ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ETHIOPIA: STATUS, CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the status, challenges, and prospects of partnership between teacher education institutes (TEIs) and secondary schools in Ethiopia. To this end, 141 secondary school teachers from 15 secondary schools, 70 instructor, and 162 student teachers from three universities were taken as a sample using purposive and random sampling techniques. Data were collected from participants (instructors, student teachers, secondary school teachers, school principals, deans, and practicum coordinators) using questionnaires (open and close-ended), interview, and documents analysis. Then the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a qualitative thematic analysis. The data analyzed suggests that the partnership between teacher education institutes and secondary schools is weak and TEIs, secondary schools, student teachers, TEI instructors and secondary school teachers' contribution and supports to each other are not found to be satisfactory. In addition, the evidences suggest that there exists an opportunity for collaborative research, providing professional development trainings, and involving school teachers in mentoring and assessing students teachers in better ways. However, Organization of practicum, student teachers' discipline, instructors' assessing student teachers, distance of secondary schools from the TEIs and secondary school teachers' involvement in mentoring are identified as challenges.

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Background of the study

Recent global phenomena such as 'new ways of working, changes in working practices and employment conditions, as well as changes in the role of training and education' demand higher learning institutions to be engaged and form partnership with the 'outside world' and redefine their roles (Gizaw, 2002). They are no longer 'about intellectual pursuit, predominantly for its own sake' or limited to educating 'a very privileged minority' (Thomas, 2002; Ayalew, 2002). Sensing the importance of partnership at this stage of knowledge based economy and society is not difficult.

There are different models of partnership with different aims, ambitions and entities in higher education (Donaldson, 2006; O'Brien and MacBeath, 1997). The aims and ambitions of the partnerships may vary. In its most basic form, the partnership should support the ambition to provide the best education for students. In this ambition, according to European Commission (2007) report the following three elements are crucial: improving methods for teaching and learning, raising the quality of teachers and developing knowledge about teaching learning through research. The extent to which these aims and ambitions are realized partly is determined by model of partnership being implemented.

Models of partnership between teacher education Institutions and schools can vary based on who takes the responsibility for initial Teacher Education. At one extreme we find TEIs being fully responsible for the education of new teachers to schools being fully responsible for school-based teacher education at the other. In general, partnership models may vary based on the nature of the contract or partnership agreement, financial arrangements, number, and type of partner institutions involved, focus of the partnership, and the geographical context of the partnership (European Commission, 2007; Sandmann &. Weerts, 2006). Based on the model of the partnership, the four entities (the school, TEIs, the student teacher and the system) can benefit out of the partnership in different ways. Some of the benefits are discussed below.

The school might get involved in the initial education of new teachers. Staffs within the school might get opportunity for in-service training, increase school's capacity for innovation and knowledge development through support from teacher educators and through student-teachers' development and research activities, the partnership creates a bridge for feedback of the outcomes of education research into the reality of the professional within schools. The TEIs can get benefits such as having an opportunity to relate the curriculum of teacher education more closely to the complex reality within the school; to provide student teachers with a realistic learning environment; and to get realistic and relevant research questions and assignments for student teachers.

Student teachers benefit through involvement in the reality of schools. Their involvement helps to reduce the 'practice shock' sometimes experienced by students at the end of their studies. In addition, getting a more realistic view of the profession and the demands that it places on teachers is another benefit (European Commission, 2007). Moreover, at the system level the following benefits can be observed: (1) partnerships can play a role in moving towards a more coherent and integrated approach to Teacher Education that links initial education to induction and continuous professional development; (2) Partnerships can create strong connections between innovation, professional development, and research.

While discussing about the partnership between school and TEI, we need to consider a number of crucial conditions

That contribute to success. Identifying responsible entities, stating the contributions, roles and responsibilities for each institutions and participants is one condition. Another condition is identifying and clearly stating the tangible benefits to be obtained out of the partnership. In other words, this includes having a shared vision, purpose and understanding between all participants in the partnership.

Statement of the problem

The global economy is becoming ever more knowledge based and it needs people with modern skills at all levels. Higher education helps people acquire such skills and become more competent. Research evidences suggest that higher education increases productivity and contribute for economic growth (Clarke, 2003; Teshome, 2004; Saint, 2004). Higher education gives opportunity to produce finest brains in the world that can push the boundaries of knowledge, science and understanding. In view of these facts, expanding higher education institutions is vital to build knowledge-based society. In light of these benefits, the commitment by Ethiopian government to expand higher education is a good start in the process of alleviating poverty and enhancing sustainable development in the country. However, this expansion brings not only opportunity for economic growth but also challenges with it. One of the challenges that are resulting from expanding higher institution relates to lack of strong link of partnership (Teshome, 2004; Ashcroft, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). However such link of partnership and connection is very important. Why? There are at least three reasons:

The first reason is that local availability of knowledge and skills is becoming increasingly important (Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2007). For example, teachers need to continuously improve their teaching skills. Universities, as engines of research, need to make their findings about improved ways of teaching accessible to teachers. Strong partnership between schools and teacher education institutes make transfer of knowledge easier.

