.82	3.15	.87	3.17	.78	3.41	.77

When we compare teachers' perception of their working conditions in terms of the components, described above, the result of the descriptive statistics (Table 5) showed that the means for each component within each of the regions look somewhat different. To check whether there was a statistically significant difference or not, one-way ANOVA was conducted. Result from one-way ANOVA analysis (table 6) showed that there was no statistically significant mean difference between the regions in teachers perception on IB $F(4, 361) = 1.224, p = .05$ and PSD $F(4, 361) = 1.039, p = .05$ for primary school. Similarly, there was no statistically significant mean difference between regions in teachers perception on PSD $F(3, 325) = 1.867, p = .05$ and PEMES $F(3, 325) = .175, p = .05$ and SSCR $F(3, 325) = .996, p = .05$ for secondary schools. However, there was statistically significant mean difference between regions in teachers perception on PEMES $F(4, 361) = 3.875, p = .05$ and SSCR $F(4, 361) = 5.802, p = .05$ for primary schools and on IB $F(4, 361) = 8.584, p = .05$ for secondary school. The perception of primary school teachers in the Amhara regional state on PEMES was more positive than the other regions. However, the perception of primary school teachers in Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia on SSCR was positive but the primary school teachers in SNNP and Harari remained neutral. The perception of secondary school teachers in Amhara regional state on income and benefit was negative than teachers in Tigray and Oromia whereas the perception of teachers in SNNP regional state tends to be neutral.

Table 6
One-Way Analysis of variance summary table comparing teachers working conditions in terms of IB, PSD, PEMES, SSCR by region

Working condition	Regional		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
IB	Primary school	Between Groups	2.479	4	.620	1.224	.300
		Within Groups	180.770	357	.506		
		Total	183.249	361			

PSD	Secondary school	Between Groups	22.019	3	7.340	8.584	.000
		Within Groups	275.301	322	.855		
		Total	297.320	325			
	Primary school	Between Groups	3.660	4	.915	1.039	.387
		Within Groups	314.324	357	.880		
		Total	317.984	361			
PEMES	Secondary school	Between Groups	5.356	3	1.785	1.867	.135
		Within Groups	307.914	322	.956		
		Total	313.270	325			
	Primary school	Between Groups	10.053	4	2.513	3.875	.004
		Within Groups	231.580	357	.649		
		Total	241.633	361			
SSCR	Secondary school	Between Groups	.369	3	.123	.175	.913
		Within Groups	226.653	322	.704		
		Total	227.022	325			
	Primary school	Between Groups	14.957	4	3.739	5.802	.000
		Within Groups	230.084	357	.644		
		Total	245.041	361			
Secondary school	Between Groups	2.530	3	.843	.996	.395	
	Within Groups	272.622	322	.847			
	Total	275.152	325				

Although the teachers showed neutrality regarding the status of their overall perception of working conditions, the qualitative results suggest that they tend to have a negative perception of their working conditions. Regarding components of working conditions, secondary school teachers indicated that they were not satisfied with their IB while remaining neutral in PSD, PEMES, and SSCR. Primary school teachers felt positive towards PEMES and SSCR while remaining neutral in IB and PSD. However, the qualitative data from the two groups shows that they had dissatisfaction with these variables. The majority of the teachers indicated that they were not satisfied especially with their incomes and benefits.

Concerning the first theme that is IB, a vice director for both the academic and administrative activities of a school reported that:

... Our teachers are not satisfied with their lives as teachers. They are very poor even compared to the students they teach. The students have relatives from South Africa and most of them are better off than some of the teachers here. Teachers' salary is very little and hardly covers their basic needs and they have to work additional works to supplement their income. You might have heard and I am sure now you are experiencing how life is extremely expensive in this town.

To tell you the truth, our teachers' life is miserable and they are not happy with their lives. They are employed for the teaching job because of a lack of other job opportunities. As you know there are no other alternatives here. The income they earn hardly covers their basic needs. In most cases the students whom they teach live a better life. Even students

who come from rural areas wear better clothes than most of their teachers. Look at that woman teacher over there. Compare her with the student whom she is talking to. Who wore better? The woman wore a local dress and the girl is in fashionable jeans trousers. Most of the teachers are dissatisfied. They always complain that they could not afford to fulfill their family's basic needs.

An interviewee from Bahir Dar confirm the above argument and stated that teachers were living in hardships in which most of them rent houses from the parents of their students and live in very poor living conditions that they are not likely to be respected at the school.

This has its impact on the teaching-learning processes in that they sometimes had to be absent to look for other works. Therefore, it is hardly possible to expect motivation from teachers in this atmosphere. This affects the quality of education because they do not have time to read and prepare themselves for their daily teaching activities.

Concerning the second theme which is about PSD an interviewee reported that there are different activities in the school like training, 1-5 group work, preparing different materials for the school but is not incentive oriented that encourage teachers to develop their professional skills. They reported that there were 5-6 career structures in the teaching profession but these do not add to their professional development.

