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Work Environment and the Teacher: A Qualitative Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study examined the nexus between the public secondary school teacher and his/her work environment. To capture the nature and substance of this nexus, the study was mainly directed towards answering the following two research questions: Which attributes of work environment matter most to the public secondary school teacher? And why do they matter? The study was conducted on teachers in public secondary schools of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It adopted a qualitative case study design where data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. The results show that basic school facilities, teacher-principal and teacher-student in-school inter-personal relations, financial and non-financial rewards, and the praxis of politics in a school setting are the attributes of the work environment that matter most to the study participants. Results also show that these attributes of work environment appeared as attributes of work environment with utmost importance to the teacher for they happened to be the basis of the teacher's work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Findings further showed that the attributes of the work environment and the emergent causal consequences have both direct and indirect relationships. This study is expected to have empirical, methodological, and theoretical implications.

Keywords

secondary school teacher, qualitative case study, thematic analysis, facilities, inter-personal relations, rewards, politics, work motivation, job satisfaction, work engagement

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Work Environment and the Teacher: A Qualitative Case Study of Public Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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This study examined the nexus between the public secondary school teacher and his/her work environment. To capture the nature and substance of this nexus, the study was mainly directed towards answering the following two research questions: Which attributes of work environment matter most to the public secondary school teacher? And why do they matter? The study was conducted on teachers in public secondary schools of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It adopted a qualitative case study design where data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. The results show that basic school facilities, teacher-principal and teacher-student in-school inter-personal relations, financial and non-financial rewards, and the praxis of politics in a school setting are the attributes of the work environment that matter most to the study participants. Results also show that these attributes of work environment appeared as attributes of work environment with utmost importance to the teacher for they happened to be the basis of the teacher's work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Findings further showed that the attributes of the work environment and the emergent causal consequences have both direct and indirect relationships. This study is expected to have empirical, methodological, and theoretical implications.

Keywords: secondary school teacher, qualitative case study, thematic analysis, facilities, inter-personal relations, rewards, politics, work motivation, job satisfaction, work engagement

Introduction

Needless it is to say, education holds this or that significance. For it was way long ago since humanity has understood the greater importance of Education. Around 800 BC, Confucius, once said "Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace." (As cited in Zhu, 2005, p. 1). After centuries, education has become the ultimate tool that can change the world for better or worse. Nelson Mandela, the 1993 Nobel prize winner, once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world" (Duncan, 2013 p. 1). But it is conventional wisdom that no matter how education is seen as the root of confidence, hope, and peace of mankind or as a weapon with which human beings make the world a better place to live, it shall serve its purpose if the quality of education is well ensured.

In Sub-Saharan African countries, the increasing concern for quality comes at a time of growing recognition of the potentially decisive role of education for growth and its rapid expansion since the new millennium (Materu, 2007). Shabani (2007) noted that even though access to primary and secondary education increased significantly in many Sub-Saharan countries, the quality of education remained low. Regardless of the increasing access to education, Kahsay (2012) argued that many Sub-Saharan African nations had faced two

significant problems. One is the problem of addressing the unmet demand for access through the rapid expansion of educational infrastructures. The other is the problem of improving the quality of education in the context of the prevailing socio-economic, fiscal and political constraints.

Like in other Sub-Saharan African countries, in Ethiopia too, the quality of education has been a concern for various scholars and other stakeholders. Since they are perceived as lacking quality in education, academic institutions in Ethiopia are publicly criticized for producing low-quality outputs. This public criticism seems to have been corroborated by different empirical studies (see Adhana, 2019; Grunder, 2016; Reda, 2018; Woldegiyorgis, 2017; Yirdaw, 2016).

Many scholars have asked this fundamental question: ‘what underlay the quality of education?’. Throughout their respective answers, several of these scholars have consistently portrayed the teacher as a critical role player in the education system in general and in the process of maintaining the quality of education. Charis (1980), for instance, said that it is on the teacher’s shoulders that the entire education system rests as he single-handedly shapes the generation. Farrell and Oliveira (1993) argued that the quality of any educational system largely depends on the quality and commitment of its teachers. Platt (1970), decades ago, has also mentioned that the teacher is the center of the educational process and the main determinant of the quality next to the student. Emphasizing Platt’s point, Miles (1975) has also claimed that teachers play a crucial role in fulfilling educational goals. Miles further argued, whatever curriculum change is introduced, and whatever reforms are made, all will be of little or no avail without qualified, well-motivated, and committed teachers (Miles, 1975). It seems there has been a general principle embedded in the findings of Charis (1980; Farrell and Oliveira (1993), Miles (1975), Platt (1970), and other related recent studies (Akporehe, 2011; Joshi & Verspoor, 2012; Pathania, 2011; Vergis, 2014). This seems to be, “The teacher's success in his/her career would be reflected in the quality of education. And the challenges to the teachers’ career would be the challenges to the quality of education too.”

It seems it is this general principle that has been driving many researchers in fields of education to focus their academic curiosity towards understanding the challenges to schoolteachers. Moreover, the academic curiosity of such scholars accompanied by the empirical study has set the baseline for the understanding of the challenges to the teacher. Some of the primary challenges to the teacher consistently mentioned by several researchers were: low job satisfaction, de-motivation, low teacher morale, poor quality of the teachers’ working environment, failing school management and leadership, de-professionalization of teachers, prolonged economic and social crisis, the increasing diversification of the teaching force, low standards of teaching, and a dramatic decline in the standards of living conditions of the teachers (Mengistu, 2012; Nyamubi, 2017; Ghavifekr & Ibrahim, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

It could be stated that almost all the challenges to the teacher are embedded in and through the interplay between the teacher and his/her work environment. Therefore, holding the notion that unearthing today’s challenges to the teacher is also unravelling tomorrow’s challenges to quality of education, this study aimed to explore the nexus between the public secondary school teacher and his/her work environment. To capture the nature and substance of this nexus, this study was particularly directed towards answering the following two research questions: Which attributes of work environment matter most to the public secondary school teacher? And why do they matter?

Literature Review

A literature review has shown that studies on the teacher and his/her work environment nexus could be loosely categorized in terms of their focus area. It is observed that most of these studies focused on one or more of the following six major themes: work motivation, work engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, burnout and stress, and job performance. Studies on work motivation indicated that extrinsic (logistic, incentives, management style, and interpersonal relations) and intrinsic (achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement) factors are the predictors of teachers' work motivation (Abós et al., 2018; Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Börü, 2018; Daniels, 2016; Kumar, 2019; Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). Studies on work engagement, on the other hand, reported that teachers' work engagement is significantly contingent on job resources such as autonomy, social support, and opportunity for personal development (Abós et al., 2018; Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Börü, 2018; Daniels, 2016; Kumar, 2019; Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). The studies conducted on teachers' job satisfaction repeatedly documented that socio-economic factors, promotional opportunity, community support, interpersonal relations, resources, political intervention, and management style affect the level of teachers' job satisfaction (Chamundeswari, 2013; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Perševica, 2014; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2019). Whereas the studies on commitment shown that commitment among schoolteachers is predictable in terms of leadership style, work motivation, job satisfaction, prestige, an ideology of fairness, reward, and engagement (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017; Hanaysha, 2016; Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). Studies conducted on burnout and stress among teachers revealed that job demand, job resource, work-life balance, efficacy, and time pressure are among the factors that contribute to burnout and stress (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Roberts et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Torkaman et al., 2017). Relatedly, studies conducted on job performance among teachers revealed that socio-economic status, political interference, motivational factors, organizational structure, and leadership style are among the predictors of their job performance (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Roberts et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Torkaman et al., 2017).

I have also reviewed studies conducted on schoolteachers in Ethiopia with the intention of capturing their general focus areas and methodological inclination. The review indicated that most studies conducted on the teacher and his/her work environment nexus primarily focus on two themes: work motivation and job satisfaction. These studies documented that teachers' work motivation and job satisfaction in Ethiopia have a significant association with salary, fringe benefits, infrastructure, recognition, opportunities for professional development, interpersonal relations, leadership style, prestige, involvement in decision making, and political intervention (Abraha, 2017; Bezabih Reta, 2019; Daniel Dando, 2017; Duressa, 2016; Fikadu, 2018; Tesfaye, 2018; Tsegaye, 2019; Yigeremu, 2018; Yitayew, 2018; Yizengaw, 2019). The review also indicated that most studies tend to rely heavily on quantitative research methods (survey method).

