

Teachers' Perception toward Quality of Education and Their Practice: The Case of Godar Secondary Schools, Ethiopia

Asrat Dagne^{*}, Aster Asrat

Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia

^{*}Corresponding author: Asratboza@yahoo.com

Abstract The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perception and practice toward quality of education in secondary schools of Gondar. In order to attain this objective, the following questions were raised: how do teachers perceive quality education, what is the relationship between teachers' perception process and their practice and the challenging constraints to quality of education. To this effect, descriptive survey method was employed. The information used in this study was obtained through questionnaires, focus group discussions and observation. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 103 teachers (87 male and 16 female). Six sections of classrooms were observed and two group discussions carried out with department heads (23 participants of male teachers) into two secondary schools. Data were analyzed by both Descriptive and inferential statistics through percentages, t-test, correlation and one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Results indicated that teachers' value input indicators of quality of education more than process and output indicators. Output indicators received the lowest rating. Teachers' practice also indicated that they apply process indicators in a reasonable manner. The results of relationship between practices of teaching-learning processes revealed that, as teachers' perception toward quality teaching-learning process increases their practice of elements of constructivism also increases. Finally, recommendations were forwarded on the basis of the findings that teachers view the quality of education in terms of input.

Keywords: *teachers, perception, quality of education and practice*

Cite This Article: Asrat Dagne, and Aster Asrat, "Teachers' Perception toward Quality of Education and Their Practice: The Case of Godar Secondary Schools, Ethiopia." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2016): 248-253. doi: 10.12691/education-4-3-4.

1. Introduction

Quality of education is the burning issue of our schools today. The issues of education quality are prominent in all countries particularly those that are presently expanding enrollments rapidly towards education for all in 2015. Many of these countries are simultaneously introducing complex reforms in teaching and learning related to more participatory active forms of learning. Rapid expansion, changing paradigms of teaching and learning, and limited resources have led to declining quality of education in many countries [2].

The development of education sector in Ethiopia has been at an early stage. On the eve of the ongoing educational reform process, this reform has begun in 1994 following the endorsement of the new Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia. Currently, Ethiopia has placed education at the center of its strategies for development and democratization, with strong policies promoting equity, access and quality of educational provision and rapid expansion of educational opportunities to previously underserved population [1].

To address these and other problems of the education system, the Ethiopian government is placing particular emphasis on education with the firm belief that the long term development of the country depends upon the expansion and provision of the quality of education. The government's desire to improve the provision of the quality education resulted in the formulation of the education and training policy [7]; following the policy, the ministry of education launched a major nationwide reform package to improve the quality of general education (grade 1-12). The package contains six programs to improve quality of education; school improvement program (SIP), teacher development program (TDP), civic and ethical education improvement, curriculum improvement, information and communication technology and educational administration and leader improvement program [8].

Ethiopia's rapidly expanding secondary enrollment rates, 6 percent in the early 1994s to nearly 39 percent in 2009 indicate that Ethiopia has made great strides in increasing access of education. Despite these achievements, expanding enrollment has compromised quality, especially in the content of severely limited resources. Thus, parallel with rapid expansion of the education system, the government called for improving quality of education by employing interactive teaching and learning process with

the limited resources at hand as the quality of education depends largely on the teaching-learning process.

In fact, the definition of quality of education depends on the context and the agreement of the country. There is no universal definition of education quality. Each country's policies define quality explicitly and implicitly according to its own economics, political, social and cultural visions. Virtually, all countries however, include two key elements: the basis of quality students, cognitive learning (which is what achievement tests usually measure) and their social, creative interpersonal and emotional development. Cognitive learning is the major explicit objective of most education system and is often use as the sole indicator of quality, although there is wide disagreement on what to measure as cognitive learning and how to measure it. Learner's social, creative learning and emotional development is rarely assessed in significant way or included in national league of educational outcomes [6,9].

Quality and its measurements, however is complex concepts subjected to interpretations. The existence of many definition of quality in education testifies the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The term efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993 cited in [3]), considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education..