The second reason relates to mission of a university. It has been accepted that the mission of a university is the discovery, improvement and dissemination of knowledge (Kaleen, 1967). Without having a connection and link of partnership, how can this be possible? Dissemination of knowledge and skills requires not only identification of beneficiaries or stakeholders but also creating appropriate link and establishing effective partnership (Donaldson, 2006).

The final reason relates to policy requirements. Regarding partnership between universities and the community, the Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation No. 351/2003 clearly indicates the need to create and maintain partnership between higher institutions and other stakeholders. For instance higher education proclamation part two No. 12 and 14 states that higher education need to undertake research and disseminate the findings, establish co-operation with different bodies and provide support for primary and secondary education institutes.

However, research findings show that this partnership is insufficient and weak (European Commission, 2007; Teshome, 2004; Ashcroft, 2004; Gizaw, 2002; Ministry of Education (MoE), 2003). This research was conducted to describe the current[1] status, challenges, and prospects of partnership between teacher education institutes and secondary schools.

[1] This study was conducted between the years 2009 and 2011 based on the previous teacher education program

The study has attempted to answer the following questions:

- What is the status of TEIs partnership with secondary schools in Ethiopia?
- What opportunities do TEIs have for establishing strong partnership with secondary schools?
- What are the challenges in establishing partnership between TEIs and secondary schools?
- What actions are TEIs taking to establish or sustain partnership with secondary schools?
- What do stakeholder say need to be done to improve partnership between the TEIs and Secondary schools in Ethiopia?

METHODOLOGY

The Study design

To explore and describe the status, challenges and prospects in partnership between teacher education institutes and secondary schools a cross-sectional exploratory study design was employed.

Study Participants

The target is to explore and describe the status, challenges and prospects in partnership between teacher education institutes and secondary schools. However, due to limited time and resources we could not include all TEIs and their environ secondary schools for this study. As a result three TEIs and 15 secondary schools were included as sample of the study.

From the nine established universities of the country that have teacher education faculty (during the study period), the following three teacher education faculties were selected using simple random sampling: Faculties of Education from Jimma, Dilla and Bahir Dar Universities. In addition fifteen secondary schools found in the TEI's environ were selected using the same method (i.e. five secondary schools for each TEI). Student teachers and Instructors in the TEIs were selected by stratified random sampling (departments forming the strata). Deans and practicum coordinators in the Teacher Education Institutions were included. Teachers in the secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling (their department forming the strata). Hence, the sources of data for the study were secondary school teachers, instructors, student teachers, deans and/or practicum coordinators from the universities, and secondary school principals.

Instruments for collecting data

To collect the necessary information from the participants of the study, the following instruments were employed:

Questionnaire: Questionnaire was prepared for instructors, student teachers, and secondary school teachers. The questionnaire, through open and close ended questions, has generated both qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to the status, challenges, and prospects of partnership between TEIs and secondary schools.

Interview Guide Questions: Structured types of interview guides were prepared for practicum coordinators, deans, and secondary school principals. The interview guide questions helped to solicit information about opportunities, and challenges in partnership between TEIs and secondary schools, the status of the partnership, actions taken to improve the partnership, and participants' suggestions to improve the partnership for the future.

Documentary Review: Documents from practicum offices were reviewed to identify existing or planned actions to improve the partnership

Procedures of Data Collection

Data collectors were hired and trained to collect data using the questionnaires from instructors, student teachers, and

secondary school teachers. Practicum coordinators, deans and secondary school principals were interviewed by the researchers. In addition, the researchers reviewed documents.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The instruments prepared for collecting data were given to two curriculum experts working at Jimma University department of Pedagogy for comment. Based on the feedbacks, some items were completely discarded and some others were modified. The issue of reliability was addressed by pilot testing the instruments. Fifteen trainee teachers and five teacher educators in Jimma University and five teachers at Jiren Secondary School completed the questionnaire for the pilot test. Then an internal consistency reliability estimate was calculated using Cronbach's Coefficient of Alpha for the questionnaires. The researchers found the coefficient of Alpha (α) to be 0.83, which is regarded as strong correlation coefficient by Jackson (2009).

Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used. The in-depth interview result was categorized and coded and a thematic analysis followed. This helped the researchers to explore the challenges and prospects in partnership between TEIs and secondary schools. The data gathered through the questionnaires were organized using tables. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used to analyze these data. In addition, the data collected from document were used to further enrich and support the evidence gathered through questionnaire and interview.