From a closer look into the literature on the relationship between the teacher and his/her work environment in Ethiopia, we could spot two significant gaps. The first gap is a methodological gap. It is observed that studies that explore the relationship between the teacher and his/her work environment in Ethiopia had heavily relied on the survey method. As social researchers argue, one of the limitations of the survey method is its weakness in understanding mechanisms and complex relations (Sayer, 1984). It seems, due to such methodological limitations, related previous studies conducted in Ethiopia have hardly understood the mechanisms and complex relations involved in the teacher and his/her work environment nexus. The second gap is thematic. As if there are no more research themes left to explore, studies investigating the teacher and his/her work climate in the Ethiopian context tend to

excessively focus on two themes: work motivation and job satisfaction. It is no wonder that such tendency has left many other aspects of the teacher and his/her work environment nexus less explored if not unexplored.

The methodological and thematic gaps underlying literature on the teacher and his/her work environment relationship in Ethiopia have inspired me to examine the subject matter from a different methodological vantage point while holding an open mind to entertain less explored themes. Therefore, with a qualitative case study research design, I have tried to grasp the mechanisms involved in the teacher and his/her work environment nexus. Two research questions were framed, taking the methodological and thematic gaps into account: Which attributes of work environment matter most to the public secondary school teacher? And why do they matter?

This study is expected to benefit anyone who wants to understand the secondary school teacher and his/her work environment nexus in the study area. However, there are four audiences who are intended to directly benefit from this study. (a) Policy makers. Policy makers may utilize the findings and recommendations of this study to inform, revise, and enrich their policies involving the public secondary school teacher in Addis Ababa and his/her work environment. (b) Researchers. Future researchers may utilize the findings and recommendations of this study as a springboard to launch a new empirical, methodological, or theoretical research project. (c) Civil Societies. Civil societies such as the Ethiopian Teachers Association may use the findings and recommendations of this study to advocate for changes and betterments in the working condition of the public secondary school teacher in Ethiopia. (d) Public Secondary School Managements. Public secondary school management may use the findings and recommendations of this study to learn about how the work environment has been affecting the teacher and make the necessary changes.

Researcher Positionality

Though I have not taught at any secondary school, I am an educator. I have been teaching sociology at Mizan-Tepi University since 2010. My experience as an educator has significantly influenced the choice of my research topic. It has also profoundly informed the research questions I asked and the aspects of the teachers' work environment I examined. I would also say that it has helped me to build rapport with the participants quickly.

As an educator, I have experienced both positive and negative aspects of being a teacher. I may say, the positive experiences have kept me in the teaching business to this day. The negative experiences, on the other hand, occasionally shower me with a feeling of frustration and nudge me to leave the teaching profession. But there is also a silver lining to that. Despite the challenging emotional backlash, the negative experiences have given me the inspiration to research and understand the impacts of the work environment on the teacher. This study could be considered as the offspring of that inspiration.

I believe that my experience as an educator was an asset rather than a liability to this study. However, as much as possible, I have endeavored to bracket my experience as an educator and accentuate participants' experiences.

Methods

Study Design

A case study is an appropriate research design to research a problem when the inquirer has identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This study adopted a qualitative case study research design for

two reasons. The first reason is that the subject matter of this study, the relationship the public secondary school teacher has with his/her work environment, could be a bounded case. The second reason is that the study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the case.

For this study, the case was bounded with different identifiable boundaries. First, the case was limited to the study of public-school teachers. This implies that private school teachers were not part of this study. Second, the case was limited to the study of public secondary school teachers. This tells us that primary or tertiary public-school teachers never took part in this study. Third, the geographical setting for the study of this case was only made to be Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

After determining a qualitative case study to be an appropriate research design for the proposed research, I decided which type of case study research design is appropriate for the proposed study. The nature of research questions often determines which type of case study research design a researcher should select. Yin (2014) states that an exploratory case study attempts to answer questions typically framed by the pronoun *what*. In contrast, explanatory case study design attempts to answer questions framed by the pronoun *why*. Thus, I decided first to answer the first research question which is framed by the pronoun *what* in and through the framework of an exploratory case study design. Then switched to explanatory cases study design to answer the second research question framed by the pronoun.

Creswell and Poth (2016) suggest that it is also important for a researcher to clearly state whether the study constitutes single or multiple cases in outlining a case study research design. The researcher is also expected to get clear whether the study will be conducted in single or multiple sites. To be clear on such matters, I declare that the implemented qualitative case study design was a single case with embedded units described by Baxter and Jack (2008). There were two sub-cases embedded in the generic case “the public secondary school teacher relation with his/her work environment.” One was the attributes of the work environment that matter most to the public secondary school teacher. The other was the reason why the attributes of the work environment matter. I also declare that the case study in this research was a single-site study that was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Philosophical Orientation

This study adhered to a constructivist’s philosophical orientation towards a qualitative case study. More specifically, it adhered to Merriam’s pragmatic constructivist approach to a case study. Merriam holds a constructivist ontological stance assuming reality is constructed intersubjectively through meaning and understanding developed socially and experientially (Harrison et al., 2017). Merriam’s approach to case study tends to take a pragmatic turn when it comes to epistemological orientation (Harrison et al., 2017). As someone inclining towards pragmatic epistemology, Merriam advises researchers to use an objective process to organize and analyze data when dealing with bulky and abstract information (Harrison et al., 2017). Merriam also suggests essential practical methodological directions to doing a qualitative case study. Some of these practical and methodological suggestions, *inter alia*, are: to direct the aim of case study towards providing a detailed and holistic description that illuminate one’s understanding of the phenomena under investigation; to draw research questions from an existing body of literature; to determine cases based on research purpose, question and for what they could reveal about the topic of interest; and to adhere to rigorous procedures to frame the research process (Harrison et al., 2017).

Merriam’s approach to a qualitative case study has significantly shaped this study. For instance, at the ontological level, I shared Merriam’s notion that reality is socially constructed. Therefore, the goal of the research was not to find out an objective universal law/truth as positivists wish to capture but rather to understand a context-bound socially constructed reality.

I also shared Merriam's pragmatic epistemological inclination and committed to utilizing objective processes to collect, organize, and analyze bulky and abstract data. Merriam's approach has also profoundly shaped the methodological aspects of this study. This could be seen in different instances. For example, the study was directed towards providing a rich and holistic description of the nexus between the teacher and his/her work environment. The research questions of this study were also drawn from existing bodies of literature. The cases were also determined based on research purpose and questions. Finally, I also adhered to rigorous procedures to collect, organize, and analyze information.

Participants

The total number of participants was twelve. Among the total number of participants, there was an equal number (Six) of male and female participants. There were also an equal number (Six) of participants from the first cycle (grade 9-10) and second cycle (grade 11-12) secondary schools. Seven of the participants were teachers in the field of social sciences and humanities while five were teachers in the field of natural science. The participants' age ranges from 27 to 45. The minimum teaching experience of participants was 5 years while the maximum was 20 years.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

There were two inclusion criteria. (a) Public secondary teachers who are genuinely interested in partaking in this study. Genuinely uninterested teachers, though they are willing to participate in this study, were assumed to be indifferent to the purpose of this study. Even if they seemed in the first instance, they would not be interested enough to sit down for an interview session for so long and go along with the interviewer wherever emergent questions would lead. (b) Public secondary teachers who are fluent in speaking in the Amharic language. This was due to the mother tongue language of the interviewer being the Amharic language, and an interview with someone who is not fluent in the Amharic language was assumed to result in the possible loss of very important information.

There were also two exclusion criteria. (a) Public secondary school teachers with less than five years of work experience. Teachers with at least five years of experience were expected to be quite familiar with their work environment and have worked in their work environment long enough to talk about it. (b) Public secondary school teachers who were or are currently in an administrative position. This was made a criterion because it would be difficult to discern whether these teachers' opinion is an opinion of administrative personnel or an opinion of just a teacher.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited from six first-cycle public secondary schools (grade 9-10) and six public second-cycle secondary schools (grade 11-12) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The interviewer directly approached the participants with the approval of school principals and their consent to be contacted.

Sample

A total number of twelve participants were recruited. Six were from first cycle public secondary schools (grade 9-10) and six from public second cycle secondary schools (grade 11-

12) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During sampling, I have tried to capture participants' diversity as much as possible.