Teachers' perceptions have an enormous effect on the successful implementation of quality education in schools, quality of teaching and quality of learning. Consequently, in conducting the study on the perception of teachers' toward quality of education, the investigation of the impact of the individual characteristics and their successes and then reporting the findings is expected to have practical implication for the successful implementation of the quality of education in Gondar secondary schools.

In line with this idea, literature on education quality indicates a strong link between teacher professional development and quality-especially in areas of teachers' belief, understanding and practices, students learning and on the implementation of educational reforms [10]. Geared toward teachers' capacity building on the use and selection of instructional materials, orientation and sensitization of teacher note that teachers' perception will play a prominent role in the improvement of education quality.

Therefore, understanding the ways in which teachers perceive education quality within their own policy content, may help explain success and challenges in the implementation of quality education in secondary schools and help to identify points of intervention to improve the effectiveness and success of quality education for all. Hence, this study questions how teachers conceptualize and understand quality of education, quality of teaching and quality of learning in Gondar secondary schools. Understanding teachers' perspectives on quality is particularly important because they are the professionals primarily responsible for interpreting and implementing the constructivist, active learning and students centered pedagogical approaches to improve education quality that underlie the reform policy of Ethiopia.

Thus, this study attempted to find out teachers' perception and existing practice on quality of education,

quality of teaching and quality of learning by raising the following research questions.

2. Discussion

1. How do teachers perceive quality of education, quality of teaching and quality of learning?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' perceptions of teaching learning process and their practice?
3. What are the major challenges affecting the quality of education, quality teaching and learning?
4. What is the actual practice of teachers in terms of quality education, quality of teaching and quality of learning?

2.1. Research Design

2.1.1. Subject

The major purpose of this study was proposed to measure teachers' perceptions toward quality of education and their practice of teaching-learning in the classrooms in Gondar Secondary schools. The research method for the study was descriptive survey.

According to Hatton, E. [4], the use of mixed method designs research make the researchers not limited to techniques associated with traditional designs, either quantitative or qualitative.

The advantage of using this design is that it can show the result (quantitative) and explain why it was obtained (qualitative) and also the use of mixed method designs is thus, the strength of each approach can be applied to provide not only more complete results but also one that is more valid. Therefore, in order to meet the purpose of this study, descriptive survey design was found to be preferable.

2.1.2. Data Gathering Instruments

To collect data for this study, both quantitative via questionnaire and qualitative (Observation and document analysis) were used.

2.2. Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered through questionnaire, observation and document review were analyzed using mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative method. The quantitative data were edited, coded and encoded in to SPSS version 20. The questionnaire items were prepared in five level likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Different quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to analyze and interpret the obtained data. These include descriptive and inferential statistics values such as one sample t-test, one way repeated measure ANOVA between group difference and within group for inputs, process and outputs components and Pearson-product movement correlation coefficient, percentage, frequency and mean. The level of significance was set at 0.05 alpha levels. The data that were gathered by using focus group discussion and observations were analyzed descriptively.

2.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

The presentation, interpretation, analysis of results and discussion of the study are provided in the form of tables as follows:

Table 1. Teachers' perceptions of quality of education in terms of input, process and output indicators

Variable	Number	Expected mean	Calculate mean	SD	t-statistics	P-value
Input	103	12	16.078	3.130	13.221*	0.000
Process	103	18	23.282	3.771	14.213*	0.000
Output	103	6	5.408	2.060	-2.918*	0.004

Df=102

*P<0.05

As indicated in Table 1, the results of one sample t-test displayed that perceptions of teachers toward input mean rating was found to be significantly higher than the mean t-value which shows that teachers' perception of inputs indicators as quality education was high.

Similarly, as shown in Table 1, teachers' perceptions of process mean rating was found to be significantly higher than the mean t-value, suggesting that teachers had relatively good perception of process indicators of education quality.