Ethical Considerations

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and the researchers have asked their consent to answer questions in the questionnaire or interview guide. We also informed our participants that the information they provided will only be used for the study purpose. Accordingly, the researchers used the information from our participants only for the study purpose. In addition, the researchers ensured confidentiality by making the participants anonymous.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Background Information of the Participants

The following two tables present background information of the participants. The first table focuses on total number, departments, sex and experiences of respondents while the second table focuses on age and positions of the participants.

Table 1: Respondents total number, sex and number of departments

	Total	Departments	Sex	
			Male	Female
Secondary school teachers	141	11	118 (83.7%)	23 (16%)
TEI instructors	70	12	60 (85.7%)	10 (14.3%)
Student teachers	162	11	128 (79%)	34 (21%)

As can be seen from Table1 most respondents are male. The only reason for this is that the study population consisted more male than female.

The column labeled departments show the number of departments from which the participants were selected. For example, TEI instructors were selected from 12 different departments (i.e. English, Mathematics, Geography, History … and so on).

Table 2: Respondents work experience

	Experience in years			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	More than 15
Secondary school teachers	41 (29.1%)	32 (22.7%)	18 (12.8%)	47 (33.3%)
TEI instructors	36 (51.4%)	18 (25.7%)	7 (10%)	4 (5.7%)

Table 2 provides information about teachers work experience. Secondary school teachers' and TEI instructors' work experience has wide variation. Most instructors in the TEIs are young. Only 5.7% of the instructors have more than 15 years of work experience.

Table 3: Respondents age and position

	Age					Position		
	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	>40	Dep. Head	Dean/ principal	Unit-leader/Practicum coordinators
Secondary school teachers	30	38	19	26	27	13	4	8
TEI instructors	7	38	11	9	4	5	3	3

The three tables above are meant to provide information on how varied the respondents are. The respondents are varied in terms of age, sex, position, experience and departments. They are randomly selected from all these groups. This increases the researchers' confidence that the respondents are representative.

Secondary School Teachers Contribution in Training Student Teachers

The following four tables focus on secondary school teachers' contribution in providing training for student teachers. Table 4 shows their general involvement; Table 5 indicates how they support student teachers, Table 6 specifies how often they observe student teachers lesson and Table 7 illustrates how they involve in assessing student teachers.

Table 4: Secondary School Teachers involve on different training areas for student teachers as perceived by Instructors(I), Secondary School Teachers (T) and Student teachers (S)

S. No	Areas for involvement	Involvement of Secondary school teachers in the areas											
		Directly			Not Directly but gave input			Not involved at all			Does not apply to him/her		
		I	T	S	I	T	S	I	T	S	I	T	S
1	Lesson observation	18(26.1%)	82(58.2%)	77(47.5%)	21(30.4%)	41(29.1%)	44(27.2%)	24(34.8%)	15(10.6%)	27(16.7%)	6(8.7%)	3(2.1%)	14(8.6%)
2	observation check list Preparation	9(12.9%)	64(45.7%)	___	11(15.7%)	33(23.6%)	___	30(42.9%)	32(22.9%)	___	20(28.6 %)	11(7.9%)	___
3	Discuss lesson plans with student teachers	19(27.1%)	71(50.4%)	73(45.9%)	15(21.4%)	34(24.1%)	33(20.8%)	27(38.6%)	26(18.4%)	37(23.3%)	9(12.9%)	10(7.1%)	16(10.1%)
4	Assess student teachers teaching skill	15(21.4%)	48(34%)	72(45.3%)	16(22.9%)	57(40.4%)	35(22%)	29(41.4%)	26(18.4%)	35(22%)	10(14.3 %)	10(7.1%)	17(10.7%)
5	Discuss student teachers progress with an instructor	12(17.4%)	34(24.1%)	___	15(21.7%)	35(24.8%)	___	32(46.4%)	54(38.3%)	___	10(14.5 %)	18(12.8%)	___
6	Providing orientation to student teachers about the school	42(60.9%)	92(65.7%)	111(69.8%)	12(17.4%)	26(18.6%)	24(15.1%)	10(14.5%)	13(9.3%)	15(9.4%)	5(7.2%)	9(6.4%)	9(5.7%)
7	Take attendance	35(50.7%)	89(63.6%)	113(69.8%)	13(18.8%)	27(19.3%)	17(10.5%)	17(24.6%)	14(10%)	20(12.3%)	4(5.8%)	10(7.1%)	12(7.4%)
8	Check student teachers professionalism	16(22.9%)	48(36.6%)	68(42.5%)	16(22.9%)	37(28.2%)	34(21.3%)	29(41.4%)	29(22.1%)	37(23.1%)	9(12.9%)	17(13%)	21(13.1%)
9	Help student teachers adjust their teaching to the class room context	11(15.9%)	80(56.7%)	66(47.1%)	27(39.1%)	28(19.9%)	19(13.6%)	25(36.2%)	26(18.4%)	36(25.7%)	6(8.7%)	7(5%)	19(13.6%)
10	Giving training for the student teachers on the teaching learning process	12(16.2%)	26(18.6%)	66(41%)	12(16.2%)	41(29.3%)	31(19.3%)	33(44.6%)	54(38.6%)	41(25.5%)	17(23%)	19(13.6%)	23(14.3%)