Regarding the sampling strategy, the study employed a purposeful sampling strategy. As Creswell and Poth (2016) put it, the inquirer selects individuals for the study because they can purposefully inform the understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. But researchers have to be careful while using the term “sample” for it may mislead readers into thinking that the case comes from a population of like-cases with the possibility of statistical generalization (Yin, 2014). I, thus, want to make clear that it has never been the intention of this study to make any form of statistical extrapolation.

Ethical Considerations

The study was given official approval by Addis Ababa University. Approval was also received from the participating public secondary school principals. On my behalf, I have given careful consideration to potential risk and safeguarding issues, given the sensitivity of some aspects of the research agenda.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from March to May 2019. Participants were first asked for their consent. Only those public secondary school teachers who agreed to participate in this study were interviewed. The interview (a semi-structured individual interview) was held in the official language of Ethiopia (Amharic Language). During the interview, participants were initially asked five guiding questions regarding their work environment and associated factors: What are your work environment's main manifestations or attributes? Tell me how these attributes of the work environment are vital to you as a teacher? Do you think that these main attributes of your work environment ever influence you as a teacher? If yes, explain how? Is there anything else you think we should know, or are there any questions we should have asked but didn't? Informants were instructed to answer questions thoroughly, giving specific examples and spending some time thinking about their answers before their response.

Analysis

Responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. As described by Braun and Clarke (2006), five major decisions were made before getting engaged in thematic analysis. First, a decision was made regarding what counts as a theme. For this study theme was what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 10) described as, “A pattern of meaning that captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” How prevalent across the entire data set a theme should be, is an important question in thematic analysis. There are different ways of representing prevalence in thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). This study shared the notion that the presence of pattern/theme across most participants suggests a theme really exists in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Second, a decision was also made whether the analysis aims to give a detailed description of the data set or a detailed account of one aspect. Thematic analysis of this study aimed to provide a more detailed account of themes related to research questions. Third, a decision was made if the thematic analysis would be inductive or deductive thematic analysis. The subject matter of work environment and occupational roles relation has not been thoroughly studied in the study area. However, there were ample analytical frameworks, theories, and concepts in the existing body of literature across the world. In such a condition, a deductive thematic analysis happens to be suitable

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis of this study, therefore, decided to be deductive thematic analysis. As a matter of this fact, the process of coding thoroughly was an attempt to fit the data into a pre-existing researcher's analytic preconceptions or a priori codes. Box 1 presents the list of a priori codes compiled from the extant literature. Fourth, another decision made was about at what level themes are to be identified: Semantic or latent. It was decided that the thematic analysis should be conducted within semantic approach. Thus, themes were identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst has not been looking for anything beyond what a participant has said. Fifth, Epistemology was another issue that needed explicit decisions. With an essentialist approach, researchers can theorize about psychological constructs, experience, and meaning in a straightforward way. The basis of this notion is the assumption that there is a unidirectional relationship between meaning, experience, and language (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study also assumed the same way and decided to carry out the thematic analysis within realist epistemology.

Box 1

A Priori Codes Compiled from the Extant Literature

Work motivation, work engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, burnout and stress, job performance, logistic, incentives, management style, and interpersonal relations, achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, job resources, autonomy, social support, and opportunity for personal development, socio-economic factors, promotional opportunity, community support, political intervention, prestige, an ideology of fairness, job demand, work-life balance, efficacy, time pressure, organizational structure, and leadership style.

Note. These a priori codes are compiled from studies discussed in the literature review section.

The actual process of thematic analysis was conducted based on the six-steps of thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Step One: Getting Familiar with Data. This step involved an orthographic transcription of data and reading and re-reading the data to note down initial ideas. The transcription was done in the Amharic Language, and then the transcribed script was translated into the English language¹.

Step Two: Generating Initial Codes. Initial codes were generated by coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set having a priori codes in mind. Then, data extracts relevant to each code were collated.

Step Three: Searching for Themes. Themes were searched in and through the entire data set. This step mainly involved collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. A Table was used as a tool to organize and present themes, sub-themes, and related significant statements. A Thematic map was used to visually present the relationship among themes. In this step, the analyst has tried to think about the direct and indirect relationship between codes, themes, and level of themes. Here, I would like to acknowledge that the terminologies such as direct and indirect relationship and mediator conventionally imply quantitative constructs whose

¹ In order to ensure the validity of the English version of transcribed script, three colleagues were asked to thoroughly read both the English and Amharic version of the transcribed scripts and check for any divergence. Except for some minor errors which were corrected latter upon the recommendation of colleagues, the English version of the transcribed script was ready to initiate coding.

relations oftentimes required to be attested by advanced statistical analysis like structural equation modeling. I would also like to acknowledge the fact that it is not uncommon to come across arguments in the extant literature that undermine the potential of a qualitative approach to outline the directions of relationships among constructs. Despite this conventional positivistic expectation and presence of counterarguments, I firmly believe² that direct and indirect relationships among constructs can be sufficiently outlined through systematic observation of causative and/or sequential relationships among significant statements in the text data set.

Step Four: Reviewing and Refining: Themes developed at step two were reviewed and refined. This step involved two forms of reviewing and refining themes. On the one hand, the review and refining process involved reading collated data extract and checking for coherence under each theme. On the other hand, the review and refining activity involved checking and refining individual themes and the initial thematic map with respect to the entire data set.

Step Five: Defining, Naming, and Analyzing Themes. In this step, the analyst clearly defined and named themes and sub-themes conducted a detailed analysis for each theme and wrote a detailed analysis for each theme by identifying each theme's story.

Step Six: Producing Analysis Report. The analysis was made up of the analyst's narrative, illustrative data extracts, and argument in relation to research questions. The analysis also consists of elaboration on the direct and indirect relations among themes. Intending to elaborate a direct/indirect relationship among constructs, I have borrowed standardized measurement scales from the quantitative research world and used them as a generic reference basis. In practice, using the items that constituted the measurement scales as basic references ground, I had endeavored to present extracts of significant statements in a way that may portray the direct and indirect relationship among work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

Trustworthiness of Findings of the Study

In the history of social science research practice, justifying the truthfulness of a qualitative research finding has always been a nightmare for the qualitative researcher. It seemed, the burden of ensuring the quality of a qualitative research finding has increased along with the advancements in validity and reliability assurance techniques and tools in the realm of quantitative research. It also seemed the burden bestowed on a qualitative researcher by quantitative research enthusiasts had pushed the qualitative researcher to devise various criteria and strategies with which one can ensure the quality of a qualitative research finding. The criteria set so far to ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative research finding are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1982).

Credibility

Credibility refers to whether the research findings are true reflections of information in the original dataset and are the correct interpretation of the participants' original view (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). A qualitative researcher ensures the

² I would like to acknowledge that his belief on the potential of a qualitative research to outline causal relations among constructs has mainly come from Strauss and Corbin's approach to grounded theory research. For further information, please, read Mattley et al., (1999).

inquiry's credibility through prolonged engagement in the field or research site, use of peer debriefing, member checks, triangulation, negative case analysis, and persistent observation (Anney, 2014). I have tried to ensure the credibility of the findings in three ways. This was first accomplished using peer debriefing. Before data analysis, two colleagues of the researcher had reviewed the English language version of the transcript to see if it is correctly translated from the original version of the transcript written in the Amharic language. During data analysis, these colleagues also reviewed the emergent initial codes and themes. Their feedback was used to redevelop most of the initial codes and themes and exempt some. Second, credibility was established using member checks. The initial draft of data analysis and interpretation was sent to three research participants for them to evaluate if the interpretation made by the researcher is a true reflection of their real-life experience as a public secondary school teacher. Their feedback was found out to be very assuring to go further through the process of data analysis and interpretation. Third, credibility was established using persistent observation. I had devoted sufficient time to have extended interaction with the context and participants. With this, it seemed I had gotten a clearer view of the essential characteristics of the setting and the research participants' experience in it.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be transferred to other study participants in different contexts. The term transferability is a qualitative research term implying similar meaning, which generalizability implies as applied in quantitative research studies (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). A qualitative researcher ensures the transferability of findings by providing a thick description of the research process and the use of purposeful sampling (Bitsch, 2005). To contribute to the transferability of the finding of this study, thus, I have tried to provide extensive detail of the research process—starting from data collection to the production of the final report. Respondents were also approached through the purposive sampling technique.