On contrary, as portrayed in Table 1, teachers' perceptions of output mean rating was found to be significantly lower than the mean test-value implying that teachers had lower perceptions of output indicators for quality education.

In addition to this, an attempt was made to identify teachers focus whether it was on input, process or output components of education quality. To do this, one way repeated measure of ANOVA was conducted and the results are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of input, process and output by teachers' perceptions toward education quality

Variable	Indicators of quality	No	Mean	SD
Quality of education	Input	103	4.019	0.783
	process	103	3.880	0.629
	Output	103	2.704	1.030
	Total	309	3.535	1.017

As indicated in Table 2, the descriptive statistics showed that input component had higher mean than process and output components, the process component had the second higher mean score than output component. This shows that teachers were more focused toward input component followed by process component of education to bring about quality of education. Table 3 below presented summary of ANOVA of input, process and output components of education quality.

Table 3. Summary of ANOVA of input, process and output components

Sources	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	significance
B/n group	107.596	2	53.798	78.027*	.000
Within group	210.981	306	0.689		
Total	318.577	308			

*P<0.05.

As indicated in Table 3, the results of one way repeated analysis of variance demonstrated that the mean differences observed between indicators of quality was statistically significant, $F(2,306)=78.027$, $P<0.01$.

Further analysis of Post Hoc pair wise comparison of means in the three indicators groups were calculated. The

results revealed that input indicator had significantly higher mean score compared to output indicators. Similarly, process indicator had significantly higher mean score compared to output indicator ($P<0.05$). No significant mean score difference were observed between input and process indicators of education quality.

Table 4. Frequency, percentage, and mean of responses for quality teaching perspective.

Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total		Mean
	f	P(%)	f	P(%)	f	P(%)	f	P(%)	f	P(%)	f	P(%)	
Quality teaching is the extent to which involving students in the classroom discussion	33	32%	48	46.6%	10	9.8%	12	11.7%	-	0	103	100%	4
Quality teaching is the extent to which teachers give good lecture.	3	2.9%	28	27.2%	14	13.6%	39	37.9%	19	18.4%	103	100%	2.6
Student access to teacher expertise may be decreased if active learning is used.	3	2.9%	12	11.7%	9	8.7%	41	39.8%	38	36.9%	103	100%	2.03

Table 4 indicated that 78.6% of the teachers show their agreement to the quality teaching is the extent to which involving students in the classroom discussion. On the other hand, 11.7% disagreed with the statement indicating that they don't see involving students in the classroom discussion as indicator of quality teaching. The same table shows that 30.1% of the teachers show their agreement to the quality teaching is the extent to which teachers give good lectures. On the other hand, 56.3% disagreed with

the statement, indicating that they don't see lecturing as indicator of quality teaching.

The same table shows that 14.6% of the teachers show their agreement to the students' access to teacher expertise may be decreased, if active learning methods are used. On the other hand, 76.7% disagreed with the statement, indicating that they don't see student's access to teacher expertise, may be decreased, if active learning method is used.

Table 5. Frequency, percentage, and mean of responses for quality learning perspective.

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	M
Quality learning is the extent to which student's active participation in the class.	18(17.5%)	52(50.5%)	9(8.9%)	23(22.3%)	1%	103(100%)	3.7
Quality learning is the extent to which student's score high mark in the final examination	12(11.7%)	41(39.8%)	13(12.6%)	23(22.3%)	14(13.6%)	103(100%)	3.1
Quality learning is the extent to which students reciting what has been said in the class	11(10.7%)	54(52.4%)	10(9.7%)	25(24.3%)	3(2.9%)	103(100%)	3.4

Table 5; indicate that 68% of the teachers show their agreement to the quality learning is the extent to which students' active participation in the class. On the other hand, 23.3% disagreed with the statement, indicating that they don't see students' active participation in the class as indicator for quality learning. The same table shows 63.1% of the teachers' showed the agreement to the quality learning is the extent to which students score high mark in the final examination. On the other hand, 35.9%

disagreed with the statement; indicating that they don't see students score high mark in the final examination as indicator of quality learning. The same table shows that 63.1% of the teachers showed their agreement to quality learning is the extent to which students reciting what has been said in the class. On the other hand, 27.2% disagreed with the statement, indicating that they don't see students reciting what has been said in the class as indicator of quality learning.