Secondary school teachers can provide training for student teachers during practicum on different areas. The second column of Table 4 indicates most of these areas. In addition, the table provides information about how secondary school teachers' involvement is perceived by the teachers themselves, student teachers and instructors from the TEIs. For example, consider lesson observation. 26.1% of instructors, 58.2 secondary school teachers and 47.5% of student teachers perceived that secondary school teachers were directly involved in this area. In other words, the secondary school teachers were observing student teachers teaching during practicum.

The table indicates 34.8% of instructors, 10.6% of secondary school teachers and 16.7% student teachers perceived that secondary school teachers were not involved in observing lesson. Notice that the percentage for instructors is significantly higher than either student teachers or secondary school teachers. We can learn two things from these figures. First, not all secondary school teachers were involved in observing student teachers lesson. Second, instructors might not know whether or not secondary school teachers are observing student teachers' lesson. This might explain the significant variation in response.

Another important area of involvement for secondary school teachers is discussing student teachers progress with instructors. Only 24.1% secondary school teachers and 17.4% of instructors perceived that secondary school teachers are directly involved in this area.

60.9% of instructors, 65.7% of secondary school teachers and 69.8% of student teachers perceived that secondary school teachers are directly involved on giving orientation for student teachers. Only less than 15% of the respondents perceive that secondary school teachers are not involved at all in this area.

Considering the area assessing student teachers teaching skill, we see that only 21.4% of instructors, 34% of secondary school teachers and 45.3% of student teachers perceived that the secondary school teachers are involved directly. On the contrary, 41.4% of instructors, 18.4% secondary school teachers and 22% of student teachers perceived that secondary school teachers are not involved at all in assessing student teachers teaching skill.

Table 5: Secondary School Teachers' Support to Student Teachers as rated by Instructors (I), Secondary School teachers (T) and Student Teachers (S)

S. No		How secondary school teachers' support is rated?											
		Excellent			Satisfactory			Not satisfactory			Never supported		
	Areas of support	I	T	S	I	T	S	I	T	S	I	T	S
1	Instructional planning	5(7.9%)	32(22.7%)	32(20%)	12(19%)	80(56.7%)	68(42.5%)	24(38.1%)	19(13.5%)	25(15.6%)	22(34.9%)	10(7.1%)	35(21.9%)
2	Selecting teaching methodology	5(7.7%)	27(19.4%)	21(3%)	9(13.8%)	78(56.1%)	74(46%)	24(36.9%)	21(15.1%)	31(19.3%)	27(41.5%)	13(9.4%)	35(21.7%)
3	classroom management	5(8.1%)	42(30.4%)	55(34.2%)	13(21%)	67(48.6%)	50(31.1%)	23(37.1%)	19(13.8%)	33(20.5%)	21(33.9%)	10(7.2%)	23(14.3%)
4	Giving feedback and praise	6(9.7%)	33(23.4%)	24(14.9%)	10(16.1%)	66(46.8%)	69(42.9%)	21(33.9%)	28(19.9%)	38(23.6%)	25(40.3%)	14(9.9%)	30(18.6%)
5	Motivate students	6(9.7%)	41(29.7%)	43(26.9%)	10(16.1%)	63(45.7%)	51(31.9%)	20(32.3%)	22(15.9%)	35(21.9%)	26(41.9%)	12(8.7%)	31(19.4%)
6	Check attainment of instructional objectives	5(8.1%)	31(22.1%)	25(15.6%)	8(12.9%)	62(44.3%)	58(36.3%)	23(37.1%)	32(22.9%)	40(25%)	26(41.9%)	15(10.7%)	37(23.1%)
7	preparing tests or examinations	5(8.2%)	33()23.6%	32(20%)	9(14.8%)	63(45%)	46(28.8%)	21(34.4%)	29(20.7%)	31(19.4%)	26 (42.6%)	15(10.7%)	51(31.9%)
8	Recording assessment results	6(9.8%)	38(27.1%)	18(11.5%)	9(14.8%)	59(42.1%)	58(36.9%)	17(27.9%)	28(20%)	26(16.6%)	29(47.5%)	15(10.7%)	55(35%)
9	communicating assessment results	4(6.6%)	29(20.7%)	22(13.8%)	11(18%)	65(46.4%)	52(32.7%)	19(31.1%)	30(21.4%)	39(24.5%)	27(44.3%)	16(11.4%)	46(28.9%)
10	Evaluating taught lessons	4(6.5%)	22(15.7%)	29(18.4%)	9(14.5%)	69()49.3%	53(33.5%)	21(33.9%)	30(21.4%)	37(23.4%)	28(45.2%)	19(13.6%)	39(24.7%)
11	Selecting, preparing, using and teaching aid	4(6.6%)	20(14.3%)	40(25.2%)	15(24.6%)	61(43.6%)	45(28.3%)	22(36.1%)	42(30%)	41(25.8%)	20(32.8%)	17(12.1%)	33(20.8%)
12	Involving in co-curricular activities	6(9.7%)	20(14.3%)	39(24.7%)	9(14.5%)	63(45%)	49(31%)	26(41.9%)	39(27.9%)	29(18.4%)	21(33.9%)	18(12.9%)	41(25.9%)
13	Using plasma screen	2(3.4%)	37(27.6%)	29(18.5%)	12(20.3%)	40(29.9%)	27(17.2%)	28(47.5%)	30(22.4%)	27(17.2%)	17(28.8%)	27 (20.1%)	74(47.1%)