Dependability

The dependability of a qualitative research finding refers to its constancy across time (Bitsch, 2005). A qualitative researcher ensures dependability through mechanisms such as audit trail, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, triangulation, and peer examination or iterator comparisons (Schwandt et al., 2007). Among these mechanisms, this study tried to ensure the dependability of its findings through three of the mechanisms. (a) use of audit trail. An audit checklist was prepared to guide and evaluate the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. (b) stepwise replication. Two colleagues had analyzed a few pieces of the same data extracts and the result was compared to see if any inconsistency arises from the separate analysis. Few inconsistencies were found, and modification was made to make words represent the exact idea they were intended to represent. (c) code-recode strategy. The researcher purposefully coded the same data twice, and the codes were compared to see if there are inconsistencies. There were some inconsistencies, but these inconsistencies seemed to be less significant.

Confirmability

Baxter and Eyles (1997) define confirmability as the degree to which qualitative research findings could be replicated or substantiated by other researchers. Confirmability of qualitative inquiry is achieved through a reflexive journal (Guba, 1981; Koch, 2006). Thus,

since the beginning of this study, I have kept a notebook to plan and reflect on methodology, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. By keeping a reflexive journal, I have tried to capture the truth on the ground, not what was expected to be found.

Results

Attributes of the Work Environment that Matter Most to the Public Secondary School Teacher

At the beginning of text data analysis, it was necessary to set criteria to determine, among multiple attributes of the work environment, which attributes matter most to the teacher in the study area. At that time, it was believed that a theme emerged as an attribute of work environment that all informants deemed to be an essential condition to carry out their everyday occupational roles to the degree of their expectation sufficed to be an attribute of work environment that matters most to the public secondary school teacher. Thus, taking this criterion into account, the text data corpus was analyzed thematically. The analysis resulted in four themes as attributes of the work environment that matter most to the public secondary school teacher in the study area. These themes are:

- School Facilities: the problem of adequacy and quality
- In-school Interpersonal Relation: nature of teacher-principal and teacher-student relation
 - Teacher-principal relation characterized by non-cooperation, autocracy, and politicized antagonism
 - Teacher-student relation characterized by students' lack of respect for the teacher
- Reward: the problem of financial and non-financial rewards
- The Praxis of Politics in School Setting

School Facilities: The Problem of Adequacy and Quality

One of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of text data as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the teacher is school facilities (especially their adequacy and quality problem). To set a clear conceptual definition of constructs, first, I analyzed text extracts labeled with the “basic school facility” tag. In the meantime, the analysis suggested that school facilities refer to those basic school infrastructures that the informants found to be essential to play their day-to-day occupational roles. Then I had analyzed all text extracts labeled with “problem of adequacy and problem of quality” tags. The analysis suggested that the problem of adequacy refers to the insufficient presence of school facilities. Whereas the problem of quality, on the other hand, means the presence of low-quality school facilities. Thus, guided by these definitions, the basic school facilities along with their associated problems were identified. The basic school facilities that informants commonly identified as essential to perform their day-to-day occupational roles to their level of expectation were Internet service, Stationery Materials, Personal computer, Classrooms, Cafeteria, Toilet, Reference Books in Library and Science Laboratory. Among these facilities, all informants reported that stationery materials, personal computers, classrooms, reference books in the library, and science laboratories are not adequately available. All informants have also reported that internet service, cafeteria, toilet, and science laboratory have low quality. For instance, one informant (Grade 10 Physics teacher) has described the problem of adequacy of classrooms and science laboratory as follows:

The pupil-class room ratio is way above the advisable rate. You could find more than 63 students in a single class...there is only one science lab. It is not proportional to the total number of students in the school. As a matter of this fact, there are plenty of times when I replaced practical demonstration sessions with theoretical lectures.

Another informant (Grade 12 History Teacher) has described the inadequacy of reference books, saying, "Students often read textbooks only for there are very few reference books in the library." Regarding the quality of the toilet and cafeteria, one informant (Grade 11 English Language Teacher) has stated, "The toilet in this school is extremely disgusting. Whenever I think about it, what comes to my mind is puking, ...I do not eat in school cafeterias. Because the food they serve oftentimes makes me sick."

In-School Interpersonal Relations: Nature of Teacher-Principal and Teacher-Student Relation

The second theme that emerged as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the teacher is the nature of in-school interpersonal relations that lies between teacher and principal and teacher and student. At the onset of thematic analysis, when the nature of interpersonal relations first flashed as a theme, further analysis was made to conceptually delimit what it means. The analysis eventually suggested that the conceptual definition of the "nature of interpersonal relation" embedded in the text data was the dominant feature that characterizes the everyday interaction between teacher and principal and teacher and student in school settings. Having this definition in mind, further analysis was then made to identify the nature of teacher and principal and teacher and student relations in school settings. Consequently, teacher-principal relations seemed to be characterized by non-cooperation, autocracy, and politicized antagonism, whereas teacher-student relations by students' lack of respect for their teachers. Most informants claimed that their principals do not cooperate with them to deal with everyday work-related challenges. These informants have also commonly shared the idea that school principals are political appointees whose primary role is to serve political causes rather than academic ones. One informant (Grade 11 Business and Economics Teacher) has described the politicized antagonistic spirit seems to lay between teachers and principals as follows:

All directors are watchdogs of the government, so, in any meetings, speaking something anti-government to the director is speaking to the government itself which is frightening. This is the reason why most of the teachers do not speak their minds, but bravely if they do, they will be branded anti-revolutionary democracy and will be repressed against many benefits in all possible ways.

Another informant (Grade 9 and 10 Civics and ethical education teacher) has told the researcher:

Most directors do not have a mentality of an academician; they rather have the mindset of a politician. For this reason, they see everything from the political prism. Every meeting is a politicized meeting, every panel discussion is a politicized discussion, and even the disciplinary warnings are politicized ones.

What a grade 12 English teacher said seems to have captured well the essence of teacher-principal relations as characterized by non-cooperation and autocratic. This informant has said:

What most school principals want is to be feared. They try to rule the teacher by frightening. They like to order the teacher not to support and guide him/her. They hold meetings to talk, not to listen to the mind of the teacher. They are not open to ideal differences; they want every teacher to agree with their thought.

As for describing the nature of teacher-student relations, there are several extracts of significant statements to present. But in the words of an informant (grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher), the teacher-student relation seems to be well articulated. This informant has reported:

Most students are disrespectful to most of their teachers. The disrespect is even up to ridiculing the teacher who asks for them to show their homework, who gives them advice, and who tells them to arrive at the class in time.

Rewards: The Problem of Financial and Non-Financial Rewards

The third theme that emerged as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the public secondary school teacher constitutes the problem of rewards. Analysis of text data suggests that the conceptual components of 'reward' embedded throughout the data corpus are financial rewards (salary, housing allowance, and access to credit) and non-financial rewards (access to free transport service and the opportunity for further education). Having determined what conceptually constitutes reward, further analysis was conducted to understand more about the issue of rewards in the research setting. The main point drawn then from the interview data is that there has been a commonly shared assumption among the study participants about the insufficiency and/or unavailability of financial and/or non-financial rewards.

Remarkably, all informants claimed that their salary does not allow them to live a decent life in the city. These informants also mentioned that the price of rent for residential houses takes two-third of their salary. The informants had further exclaimed that their financial burden would have been eased if the government provides adequate house allowance. For example, one of the informants (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Teacher) has said:

My salary is 4,500 Ethiopian Birr. Out of these, my landlord takes 2, 500 Birr. To live by the remaining money requires one to apply an austerity measure on his life...Imagine how much help would it be if the government provides us with meaningful house allowance.

Relatedly, all informants had reported that their employer does not provide free transport service and the available opportunity for further education and access to credit is insufficient. For instance, a grade 11 Mathematics teacher has described the seemingly absent free transport service and insufficient opportunities for further education in such a manner:

I usually travel 8 km from home to work. I do this not driving my mini-van or comfortably sitting in a school bus but suffering by taxis...Opportunities for further education are available for very few staff who are either holding

administrative positions in the school or politically affiliated with the ruling party.

Another informant (Grade 9 and 10 English Language Teacher) has described the seemingly insufficient access to credit stating, “Credits are not accessible for the majority. Only a few individuals with political capital and administrative positions have the access.” Informants had mentioned that there were times and conditions where schools facilitated access to credits. They had also added that only a few individuals who were politically influential, who were school administrators, or who had informal connections had benefited from it.