Since teachers do not have incentives and their hope for promotion is rare, personal developments are limited to the effort of the individual. They felt that any developmental efforts should be supported by incentives. There is no free lunch in this world and one has to get advantages based on the developmental effort he/she makes but there is no this kind of support scheme in our education system and at the school.

Concerning the third theme which is about PEMES, most of the interviewees agreed that power is delegated to everyone equally and they share the joy of success. A principal said, "our school is known for its collective management processes and cooperation. There is nothing hidden and kept secret from staff in the school. Teacher evaluation, promotion, and management processes are open and transparent". This suggests that teachers and the school management work in harmony. The interviewees, however, felt that although there seems to be generally fair management of evaluation and promotion schemes, there are occasions when the outcomes of evaluation are disputed for not being transparent and fair. This seems to be one of the sources of teacher's dissatisfaction.

Concerning the fifth theme which is about SSCR, the interviewee respondents overall believe that there were very good teacher-teacher, teacher-students, teacher-leader, teacher-support staff, and teacher-parent relationships. Nevertheless, they complained that students do not behave good manners expected of them as such. They reported that students often come late, are often absent from school and a significant number of them are violent. A respondent stated, "the society understands the importance of education and gives due respect for teachers and their profession. However, the situation is not encouraging; since teachers are poor nobody wants to marry his/her daughter to a teacher" This shows that teachers' low status of living conditions (mentioned earlier) made the society have a negative attitude toward the profession and discouraged them to prefer the teaching profession for their children.

Interview participants in other contexts complained that schools were "*disrupted repeatedly and that it was difficult to conduct the teaching and learning process smoothly which in turn created not only discomfort but also in some situations teachers are prone to imprisonment associated with the disruption. Therefore, this shows that safety is the major concern of teachers in schools*".

The fourth research question of this study was about whether there was any significant difference between males and females in perception about working conditions or not. From the results obtained, the means within each of the two pairs look somewhat different. Therefore, there is a need to check with an independent sample t-test. The result from independent sample

t-test analysis (table 7) revealed that, though both genders showed neutrality, there was a significant difference between primary school male and female teachers in the perception of working conditions ($t(354) = -2.089, p < .05$). The means of the two groups indicate that the mean for primary school female teachers on working conditions (3.31) was significantly higher than the mean (3.16) for male teachers. Similarly, there was a significant difference between secondary school male and female teachers regarding the perception of working conditions ($t(321) = -3.336, p < .05$). The two groups' means indicate that the perception means of females on working conditions (3.37) was significantly higher than that of males (2.91).

Table 7
Males and Females Teachers perception on working condition

Variables	N	M	SD	t	df	P
Gender - primary school						
Male	144	3.16	.687	-2.09	354	.037
Female	212	3.31	.654			
Gender -secondary school						
Male	289	2.91	.75	-3.34	321	.001
Female	34	3.37	.84			

When teachers' perception of their working condition was compared in terms of the components, described above by gender, the means within each of the two pairs look somewhat different. Therefore, there was a need to check with an independent sample t-test. The result from independent sample t-test analysis (table 8) revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female in primary schools on IB ($t(354) = -.53, p > .05$); PSD ($t(354) = -1.60, p > .05$) and SSCR ($t(354) = -1.84, p > .05$) but there was a significant difference between male and female in primary school on PEMES ($t(354) = -2.17, p < .05$). Primary school female teachers perceived the condition of PEMES more positively than male teachers. However, there was a significant mean difference between male and female in secondary schools in terms of all components: IB ($t(321) = -2.02, p < .05$); PSD ($t(321) = -2.62, p < .05$); PEMES ($t(359) = -3.30, p < .05$) and SSCR ($t(321) = -2.72, p < .05$). Secondary school male teachers were not satisfied with IB than females but female teachers perceived positively the situation of PEMES and SSCR than male teachers in secondary school.

Table 8. Independent samples t-test of Males and Females Teachers perception on working condition IB, PSD, PEMES, and SSCR

working condition	Schools	Variables	N	M	SD	t	df	P
IB	primary school	Gender						
		Male	144	2.70	.72	-.53	354	.600
	Female	212	2.74	.72				
	secondary school	Gender.						
Male		289	2.16	.93	-2.02	321	.045	
Female	34	2.51	1.10					
PSD	primary school	Gender						
		Male	144	3.03	.92	-1.60	354	.111
	Female	212	3.19	.94				
	secondary school	Gender.						
Male		289	2.81	.98	-2.62	321	.009	
Female	34	3.27	.99					
PEMES	primary school	Gender						
		Male	144	3.51	.86	-2.17	354	.031
	Female	212	3.70	.79				
	secondary school	Gender.						
Male		289	3.01	.82	-3.30	321	.001	

SSCR	primary school	Female	34	3.51	.86			
		Gender						
		Male	144	3.39	.88	-1.84	354	.067
	secondary school	Female	212	3.55	.79			
		Gender.						
		Male	289	3.18	.90	-2.72	321	.007
		Female	34	3.63	.99			