articipants were requested to indicate areas in which the secondary school teachers support the student teachers during practicum (Teaching practice). The result is presented in Table 5. One can notice that about 70% of school teachers rated their support for student teachers in such areas as instructional planning, selecting teaching aid, preparing exam and recording assessment results and motivating students as satisfactory or excellent. About 60% of student teachers rating agree to the secondary school teachers rating in most cases. However, only 35% of the student teachers rated secondary school teachers' support on how to use plasma screen as excellent or satisfactory.

Most instructors from the TEI did not agree to the rating of the student teachers or the secondary school teachers. Less than 30% of TEI instructors rated secondary school teachers' support as excellent or satisfactory in all areas (Instructional planning, selecting teaching methodology, classroom management, preparing examination …etc).

Student teachers need support and guidance from the secondary school teachers on preparing lesson plan, managing classroom, motivating students, preparing examination or selecting teaching methodology. Table 5 indicates that more than 30% of instructors from the TEIs rated secondary school teachers' support in these areas as unsatisfactory. About 20% of student teachers and more than 15% of the secondary school teachers agree with the instructors rating.

Table 6: How often does the school teacher observe student teachers' lesson or vice versa?

Who is Observing?	respondents	Frequency of observation					
		Once in a weak	Once during practicum	Twice during practicum	More than twice during practicum	never	I don't know
A student teacher observes school teachers' lesson	I	6(9%)	18(27%)	8(12%)	17(25%)	7(11%)	11(16%)
	T	32(24.8%)	24(18.6%)	14(10.9%)	38(29.5%)	20(15.5%)	-
	S	32(20.6%)	30(19.4%)	37(23.9%)	29(18.7%)	27(17.4%)	-
A school teacher observe student teachers' lessons	I	4(6%)	12(17%)	8(12%)	6(9%)	27(40%)	11(16%)
	T	38(27.5%)	23(16.7%)	21(15.2%)	32(23.2%)	24(17.4%)	-
	S	47(29.2%)	24(14.9%)	18(11.2%)	21(13%)	1(31.5%)	-

Lesson observation is one of the most important activities during practicum for student teachers. They can learn from observing the secondary school teacher teaching or being observed by the secondary school teacher while they are teaching. Table 6 shows how often the student teachers' lesson is observed by the secondary school teachers and vice versa. 11% of instructors, 15.5% of secondary school teachers and 17.4% of student teachers reported that student teachers were never observed school teachers while they were teaching. 40% of instructors, 17.4% secondary school teachers and 31.5% of student teachers have reported that school teacher never observed student teachers while they

were teaching. Table 6 suggest that most secondary school teachers observed

student teachers only once or twice during practicum. Only 9% of instructors, 23.5% secondary school teachers and 13% of the student teachers reported that the secondary school teachers observe student teachers' lesson more than twice during practicum.

Table 7: Teachers participation in assessing student teachers' teaching skills

Do secondary school teachers take part in assessing student teachers' teaching skill?	School Teachers		Instructors		Student Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	85	60.3	25	35.7	87	54.4
No	56	39.7	45	64.3	73	45.6
Total	141	100	70	100	160	100

The result in Table 7 depicts that more than half of the secondary school teachers 85(60.3%) and student teachers 87(54.4%) verified secondary school teachers' participation in assessing student teachers' teaching skill. However, more than half of the instructors 45(64%) replied that teachers did not take part in the assessment of student teachers teaching skill. In addition, those respondents who said secondary school teachers participate in assessing student teachers teaching skill were further requested to specify what percentage their assessment makes out of the total mark allotted for practicum. Most say 0- 10% while most practicum coordinators and instructors stated that school teachers' assessment makes 0% of the marks allotted for practicum.

How did TEI Instructors Contribute for the Secondary Schools?