The Praxis of Politics in School Setting

The last theme found, underneath the plain text data, as one of the attributes of the work environment which seems to matter most to the public secondary school teachers is the praxis of politics in school settings. Soon after “the praxis of politics in school settings” emerged as a theme, the next step of data analysis was directed towards stating a simple conceptual definition for it and identifying its manifest forms. In the early phases of the analysis, different potential definitions and manifest forms emerged. But, in the end, a definition of ‘the praxis of politics in school settings’ as all politically motivated activities taken place in school settings has appeared as the most appealing definition. As for manifest forms, initially, five manifest forms of the praxis of politics in school settings were identified. But later, only four of them have appeared sufficiently substantiated by empirical data. These were: provision of scholarship based on political affiliation; unofficial banning of real political agenda from a discussion in classrooms; provision of promotions based on political affiliation; and the use of time which is officially allotted to teaching practice for the purpose of administering political programs and meetings.

These forms of the praxis of politics in school settings seem to be well evidenced. For instance, one respondent (Grade 11 and 12 Civics and Ethical Education Teacher) has described how some real political agendas have been informally banned from discussions in classrooms, saying:

I am a civic and ethical education teacher. One day, while teaching about terrorism, I brought the reverberated 2012 EC Ethiopian Muslims and government tension into classroom discussion...no later at the end of that session, I was told by the principal not to raise such type of example again into the class with a stern warning.

Relatedly, in words uttered by a grade 9 and 10 Chemistry teacher, the involvement of politics in determining teachers’ chance for winning opportunities for further education and promotion appeared to be well articulated. This informant has said:

The role of politics in schools is substantial. For example, scholarships for further education and promotion for a higher position are granted on the basis of political affiliation. It is those who are affiliated with the political parties which formed the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia that get the opportunities for education as well as promotion.

A Grade 11 and 12 Economics Teacher, on the other hand, has described how it was common to utilize time officially scheduled for administering day-to-day curricular programs for rather entertaining political programs and meetings. This informant mentioned that he has missed

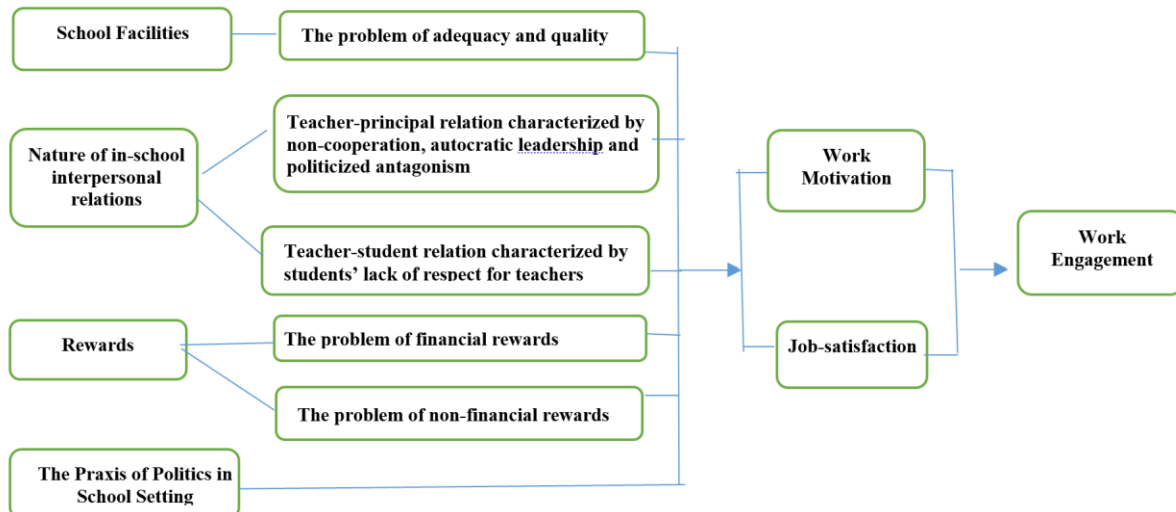
some classes for his periods were scheduled for politicized programs and meetings. More than half of the informants have also resounded this specific scenario.

The Underlying Reason for Why the Attributes of the Work Environment Matter

Having identified the attributes of the work environment that seem to matter most to the public secondary school teacher in the study area, further analysis was made to unearth the underlying reason these attributes matter. The result of this analysis suggests that the attributes of work environment appeared as attributes of work environment with utmost importance to the teacher for they happened to be the basis of their work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement. At the initial stage of text data analysis, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement appeared as having a direct relationship with the attributes of the work environment. But a further examination of the relationship between the attributes of the work environment and the emergent consequences has shown both direct and indirect relationships. Wherein work motivation and job satisfaction appeared as having a direct association with the attributes of the work environment. Whereas the relationship between the attributes of the work environment and work engagement appeared as an indirect relationship that was mediated by work motivation and job satisfaction. Fig 1 presents a diagrammatical representation of the direct and indirect relationships among the attributes of the work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement.

Figure 1

A Diagrammatical Representation of the Relationships Among Attributes of Work Environment, Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Work Engagement



Attributes of Work Environment and Work Motivation

This study has found that there has been a problem of adequacy and quality regarding basic school facilities in the study area. As it has been mentioned in previous discussions, the data shows that stationery materials, personal computers, classrooms, reference books in the library and science laboratory seem to be inadequately available. The data has also shown that the quality of internet service, cafeteria, toilet, and science laboratory appears to be low. An in-depth analysis of the text data was conducted to learn more about the problem of adequacy and quality of basic school facilities. The result of this analysis has revealed that the problem of

adequacy and quality of basic school facilities seems to have an impact on the work motivation of the study participants. Perhaps it is as a matter of this fact that informants had repeatedly identified their work motivation along with the condition of basic school facilities during interview sessions. For instance, an informant reported, “I do not see how teaching physics could be interesting while I hardly get lab tools readily available.” (Grade 10 Physics teacher). Another informant also said, “Teaching would have been pleasant if a teacher has unlimited access to internet service to usually update his knowledge and equip her students with the latest bodies of knowledge.” (Grade 11 English Language Teacher). An informant has also reported, “Spending all day teaching in a school where the restrooms are entirely disgusting erodes the deepest desire I have before for teaching in a public school. Unfortunately, this feeling becomes unbearable whenever you have gotten digestive problems.” (Grade 9 and 10 Civics and ethical education teacher).

In this study, a second theme that emerged as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the public secondary school teacher is in-school interpersonal relations. Under the umbrella of this theme, two sub-themes have also emerged. One is the teacher-principal relation characterized by non-cooperation, autocracy, and politicized antagonism, and the other is the teacher-student relation characterized by students’ lack of respect for their teachers. To understand why this attribute of work environment appeared with greater significance to the teacher, further scrutiny was also made on the text data. From this scrutiny, it has been learned that the nature of teacher-principal and teacher-student relations appears to connect with study participants’ work motivation. This connection has been clearly observed throughout the text data corpus. For example, an informant said, “I would be more motivated to work if my principal was cooperative.” (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher). Another informant also said, “My principal is a dictator, and it is not pleasant to work under his administration.” (Grade 11 and 12 Economics Teacher). Another informant also said, “I don’t understand why students have become more and more disrespectful to their teacher through times. Teaching is no more an interesting profession.” (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher). An informant also reported, “Public secondary school principals are political tools, and it pains me to work under such condition.” (Grade 9 and 10 Chemistry teacher)

In this study, another theme that emerged as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the public secondary school teacher is Reward. This theme consisted of two sub-themes which are the problem of financial and non-financial rewards. Having identified these themes, additional analysis was made to unveil why the issue of rewards appears as mattering most to the teacher. Consequently, the analysis has shown that the problems of financial and non-financial rewards appear to have an impact on study participants’ work motivation. Below are presented two significant statements extracted from the data set to indicate the relationship between the problems of financial and non-financial rewards and work motivation. The first one is what a Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher said. He said:

With an unchanging monthly salary of a teacher, it has become more and more unbearable to get along with the rapidly changing living cost in the city. Life has become very difficult for a public-school teacher. Knowing this fact, how could you expect me to find teaching interesting.

The second one is what the Grade 11 Business and Economics Teacher said. He said, “If I have gotten the opportunity for further education or access to credit whenever I needed it, I could have liked the fact of me being a schoolteacher.”