Table 6. Frequency, percentage and mean of teachers' repeated practices of quality education

No	Statements	Always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	mean
1	Actively involved in quality related activities like communicating and recognizing parents' contribution	8(7.8%)	21(20.4%)	40(38.8%)	25(24.3%)	9(8.7%)	3.2
2	Focus on students' achievement with regard to knowledge, attitude, and skills	30(29.1%)	41(39.8%)	23(22.3%)	7(6.8%)	2(1.9%)	3.9
3	Uses active learning strategies.	24(23.2%)	39(37.9%)	27(26.2%)	12(11.7%)	1%	3.2
4	Motivate students and extend their aspiration to participate actively.	28(27.2%)	46(44.7%)	24(23.3%)	4(3.9%)	1%	3.9
5	Know how students' learn in your subject area and be creative and effective in facilitating learning.	12(11.7%)	42(40.8%)	32(31.1%)	12(11.7%)	5(4.9%)	3.2
6	Involve students in the process of setting learning outcomes.	27(26.2%)	29(28.2%)	22(21.4%)	13(12.6%)	12(11.7%)	3.4
7	Feedback is timely provided and focused on students development.	15(14.6%)	37(35.9%)	28(27.2%)	18(17.5%)	5(4.9%)	3.4
8	Students have opportunities to articulate their own views and responses, and those views are treated with respect.	13(12.6%)	35(34%)	35(34%)	17(16.5%)	3(2.9%)	3.4
9	Students have opportunities to assist and lead other in learning.	49(47.6%)	34(33%)	16(15.5%)	4(3.9%)	0(%)	4.2
10	Participate in school improvement and planning by working collaboratively with teams focused on specific improvement initiatives.	25(24.3%)	34(33%)	26(25.2%)	14(13.6%)	4(3.9%)	3.6
11	Participate in the decision-making process in the school.	22(21.4%)	25(24.3%)	23(22.3%)	18(17.5%)	15(14.6)	3.2
12	Participate on continuous professional development program.	42(40.2%)	25(24.3%)	23(22.3%)	9(8.7%)	3(3.9%)	4.2
13	Share a responsibility for all students' learning across the school and collaborate with colleagues to support every student's growth.	29(28.2%)	33(32%)	28(27.2%)	13(12.6%)	0(%)	
14	Assess and diagnose individual student's context, strength and learning needs and teaching to address these personal characteristics.	23(22.3%)	38(36.9%)	27(26.2%)	9(8.7%)	6(5.8%)	3.6
15	Makes action research to improve the teaching-learning process.	8(7.8%)	21(20.4%)	24(23.3%)	29(28.3%)	21(20.4)	2.7
16	Make teaching aids from the local materials.	10(9.7%)	19(18.4%)	27(26.2%)	26(25.2%)	21(20.4%)	2.7
Average fraction and total percentage for all		22.8(22.16%)	32.4(31.5%)	26.6(25.8%)	14.4(14%)	6.8(6.6%)	3.5

Table 6 indicates that 79.5% of the respondents responded that they employ the quality improvement activities, the range between 'sometimes' and 'nearly always'. On the other hand, 20.6% of the teachers responded that they employ such activities 'rarely' and 'never' (below sometimes).

The other purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between process and practices of quality education. To do this, Pearson correlation coefficient was employed and the results presented in Table 7.

Table 7 indicates that, as teachers' perception of quality teaching-learning process (as measured by the study) increases their practice of elements of constructivism also increases.

Table 7. Mean, Standard deviation, and Correlation coefficient between Teachers perception of Teaching-learning process and practices.