The researchers have asked instructors from the TEIs and teachers in the environ secondary schools to list areas on which secondary school teachers might need support. The following five areas repeatedly appeared on their list: Improving English language skill, improving subject matter knowledge, how to use technology in education (including how to effectively use plasma screen), effective use of laboratory equipments, and how to conduct research. Notice that these are not the only areas. Rather, these are the most frequent areas where support is needed. Did TEIs organize trainings to address this need for support? The following table gives the answer.

Table 8: Did TEIs organize trainings to address secondary school teachers need?

	Response	
Participants	Yes	No
Teachers	35(24.8%)	106(75.2%)
Instructors	17(29.8%)	40(70.2%)
Total	52(26.3%)	146 (72.7%)

The table above shows that more than 70% of teachers and instructors did not believe that the TEIs organize trainings to address the perceived training need of

secondary school teachers. Some teachers and instructors (below 30%) believed that TEIs are organizing such trainings. Clearly, the majority of secondary school teachers were not either aware of these trainings or the training is provided for few representatives of secondary school teachers only.

How did Student Teachers Contribute to the Secondary Schools?

To understand how specifically student teachers contribute to the schools, the researchers asked teachers, student teachers and instructors the following question: "please list at least three ways in which the student teachers contribute to the school" their answer is summarized as follows:
student teachers contribute to the school by preparing teaching aid, providing tutorial classes, participating in co-curricular activities, raising awareness on issues like HIV, contributing to the sanitation of the school, inspiring students and substituting the teachers in the secondary schools.

Communication

The following table captures the general feeling of TEI instructors and secondary school teachers about the communication between TEIs and the environ schools.

Table 9: Rating of Communication between TEIs and the environ secondary schools

participants	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor	Total
Teachers	12(8.5%)	20(14.2%)	38(27%)	37(26.2)	34(24.1%)	141
Instructors	2(3.3%)	8(13.3%)	14(23.3%)	27(45%)	9(13.3%)	60

As shown in Table 9, more than 50% of the teachers and instructors rated the communication between TEIs and the environ schools either poor or very poor. In addition, less than 20% of teachers and instructors rated the communication as very good or excellent while about 25% of the instructors and teachers said the communication is good. Clearly, the rating suggest that the instructors and the school teachers were not satisfied with the communication between the TEIs and the environ schools. Answers given to the following questions help in understanding what this means:

Instructors and school teachers were asked the following questions: How often secondary school teachers are informed beforehand about when practicum would start or end, whether school teachers are given a guideline on how to support or assess student teachers, and whether a meeting is arranged for a school teacher and an instructor to discuss student teachers progress. The most frequent answer was negative. For example, practicum schedule did not allow for advance preparation. More than 50% secondary school teachers and about 40% of instructors felt that practicum starts by surprise. Many school teachers (more than 60%) reported that they were not given guidelines about how to support or assess student teachers. More than 75% of secondary school teachers reported that there is no arrangement for meeting with instructors to discuss student teachers' progress. About 80% of the instructors agreed. From these results, we can now understand why the communication between TEIs and Secondary Schools was rated poor. Practicum activities seem to occur by surprise, the secondary school teachers are not given guidelines and arrangement for meeting to discuss student teachers' progress is lacking.

Collaborative research

Principals, practicum coordinators (or deans), secondary school teachers and instructors all recognized the importance

of conducting research in collaboration with each other. However, the secondary school and TEI communities are not collaboratively conducting research. Some teachers from secondary school participate in collecting data or providing information. Yet, neither the instructors nor the teachers in the secondary school take the initiative to conduct collaborative research.

When asked: "what do you think of the possibility for conducting collaborative research?" instructors and secondary school teachers (about 60%) expressed a view that it is possible. We also have requested both instructors from the TEIs and teachers from the environ secondary schools to list areas in which they would like to do collaborative research. Their list indicates that they would like to conduct collaborative research on the areas such as: Student assessment, employing problem solving methods, managing classroom, effective teaching in large class size, improving students attitude towards science subjects, assessing and using locally available energy, the role of science to improve daily life, teachers skill and readiness to teach, teachers professionalism, continuous assessment in large classes, assessing secondary school teachers' skill of conducting practical activities in the laboratory, improving the collaboration between high school teachers and instructors, teacher student relationship, professional development, improving students achievement in maths, teaching mathematics in a simple and understandable way, and the significance of school clubs in promoting science education

Challenges in and Overall Status of the Partnership

This section attempts to briefly summarize the challenges in the partnership between TEIs and the environ secondary schools. The responses for the open ended question: "what are the challenges during practicum?" highlight some of the challenges as follows:

Balance of Benefit*:* Most teachers feel that their schools contribute to the TEIs by accommodating students during practicum and by providing information for those people from TEIs when conducting research. However, they feel that, the TEIs contribution is not significant in improving the teaching learning process in their schools.