The praxis of politics in a school setting is the last theme this study has identified as an attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the public secondary school

teacher. Analysis of text data showed that the praxis of politics in school settings appears to manifest itself in four various forms. These were: provision of scholarship on the basis of political affiliation, unofficial banning of real political agenda from a discussion in classrooms, the provision of promotions on the basis of political affiliation, and the use of time which is officially allotted to teaching practice for the purpose of administering political programs and meetings. Right after learning the praxis of politics is an attribute of the work environment that matters most to the public secondary school teacher, further analysis was also made to capture the underlying reason it mattered. The output of this analysis has revealed that the praxis of politics in school settings seems to impact study participants' work motivation. It is believed that this connection could be represented by significant statements extracted from the interview data. For instance, an informant said, "Teaching in a context where the school principal tells you which empirical situation of the country you can or can't discuss in the class is not something that any teacher is pleased about." (Grade 9 and 10 Civics and ethical education teacher). Another informant said, "One thing that makes me lose my interest in teaching is the provision of scholarship on the basis of political affiliation." (Grade 12 History Teacher). An informant had also reported, "The moment I realized the provision of promotions is mainly on the basis of political affiliation, I lost my interest in pursuing a teaching job." (Grade 9 and 10 English Language Teacher)

Attributes of Work Environment and Job-Satisfaction

Besides its potential impact on work motivation, this study has also found that the problems of basic school facilities could possibly have an impact on study participants' job satisfaction too. Throughout the interview data set, respondents were observed repeatedly associating their job satisfaction with the problems of basic school facilities. This seemingly causal connection can be depicted by some extracts of significant statements. For example, an informant mentioned, "Inadequacy of personal computers, reference books, and laboratory tools have constrained me from utilizing my talent, knowledge, and skill to the fullest." (Grade 11 and 12 Information Technology Teacher). Another informant mentioned, "The quality of school cafeteria and restrooms has made me feel bad about my job." (Grade 11 and 12 Mathematics Teacher). An informant had also said, "The inadequacy and quality of basic school facilities have made me hate working in public secondary schools." (Grade 10 Geography Teacher).

After the nature of in-school interpersonal relations appeared as having an impact on study participants' work motivation, the text data set was also further explored seeking if there are other associated factors. Consequently, job satisfaction emerged as a theme linked with the nature of in-school interpersonal relations. Analysis of text data showed that both nature of teacher-principal and teacher-student relations have an impact on study participants' job satisfaction. Extracts of significant statements seem to substantiate this claim. For instance, an informant reported, "My supervisor doesn't usually grant me recognition for the good things I do. This kind of treatment has taken the satisfaction I used to get out of my job." (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher). Another informant also reported, "A dictator school principal made me hate my job." (Grade 10 Geography Teacher). An informant had also reported, "Students often approach teachers in an unruly manner, and that is one thing teachers are losing their job-satisfaction for." (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher).

Data extracts related to problems of rewards were thoroughly analyzed to point out potentially associated factors other than work motivation. The analysis took no time before job satisfaction emerged as a theme related to the problems of rewards. Throughout the data set, study participants' job satisfaction persistently appeared as affected by the condition of financial and non-financial rewards. It is assumed that the two pieces of statements extracted

from the data set could clearly highlight a story of how problems of rewards have been excreting their fair share of effect on respondents' job satisfaction. The first one is what a grade 9 and 10 Chemistry teacher reported. She said, "I am afraid to say this, teaching is an interesting profession, but I would have been more content with it if my salary had been at least sufficient just to get along with the cost of living in the city." (Grade 9 and 10 Chemistry teacher). The second one is what a Grade 11 and 12 Mathematics Teacher reported. He said, "One thing that makes work difficult in the city is a transportation problem. Daily moments of suffering I experienced while queuing for a taxi under a scorching sun are those moments, I cursed my job." (Grade 11 and 12 Mathematics Teacher).

In being cognizant of the trend observed from the first three main attributes of the work environment exhibiting seemingly causal effect on study participants' work motivation and job satisfaction, further analysis was also made on data extracts related to the praxis of politics in a school setting. The analysis showed a similar result. The praxis of politics in the school setting has happened to have a potential effect on informants' job satisfaction.

This story of the relationship between praxis of politics in the school environment and job satisfaction has been told well through the words of the respondents. For instance, one informant (Grade 11 and 12 Information Technology teacher) reported that the provision of scholarship based on political affiliation has made her lose the satisfaction she once had gained from her job. Another informant (Grade 9 and 10 Civics and Ethical Education teacher) reported that unofficial banning of real political agenda from discussion in classrooms has made him think about changing his profession. With a similar spirit, a grade 12 Economics teacher mentioned that he would have been promoted years ago if promotion to a higher position had not been granted based on hidden political intentions. It seems it was as a matter of this fact the Economics teacher mentioned that he has lost his interest in his job and has decided to leave the profession to work for private companies.

Attributes of Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Work Engagement

In an intention to elaborate on the direct/indirect relationship among the attributes of the work environment, work motivation, and work engagement, I have borrowed two standardized measurement scales and used them as a general reference basis. These scales are the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) by Fernet, Senécal, Guay, Marsh, and Dowson, (2008) and the shorter version of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Seppälä et al. (2009). Using the items which constituted the measurement scales as basic references ground, I, thus, endeavored to present extracts of significant statements in a way that may portray the direct and indirect relationship among work environment, work motivation, and work engagement.

Box 2

The Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) by Fernet et al. (2008)

1. Because it is pleasant to carry out this task(M1).
2. Because I find this task interesting to do (M2).
3. Because I like doing this task(M3).
4. Because it is important for me to carry out this task(M4).
5. Because this task allows me to attain work objectives that I consider important(M5).
6. Because I find this task important for the academic success of my students(M6).
7. Because if I don't carry out this task, I will feel bad(M7).
8. Because I would feel guilty not doing it(M8).
9. To not feel bad if I don't do it(M9).
10. Because my work demands it(M10).

11. Because the school obliges me to do it(M11).
12. Because I'm paid to do it(M12).
13. I don't know, I don't always see the relevance of carrying out this task(M13).
14. I used to know why I was doing this task, but I don't see the reason anymore (M14).
15. I don't know, sometimes I don't see its purpose(M12).

Box 3

The Short Version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) from (Seppälä et al., 2009)

1. At my work, I feel that I am bursting with energy (E1)
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (E2)
3. Time flies when I'm working (E3)
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (E4)
5. I am enthusiastic about my job (E5)
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me (E6)
7. My job inspires me (E7)
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (E8)
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely (E9)
10. I am proud of the work that I do (E10)
11. I am immersed in my work (E11)
12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time (E12)
13. To me, my job is challenging (E13)
14. I get carried away when I'm working (E14)
15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally (E15)
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job (E16)
17. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well (E17)

To reference and clarity, hereunder, sentences within significant statements extracted from the data set are presented along with reference numbers. These reference numbers are expected to enable readers to easily relate extracts of significant statements with items in the work tasks motivation scale for teachers (WTMST) by Fernet et al. (2008) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Seppälä et al. (2009). And to enable them easily to visualize the direct and indirect relationships among work environment, work motivation, and work engagement embedded in the text data.

There are plenty of significant statements in the text data set that could implicate the direct and indirect relationships among work environment, work motivation, and work engagement. It could be logically argued that several sentences that made up those significant statements host the very basic idea embedded in the items of measurement scales considered for the intended elaboration. A few of the significant statements that may imply the direct and indirect relationships among work environment, work motivation, and work engagement are: (a) "It is not pleasant to teach science with a shortage of classrooms and science laboratory (Remind M1&2). It just sucks your energy (Remind E1) and make a wish when you will be changing the profession (Remind E3)" (Grade 9 and 10 Chemistry teacher). (b) "How can you be so enthusiastic about your job (Remind E5) if your principal School is not genuinely cooperative to help you work staff (Remind M5)." (Grade 11 Business and Economics Teacher). (c) "Students are less cooperative to achieve teaching and learning objectives Remind (Remind M5). This actually takes the inspiration and enthusiasm away from your job (Remind E5 & 7)" (Grade 9 and 10 Amharic Language Teacher). (d) "The salary we receive is demotivating (Remind M12). It is hard to be a hard worker under this circumstance (Remind E4). (Grade 12 History Teacher). (e) "Opportunities for further education are often given based on your political affiliation. It is no use to stay in this profession for a politically inactive person

like me (Remind M14). I no longer have the desire to do it anymore (Remind E,3, 5, &7). (Grade 9 and 10 English Language Teacher)

I believe that a closer look into the above-stated significant statements could reveal how possibly the attributes of the work environment somehow directly related to work motivation and how work motivation mediates the relationship between the attributes of the work environment and work engagement. For instance, the first extract of a significant statement seems to summarize how the inadequacy of basic school facilities affects work motivation, which, in turn, causes an effect on work engagement. Likewise, the second significant statement sheds light on how the nature of teacher-principal relation has affected the study participants' work motivation and how the effect then extends onto their work engagement. From the third significant statement, it can reasonably be claimed that reward has something to do with study participants' work motivation, and work motivation bridges the relationship between reward and work engagement. On the other hand, the last significant statement gives a picture of a work motivation mediated the relationship between the praxis of politics in the school setting and work engagement.