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlation Coefficient	
			Process	Practice
Process	23.252	3.771	1.00	-----
Practice	55.796	10.787	0.331	1.00

*P<0.05

Note: *test value for practice was 48.

The focus group discussion questions were 4 items, which were to be answered by the focus group participants accordingly. For the first item stated as 'What does quality education mean for you?' "The participants generally defined quality of education as relevant to the society,

creating competent students, the broader goal of students becoming aware of their community and environment, teachers properly use input of education in the school, sufficient resources are fulfilled, when active learning strategies or student-centered strategies practiced, when students actively participate in the class, and teachers reported that quality education in terms of students knowledge, attitudes and skills.”

For the second item Stated as ‘what do you think that the prior things to be fulfilled to improve quality education?’ “The participants pointed out that: Better teacher’s salaries and conditions of services are areas for policy attention, provide education and professional development of high quality to the teachers, sharing responsibility by increasing students, parents and community involvement in schools, sufficient resources: such as textbooks, desks, teaching materials, libraries and classroom, good interaction of students and teachers properly practice student-centered approach and good governance for teachers.”

For the third item stated as ‘How do you evaluate students achievement of quality education?’ the participants pointed out that: “In terms of students’ achievement and good behavior, students being able to express their views, demonstrate practically what they have learned, and exhibit an awareness of their environment, when students should be responsible, disciplined, punctual, respectful, and listen well.”

For the fourth item stated as ‘What do you think, should the role of the teacher be in the status of improvement of quality education?’ the respondents reported that: “participation in planning process, giving feedback mechanism that target learning needs, positive and gender-sensitive teacher/students relationship, apply student-centered method properly, make action research properly with regard to the teaching-learning process, accept innovate ideas that improve the teaching-learning process, participate in the school decision making process, making teaching aid properly from local materials to be more meaningful to the teaching-learning process, participate in updating and upgrading training and effective use of instructional time.”

Regarding the results of classroom observation, the researcher witnessed to observe grade 9 section C students on September 6, 2015 academic year while the chemistry teacher taught, that he tried to give cues but he did not use materials helpful to involve the students in different class activities like pictures, graphs and model and by giving peer work, group discussion to understand the ideas presented from the topic. Again, the teacher tried to plan the instructional process in his lesson plan to use student-centered in a way students involve in different class activities and provide continuous assessment but the researcher observed that the teacher did not apply his plan.

The researcher deduced that the inadequacy of classroom and number of students make the teaching learning process as lecture methods. Besides, the researcher observed that there are inadequate school facilities, teaching aids and other infrastructures.

In addition, the teachers were tried to deliver continuous assessment and active learning method, but it seemed to be not uniform as the teachers’ understanding about continuous assessment is different and some time it might be due to some constraints of size of the class or

number of students in the classroom. Because the approach most frequently used by teachers is mixed approach, some teachers tried to using active learning but others still dominating the lecture teaching learning activities. From the above results, however, the delivery of quality education is not yet to the desired levels. This is mainly emanated from variation among teachers themselves as there are some members of teachers who have not yet promoting any instructional training skills as it is replied from the respondent teachers who attributed the absence of practice of teaching learning process and use of active learning methods and the lack of sufficient input such as syllabus, textbooks, teachers’ guides, class-size etc.

3. Discussion of Results

The main purpose of this study was to examine teachers’ perception toward quality of education, quality of teaching and quality of learning and relationship between teachers’ perception of teaching-learning process and their practice and challenging factors for quality education, quality teaching and quality learning.

As the results shown, the teachers’ perception of input was higher than the mean test value. This shows that teachers had high perception of quality education with regard to the input factors. According to Hawes and Stephens [5], the term ‘quality of education’ is often not defined and unconfused with factors that are believed to produce quality, e.g. school building, textbooks, didactics materials and well prepared teachers. Such factors are important, but do not produce quality per se. The quality of the teacher is more important than any other factors. It is the teacher who decides how to use textbook, didactic material, school facilities and teaching methods. It is the teacher who defines what he/she means by participatory methods and how they are applicable under the circumstance in which he/she works.