Discussion

The major purpose of this study was to explore the working conditions of teachers and their implications to teaching and learning processes at primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia. The quantitative analysis of the study showed that teachers were neutral about their overall status of working conditions. There was no statistically significant mean difference between regions in the perception of primary school teachers on working conditions but it was found that there was a difference between regions in secondary school teachers' perception on working conditions in which teachers in Amhara regional state had the highest mean. Although teachers were neutral, the qualitative results suggested that they had an unenthusiastic perception of their working environment in schools. However, other research findings indicated that teachers working conditions in Ethiopia were not conducive, had been seriously compromised, and often observed as affecting the education processes and negatively affected the attitude of the society towards teaching (Gedefaw, 2012; Getachew, 1999; Manna & Tesfaye, 2000; Tesfaye & Demewoz, 2004; World Bank, 2005).

With regards to components of working conditions, the majority of secondary school teachers perceived that the income and benefits in their profession were not satisfactory for them whereas teachers in primary school remained neutral. This finding is in parallel with other studies' findings which indicated that salaries and incentives of teachers are major issues that determine teachers' working and living conditions but according to Bennell (2004) teachers are paid considerably less than the 'mainstream professionals' such as doctors, engineers, and lawyers. According to Artz (2010) benefits such as housing provision and transport allowances, pension, holidays, health insurance and compensation for after-hours' work are often less for teachers. Furthermore, Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) indicated that teachers in many African countries are working in challenging conditions due to factors such as delay in payment of salaries, allowances, and promotions, scarce teaching, and learning resources, and disrespect from government, parents, and the community at large.

Nevertheless, about policy environment, management and evaluation systems, safety, and school-community relationship, the primary school teachers felt positive while secondary schools teachers consistently remained neutral. This positive feeling is important for teachers to effectively discharge their work. According to Mullins (2005), safety needs such as the need for protection from danger, deprivation, pain, the threat of physical attack, lack of savings, and failure to medical services, etc, are important for teachers to effectively discharge their responsibility.

It was also found a significant difference between regions in terms of the policy environment, management and evaluation systems, safety and school community relationship among primary school teachers, and incomes and benefits among secondary school teachers. The perception of primary school teachers in Amhara regional state on the policy environment, management, and evaluation systems was more positive than that of the other regions whereas perceptions of secondary school teachers with regards to incomes and benefits were negative than the Tigray and Oromia regions. Similarly, the qualitative data showed that they had dissatisfaction with these categories.

Concerning gender, both school levels both male-female teachers were unable to take a position on the perception of the working condition in the schools. The result from independent sample t-test analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in primary schools on incomes and benefits, professional self-development and safety, and school community relationship but there was a significant difference between males and females in primary school on policy environment, management and evaluation system. Primary school female teachers perceived the condition of the policy environment, management and evaluation system more positively than male teacher counterparts. However, there was a significant mean difference between males and females in secondary schools in all components. Secondary school male teachers were not satisfied with incomes and benefits than females but female teachers perceived positively the situation of policy environment, management and evaluation system and safety and school community relationship than male teachers in secondary school.

Working conditions play an important part in the quality of education that comes out of schools. A good working environment will determine the quantity and quality of knowledge children receive; the type of skills to enhance the development of young minds; and the sense of security children feel (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Moreover, schools that can offer their teachers a safe, pleasant, and supportive working environment and adequate compensation are better able to attract and retain good teachers and motivate them to do their level best. A study conducted by Markel (2004) shows that working conditions have continually played a large role in teacher decisions to migrate or leave the profession. Reasons for remaining in teaching or leaving are strongly associated with how teachers view administrative support, available education resources, teacher input regarding decision-making, and school climate (Markel, 2004). Hence, teachers working conditions should be improved to have effective teaching in schools to enhance learning outcomes and retain teachers in their profession.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study, in general, showed that the study participant teachers both at primary school levels tended to have an apathetic perception about their working conditions expressed in terms of income and benefits (IB), professional self-development (PSD), policy environment, management, and evaluation system (PEMES), safety and school community relationship (SSCR). Specifically, the difference in perception observed between males and females towards working conditions was significantly high. This would suggest that women seemed to have more negative perceptions about their working conditions. This might be attributed to the fact that women are overburdened with house chores as well as with productive work. The overall result showed that teachers do not seem to be satisfied with their working conditions. This would imply that the working conditions at primary and secondary schools do not seem to be conducive for teachers. The existence of unfavorable working conditions could mean that teachers would encounter difficulty in using their utmost potential to fulfill their professional commitments as teachers. This difficulty might have a contribution to the poor teaching effectiveness of the teachers which is likely to spill over to the prevailing poor quality education in Ethiopia. Therefore, school management, regional education bureaus and the Ministry of Education should work jointly towards alleviating difficulties related to income and benefits (IB), professional self-development (PSD), policy environment, management, and evaluation system (PEMES), safety, and school community relationship (SSCR).

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