Attributes of Work Environment, Job-satisfaction, and Work Engagement

The results of this study suggest that the attributes of the work environment have a direct effect on job satisfaction. The results also suggest that job satisfaction also mediates the relationship between the attributes of work attributes and work engagement. In the preceding section, I have tried to elaborate on the relationship between work environment, work motivation, and work engagement by systematically relating extracts of significant statements with standard work motivation and work engagement measurement scales. The elaboration on the relationship among work environment, job satisfaction, and work engagement follows a similar logic. Thus, I have adopted a standard job satisfaction measurement scale. Box 4 presents a job satisfaction measurement scale developed by (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997).

Box 4

Job Satisfaction Measurement Scale Developed by Macdonald & MacIntyre (1997)

- 1.I get along with supervisors (J1)
- 2.All my talents and skills are used (J2)
- 3.I feel good about my job (J3)
- 4.I receive recognition for a job well done (J4)
- 5.I feel good about working at this company (J5)
- 6.I feel close to the people at work (J6)
- 7.I feel secure about my job (J7)
- 8.I believe management is concerned about me (J8)
- 9.On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health (J9)
- 10.My wages are good (J10)

Again, readers are kindly reminded to note that for the purpose of reference and clarity, sentences in significant statements extracted from the data set are presented along with reference numbers. These reference numbers are expected to enable readers to easily relate extracts of significant statements with items in the job satisfaction measurement scale developed by Macdonald & MacIntyre (1997) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Seppälä et al. (2009). These reference numbers are also expected to enable readers to easily visualize the direct and indirect relationships among work environment, work motivation and work engagement embedded in the text data.

Upon the results of text data analysis, it has been reasonably assumed that there are several significant statements that could exemplify the direct and indirect relationships among the work environment, job satisfaction, and work engagement. I also reasonably believe that several sentences of those significant statements host the basic idea embedded in the items in the job satisfaction measurement scale developed by Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Seppälä et al. (2009). Some of the extracts of significant statements that may imply the direction of the relationship among the attributes of the work environment, job satisfaction, and work engagement are these ones: (a) “If you have seen the toilets, you would have puked once & left the institution forever (Remind J5). This is one of the problems which made my job too challenging (Remind E13)” (Grade 11 and 12 Economics Teacher). (b) “My supervisor is an autocratic person. It is not easy to get along with him (Remind J1) ... he invokes confrontation in me than cooperation (Remind E15)” (Grade 9 and 10 Civics and ethical education teacher). (c) “It is unrealistic to expect the teacher to be enthusiastic about his job (Remind E5) though he earns a salary that cannot help him withstand the urban living cost (Remind J10)” (Grade 11 Business and Economics Teacher). (d) “I deeply feel bad whenever I think of the fact that the politics informally determines so much of the things that happen in this school (Remind J5). This has made me emotionally detached from my job as I have never been before (Remind E1,5,16, & 17).” (Grade 10 Geography Teacher)

If the above-mentioned extracts of significant statements are observed closely, one could capture an embedded direct relationship between attributes of the work environment and job satisfaction and an indirect relationship between work environment and work engagement as mediated by job satisfaction. The first significant statement, for example, shows how job satisfaction on one hand is affected by the conditions of school facilities and on the other hand, mediates the impact of the conditions of school facilities on work engagement. From the second significant statement, it can be drawn a direct link between the nature of teacher-supervisor relation and the teacher’s work motivation and an indirect link between the nature of teacher-supervisor relation and the teacher’s work engagement with job satisfaction in the picture as a mediator. The third significant statement portrays a connection among the attributes of the work environment, job satisfaction, and work engagement with job satisfaction having a mediating role in the process of interaction. The fourth significant statement tells a story of how a condition of penetration of politics into the school environment has influenced the teacher’s job satisfaction and how this in turn has created a condition for an engaged teacher to turn out to be a disengaged one.

Discussion

This study indicates that the condition of school facilities has been one of the attributes of the work environment that seems to matter most for the public secondary school teacher. This study further indicates that there seems to be a problem of adequacy and quality with basic school facilities. In comparison to studies conducted on related study populations across Ethiopia, the results of this study appear in good agreement with the findings of several studies that have investigated the condition of basic school facilities. Kore (2013); Mekonnen and Demelash (2014); and Mengistu (2012), for instance, have identified a shortage of classrooms. Kore (2013); Mekonnen and Demelash (2014); and Mengistu (2012) have also reported that there has been the inadequacy of science laboratories and reference books in public school libraries.

This study suggests that the second attribute of the work environment that seems to matter most to the teacher is the nature of in-school interpersonal relations. Particularly, the aspects of teacher-supervisor and teacher-student relations that matter most to study participants were revealed. The study further found out that the teacher-principal relation seems

to be characterized by the principal's non-cooperation, autocracy, and presence of a spirit of politicized antagonism. At the same time, the teacher-student relation seems to be characterized by students' lack of respect for the teacher. In comparison to much research conducted on related study populations across Ethiopia, the results of this study happen to be consistent with the findings of several studies that have explored the different aspects of interpersonal relations in school settings. For example, Demelash and Damtew (2013), Gebereslassie (2014); Mengistu (2012), and Negussie and Ranjan, (2014) have pointed out that the undemocratic nature of leadership in public schools has manifested in and through teacher-principal relations. Mengistu (2012), has further argued that a considerable number of students exhibit negative behavior towards their teachers.

According to the findings of this study, the problem of financial and non-financial rewards seems to be another attribute of work environments that matters most to the teacher. The results of this study further suggest that rewards such as salary, house allowance, access to credit, and opportunity for further education seem to be insufficient while access to free transportation service happened to be unavailable at all. Agreeable to the findings of this study, various researchers have also claimed that public secondary school teachers in the study area and other parts of Ethiopia receive an unsatisfactory salary (see Mengistu, 2012; Negussie & Ranjan, 2014; Yami et al., 2011). Several studies have also documented that the provision of fringe benefits was unsatisfactory too (see Demelash & Damtew, 2013; Mekonnen & Demelash, 2014; Mengistu, 2012; Negussie & Ranjan, 2014)

Among attributes of the work environment, this study suggests that the praxis of politics in school settings is another attribute that seems to matter most to the teacher. This study also demonstrates that politics has been practiced in school settings in four different forms. In comparison to reports of studies conducted on related populations across Ethiopia, the results of this study strikingly concur with the results of several studies that either implicitly or explicitly investigated the interplay between the institution of politics and education. Amare (2009), Gari (2017), and Tesfaye (2018), for instance, suggest that, unlike others, schoolteachers with strong political affiliation to the ruling party have greater access to opportunities for further education. On the other hand, some other studies have pointed out how politics and politicians directly influence school leadership and management (see Duressa, 2016; Hailemichael, 2019; Hassen, 2017; Yigeremu, 2018).

This study also suggests that the public secondary school teacher's motivation seems to be influenced by the condition of the attributes of the work environment. The findings of several previous studies conducted on related populations across Ethiopia also substantiate the results of this study. Abraha (2017), Ketsela (2011), and Yizengaw (2019), for instance, have identified a statistically significant relationship between school facilities and teachers' motivation. Abraha (2017), Ketsela (2011), and Yizengaw (2019) have also found out a statistically significant association between reward and teachers' motivation. Tesfaye (2018); and Tsegaye (2019), on the other hand, have identified in-school interpersonal relations as one of the determinant factors to teachers' motivation. In Hordofa (2011), it was also documented that the involvement of politics in school issues is a factor that may affect teachers' motivation.