Similarly, teachers’ perception of process was higher than mean tests value. This shows that teachers have high perception of quality education with regard to the process factors. According to the UNICEF [11], until recently much discussion of educational quality centered on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil teachers ratios, and on curricular contents. In recent years, however; more attention has been paid to educational processes-how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represented a key factor in ensuring quality school processes, Such as, professional learning for teacher’s ongoing professional development, continuing support for student-centered learning, active standard based participation methods, teacher feedback mechanism and teacher belief that all students can learn.

On the contrary, teachers’ perception of output was lower than the mean test value. This shows that teacher have low perception toward quality education (in term of student’s scoring high on exams and students achieving promotion to the next grade as central to education quality) with regard to the output indicators. According to UNESCO [9], output which signal overall quality which includes, academic achievement, life skills creativity and emotional skills, values and social benefits.

4. Conclusions

The study was conducted in five (5) secondary schools of Gondar in Amhara People and Regional State. The schools selected from 19 secondary schools by using purposive sampling techniques. The subjects of the study were 103(87 male and 16 female) teachers. To collect the data, a five point scale closed questionnaires containing 34 items dispatched to the teachers. In addition, focus group discussion was conducted at two secondary schools with head departments founded at selected two secondary schools and classroom observation was also conducted in six sections from each sampled secondary school to observe the constraints to education quality. Then, after the responses were tabulated and analyzed by inferential statistical values and descriptive approaches.

From the analyzed data the following findings were obtained.

1. Teachers' overwhelmingly viewed quality education highly in terms of input indicators, with a total mean value of 4.019, in term of process indicators with a total mean value of 3.880 and low in term of output (cognitive aspects) indicators with a total mean value of 2.704.
2. 78.6% (with the mean value of 4) of the teachers' perceive quality of teaching in terms of involving students in the teaching-learning process/ student-centered approach.
3. 68% (with the mean value of 3.7) of the teachers' perceive quality of learning in term of active participation of students in the class.
4. 79.5% of the teachers' (with an aggregated mean value of 3.5) are highly practicing quality activities to improve quality of education. Thus, as teachers' perception of quality teaching-learning process increases their practice of elements of constructivism also increases. On contrary, specifically gaps in the understanding and practice of teachers relating to quality education activities, such as making action research to improve the teaching-learning process and making teaching aids from the local materials (with the mean value of 2.7).

The overall findings of this study indicate that teachers' had high level of quality education viewing with regard to input indicators. In spite of the fact that teachers have high level of quality education viewing with regard to process indicators, they believe that without sufficient input, teachers are unable to deliver quality of education. Similarly, teachers have somewhat considerable degree of practice to improve quality of education and this indicates consistency in the teachers' perception on quality of education and their practice, as teachers' perception of quality teaching-learning process increases their practice of elements of constructivism also increases.

5. Recommendation

1. Teachers' are key enabling factors in employing the quality of education, so that teachers should be

critical to any reforms designed to improve quality education.

2. In the teaching-learning processes, the teachers are the 'planner and organizer' of learning activities. Hence, teachers are focused on many quality teaching initiatives. Therefore, much of the success of quality teaching support depends on acceptance by teachers and the use of the methods at their disposal in their teaching-learning processes.
3. Teachers' should understand action research is also closely related to teacher empowerment and has become an important component of what is considered good teacher development.
4. By and large, the research findings indicated that teachers have high level of viewing of quality education initiatives, in reality they failed to practice it in improving quality education in the entire contexts. Therefore, it is advisable that the government should give attention to teacher's job satisfaction; salary and status need to be better understood to find out how these factors affect their performance.
5. Finally, hopefully, the research findings in this paper will encourage the teacher's collaborative works is an essential resource to improve quality education. Therefore, this study is not intended to make and generalization about the main determinant of better quality in education, so any concerned and interested body can make use of this study as a venue for further studies and is suggested to contribute a lot.

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