Evaluation*:* some secondary school teachers and most instructors feel that school teachers' assessment is not considered when grading student teachers performance during practicum. This creates a challenge in that student teachers respect for and cooperation with the school teacher is minimized and school teachers' motivation to assess student teachers regularly is negatively affected.

Work relationship and Communication*:* some teachers and instructors reported that the school teachers and the instructors do not have smooth work relationship. They do not communicate regularly, there is lack of mutual understanding and conflict of interest (usually in the form of disagreement over schedule of activities). In addition, some instructors and teachers reported that there is no clear guideline on how to involve school teachers during practicum.

Weak Partnership: About half of the instructors from TEIs and over 60% secondary school teachers rated the partnership between TEIs and secondary schools as weak. Obviously, weak partnership is another challenge that needs attention. Besides most instructors and secondary school teachers do not know what their organization is doing to tackle this challenge.

DISCUSSION

In this section, an attempt is made to interpret the data collected through different tools from different sources and to answer the research question. Hence, the discussion is organized in such a way that the research questions are answered.

Status of partnership between TEIs and Secondary Schools

A partnership with a good status should support mutual benefit (Greenberg, 1991; Bowers, 2001). This might mean different things to different organizations. When considering the benefit out of TEI and secondary school partnership, at least three important areas emerge which are: TEIs contribution to a school's program, the contribution from school staffs to teacher education and the contribution from student teachers to school development. Effective communication is also another indicator of good partnership (European Commission, 2007; Thomas, 2002).

School Teachers' Contribution

Student teachers go to schools to develop professional skills and learn about their future work environment (Lorist et.al, 2009). Obviously, school teachers can take part in refining students' professional skill, instilling professionalism and acquainting student teachers with their future work environment.

Table 4 shows that most school teachers directly involve in giving orientation to student teachers about the school. And hence, the school teachers seem to be doing something in acquainting student teachers with their future work environment.

School teachers rated their contribution in areas such as giving support to student teachers in preparing test, lesson plan and evaluation, classroom management, selecting teaching method, preparing and using teaching aid as satisfactory or excellent. About 40% of student teachers and 70% of instructors do not agree with the secondary school teachers. They think the contribution by the teachers in the aforementioned areas is not satisfactory. In Addition, from table 5, about 50% of school teachers admit that they do not directly involve in such activities as lesson observation, discussing lesson plan with student teachers and assessing student teachers teaching skill. Most student teachers and instructors feel the same (about 80%).

Number of research relating to TEI-school partnerships indicate that school teacher can and should contribute to student teachers professional development through observing lessons, giving feedback, discussing lesson plans, and mentoring (Ceylan & Lee, 2000; University of Ulster, 1991; Denish Technological Institute, 2007). The data as displayed in table 4 and table 5 show that school teachers' contribution in sharing their experience to student teachers is not satisfactory.

Student teachers can benefit a lot from observing secondary school teachers while they are teaching in classrooms. In addition, student teachers can benefit from being observed by the school teachers while they are teaching in classrooms during practicum. Nevertheless, 70% of all respondents (school teachers, student teachers and instructors) reported that student teachers did not observe the school teacher teaching in the classroom and the student teachers were not observed by the school teacher when they are teaching in the classroom during practicum. Hence, lesson observation is a matter of concern. The frequency at which student teachers are observed when they are teaching or that the student teachers observe the school teachers' lesson was not adequate.

Furthermore, instructors and school teachers should meet to discuss student teachers professional development. (Greenberg, 1991; Bezzina, 2006;

Reimers, 1998). However, such discussion seems to be lacking as can be seen from table 4.

TEI's contribution

Instructors in the TEI or the TEI as an institute may contribute to the schools in at least three areas: providing training that would contribute to teachers' professional development, Collaborative research and sharing resources (Greenberg, 1991; European Commission, 2007).

Need for professional development training: Secondary school teachers have expressed interest for training on areas such as how to support student teachers, improve teaching skill, communicate, conduct research and use computers. However, as can be seen from table 8, over 70% instructors and school teachers said that the TEIs do not organize such trainings. On the other hand 30% of respondents confirmed the existence of such trainings. The difference in response suggests that even if trainings were organized, it did not include the majority of the secondary school teachers. Interview results further clarify this point. Practicum coordinators and Deans have said that their TEI arranges workshops for representative school personnel only.

Collaborative Research: Although both school teachers and instructors believe that there is a possibility of conducting research collaboratively, they were not conducting collaborative research. Neither instructors nor school teachers take the initiative to conduct collaborative researches.

Sharing Resources: Deans and Practicum coordinators of some TEIs have indicated that their TEI has donated computers, printers and duplicating machines to the environ secondary schools. Some of the school directors in the TEIs environ confirmed this response.