The results of this study also suggest that the public secondary school teacher's job satisfaction has possibly been influenced by the condition of the attributes of the work environment. Reports of several studies that have investigated the determinants of teachers' job satisfaction across Ethiopia also appear in consistence with the results of this study. For instance, in Hordofa (2011), it has been documented that there is a statistically significant relationship between school facilities and teachers' job satisfaction. Several authors, Fikadu (2018), Dando (2014), Reta (2011), Mengistu (2012), and Yitayew (2018), on the other hand, have found out a statistically significant association between rewards and teachers' job satisfaction. In-school interpersonal relations have also been identified as determinant factors

to teachers' job satisfaction (see Fikadu, 2018; Reta, 2011). Agreeable to the finding of this study, Fikadu (2018) and Reta (2011) have claimed that the praxis of politics in the school environment is among the factors that have been affecting teachers' job satisfaction.

Results suggest that the secondary school teacher's motivation mediates the relationship between attributes of the work environment and his/her work engagement. In comparison, related studies have found a statistically significant relationship among attributes of the work environment, work motivation, and work engagement. Azanza, Moriano, and Melero (2013), for example, indicated that psychological empowerment through motivational approach (a construct closely related to work motivation) mediates the relationship between job resources (aspect/attribute of work environment) and work engagement. Consistent with this study, various other studies have also indicated work motivation as a predictor of work engagement (Li et al., 2015; Sartono & Ardhani, 2015; Taghipour & Dezfuli, 2013). But there is also a considerable number of authors, inconsistent with the result of this study, who documented direct/unmediated relationships between different aspects/attributes of the work environment and employees work engagement (Altunel et al., 2015; Alzyoud et al., 2015; Hanaysha, 2016; Runhaar et al., 2013).

Results also suggest that the secondary school teacher's job satisfaction mediates the relationship between attributes of the work environment and his/her work engagement. In comparison to related studies in the body of literature, most of the findings of this study happened to be agreeable to the findings of several other authors. For instance, Van Den Broeck et al. (2008), documented that need satisfaction (an aspect of job satisfaction) mediates the relationship between job resources (aspect/attribute of work environment) and work engagement. Agreeable to this study, various other studies have also indicated job satisfaction as an antecedent to work engagement (Garg et al., 2018; Sartono & Ardhani, 2015; Taghipour & Dezfuli, 2013). However, contrary to the finding of this study, there has been a significant number of authors who have documented employees' work engagement as an antecedent to their job satisfaction (see Garg et al., 2018; Sartono & Ardhani, 2015; Taghipour & Dezfuli, 2013). In addition, contrary to the finding of this study, there have also been a considerable number of authors who have suggested a direct/unmediated relationship between different aspects/attributes of the work environment and employees work engagement (Altunel et al., 2015; Alzyoud et al., 2015; Hanaysha, 2016; Runhaar et al., 2013).

This study is expected to have empirical, methodological, and theoretical implications. Some of the empirical implications are the following. (a) The thick description this study made about the public secondary school's work environment in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the psychological experience of schoolteachers in relation to the work environment; and teachers' perception towards their work environment may have greater policy implications. It may enlighten the Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and other concerned bodies on the nature of the relationship between the work environment and the teacher's occupational role nexus and trigger a policy intervention. (b) The questions I raised for future researchers may inspire a different perspective among other researchers interested in digging the relationship between the teacher and his/her work environment. (c) The construct model this study developed about the direct and indirect relationships among the relationships among attributes of work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement may serve as a springboard for quantitative researchers who wish to test such models with advanced statistical procedures such as structural equation modeling. (d) The study may also be seen as a tool that showcases the day-to-day problems public secondary school teachers (the study participants) experience in their work environment to the national and international community. (e) Findings of this study regarding the indirect and mediated effect of work environment on work engagement may challenge the academic community that argues for a direct and unmediated relationship.

Intending to elaborate a direct/indirect relationship among constructs, I have borrowed standardized measurement scales and used them as a generic reference basis. In practice, using the items that constituted the measurement scales as reference points, I had endeavored to present extracts of significant statements that may portray the direct and indirect relationship among work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement. As far as I know, such an approach to an elaboration of the direct and indirect relationship among constructs is not available in any qualitative research literature. I instead introduced the approach as a methodological experiment. I hope that this may contribute to the development of data analysis and presentation techniques in qualitative research in general and thematic analysis in particular.

If this study is seen from a theoretical vantage point, it could be considered as an empirical endeavor to understand how contexts condition emotions. Sociology of emotion is a branch of sociology that deals with such matters. In this regard, the study's attempt to unearth how contexts (work environment) condition emotion (motivation, satisfaction, and engagement) may have its own share of contribution to theories of sociology of emotion. Again, if this study is seen from a theoretical vantage point, it could be considered as an empirical endeavor directed towards understanding constraints of the roles attached with the teacher's occupational status. In this case, the study's attempt to point out the challenges of teaching as an occupational role may have its own share of contribution to role theories.

However, readers must note the limitations of the study and be careful while interpreting the findings. The first limitation of the study is that it was conducted only in an urban context. Since the study was conducted in an urban setting, in interpreting the findings, readers are advised to take the difference between rural and urban habitats into account. The second limitation is that the study was conducted only on public secondary schools. Since the study was conducted on public secondary schools, readers are, thus, advised to take caution while trying to relate the findings of this study to private school teachers. The third limitation of the study is that its study population was only secondary school teachers. As a matter of this fact, readers are kindly reminded to note that the findings of the study shall not be considered as a representation of the teacher in either primary or tertiary schools. Relatedly, given the purpose and design of the study, readers are kindly reminded to note that the generalizations made in this study are analytical generalizations. At this point, readers are advised to recall the three types of generalizations in social research: statistical generalization, analytical generalization, and case-to-case generalization (Polit & Beck, 2010). Unlike in statistical or case-to-case generalization, "in analytical generalization, qualitative researchers develop conceptualizations of processes and human experiences through in-depth scrutiny and higher-order abstraction" (Polit & Beck, 2010 p. 1453).

Despite the limitations of this study, I believe that the analysis of text data has produced very good if not excellent answers for the research questions which guided this study from the onset. The analysis of text data has not exclusively yielded answers to the research questions, but also questions left unanswered, for they have stretched beyond the domain of this study. It is my strong belief that answering these questions would play a significant role in and through the process of modeling the complex relationship the teacher has with his/her work environment. Thus, I call for other researchers to seek answers to those questions left unanswered. The basic questions I have so far confronted and left unanswered are these.

1. Is there a difference of magnitude in the severity of the problems of adequacy and quality of basic school facilities in the study area? If it does, what are the underlying conditions for the difference? And how does the difference in the magnitude affect the association among the problems of

- basic school facilities, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement?
2. What kind of roles variables such as work experience, academic status, fields of expertise, age, gender, and other demographic, psycho-social, and cultural backgrounds of the teacher and principal play in shaping the nature of teacher-supervisor relation?
 3. Do all teachers in the study area lack respect of their students? Or does it depend on the teacher's age, gender, work experience, a field of specialization, and other demographic, psycho-social, and cultural backgrounds?
 4. Are all students in the study area disrespectful to their teachers? Or does it depend on the student's age, gender, grade level, a field of study, and other demographic, psycho-social, and cultural backgrounds?
 5. Is there a difference of magnitude in the severity of the problems of financial and non-financial rewards in the study area? If it does, what are the underlying conditions for the difference? And how does the difference in magnitude affect the association among rewards, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement?
 6. What are the underlying socio-economic and political conditions for the praxis of politics in a school setting? Does the praxis of politics in a school setting have something to do with the ethnic identity politics the nation has lived through for the past 29 years?
 7. What are the variables that moderate the effect of the attributes of work environment on work motivation and job satisfaction? What are the variables that moderate the effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on work engagement? How does work engagement relate to performance?

In the end, based on the findings of this study, the following two major recommendations are made for future implications on policy, programs, and research. One, national policies and programs directed towards enhancing the quality of education through psychologically empowering the teacher shall be clearly informed that the condition of basic school facilities, teacher-student & teacher-director interpersonal relations, salary and fringe benefits, and the praxis of politics in school settings are potentially influencing teachers' work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Two, incognizant of a pivotal role of the teacher in enhancing the quality of education on one hand and the significant influence of work environment on the teacher's occupational roles, on the other hand, scholars are recommended to pay their due attention towards modeling the complex relationship the schoolteacher has with his/her work environment.

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