Student Teachers' Contribution: Student teachers contribute to the secondary schools by preparing teaching material, providing tutorial classes, participating in co-curricular activities, raising awareness about issues like HIV, inspiring students to attend college and substituting regular teachers (or help to minimize teachers shortage). However, some teachers and instructors have expressed concerns such as the existence of student teachers who have lacked subject matter knowledge or teaching skill. These student teachers only waste the teaching learning time. Lack of enthusiasm and interest to teach, poor communication skill, and poor classroom management skill are additional challenges.

Communication

As it is evident from Table 9 the communication between TEIs and secondary schools is not effective. The school and student teachers reported that there is orientation by the school to the student teachers. However, most respondents (over 70%), reported that there is no orientation for school teachers, arrangement for meeting with instructors and guideline on how to support student teachers. Generally, more than 50% of both instructors and school teachers have rated the communication between TEIs and secondary schools as poor.

From the discussion so far, school teachers are not effectively supporting student teachers professional development, the TEIs are not satisfactorily contributing to the schools (mainly lack of collaborative research and providing training that contributes to the professional development of the school teachers) and communication between TEIs and the environ secondary schools is poor. The evidences presented suggest that the status of partnership between TEIs and secondary school

teachers is still weak and does not allow stakeholders to mutually benefit. A strong partnership (As described, for example, in Greenberg,1991; Lorist et.al, 2009; Bezzina, 2006; Reimers, 1998) results in mutual benefit.

Opportunities for strengthening the partnership

Secondary school teachers have expressed interest for training that would improve their skills in the following areas: facilitating students learning, supporting student teachers, using computers and communication. Hence, TEIs have opportunity to organize short term trainings to address secondary school teachers need for training.

Moreover, both the school teachers and instructors from the TEIs have expressed willingness to conduct collaborative research. They have even suggested the following areas for the research: effective teaching in large classes, improving students' attitude towards science subjects, assessing and using locally available resources and assessing teachers' skill of conducting practical activities in laboratories. Obviously, there is an opportunity to conduct collaborative research.

In addition, Deans, practicum coordinators, school principals and school teachers have all expressed interest in strengthen the partnership between TEIs and secondary schools. According to Scott and Allsop (1998), Vick (2007), Greenberg (1991), and Bezzina (2006) this willingness in itself creates an opportunity to strengthen TEI-school partnership.

Challenges

Organization of practicum, student teachers' discipline, student assessment, and communication, distance of secondary schools from the TEI, lack of mutual benefit, supervision, and secondary school teachers' involvement are identified as challenges.

What actions are being taken to improve the partnership?

Most secondary school teachers and TEI instructors do not know what their organization (the school or the TEI) is doing to improve the partnership. Some TEI's Deans and practicum coordinators have expressed interest to improve the partnership. Organizing workshops, providing on the job trainings, strengthening clubs found in secondary schools and conducting collaborative research are some of the activities included in the TEIs plan for the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The following are major conclusions based on the evidence observed. Each conclusion relates directly to the research questions:

TEIs-secondary school partnership seems to be very weak as secondary schools contribution in training student teacher or TEIs contribution to secondary school teachers' professional development is not up to the theoretical expectations. In Addition, TEIs-secondary schools communication seems to be poor. Further more, TEI instructors and secondary school teachers have rated the strength of the partnership as poor.

Both instructors and secondary school teachers have expressed interest to conduct research collaboratively. In addition, Secondary school teachers have expressed need for trainings that can contribute to their professional development.

The major challenges are: poor organization of practicum, student teachers' discipline, lack of credit for secondary school teachers in assessing student teachers, poor communication,

long distance between secondary schools and TEIs and lack of mutual benefit.

Most instructors and secondary school teachers do not know what their organizations (TEIs and secondary schools) are doing to strengthen partnership. What this suggests is that there is nothing being done to improve the partnership or what is being done does not involve the main actors (Instructors and secondary school teachers).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and major conclusions of the study the following recommendations are forwarded:

- TEIs and Secondary Schools should create a forum that opens opportunity for planning together, share experience and find ways to systematically contribute for each other.
- An opportunity for collaborative research should be created and/or encouraged.
- Mechanism should be designed where student teachers are assessed by both instructors and school teachers and the assessment should contribute for grading (so far teachers' assessment is hardly considered for grading student teachers' achievement during practicum).
- Feedback system should be designed so that challenges and opportunities are identified and documented. This might contribute to notice challenges and opportunities and act accordingly.
- Student teachers discipline is a thing of concern for most school teachers. Hence, school teachers should be provided for opportunity to evaluate student teachers discipline and their evaluation should seriously be considered. For example, based on the evaluation result some student teachers might be asked to do the practicum again with improved behaviors.
- When orientation is necessary, instead of selecting few representatives, it might be better to make arrangements that allows for cascading – first training trainers and then the trained teachers will train their colleagues.

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