# Professional Commitment of Secondary School Teachers in Wolayta Zone, South Ethiopia Region

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## Article Info

## Abstract

*Professional commitment refers to the emotional attachment and dedication individuals have towards their chosen profession. In the field of teaching, commitment is crucial for educators' focus and involvement. However, sometimes teachers may experience declining commitment over time. Therefore, a study was conducted to investigate the extent of teachers' professional commitment in selected secondary schools in the Wolayta Zone, South Ethiopia Region. The study focused on examining teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, students, colleagues, and the school. The study used a cross-sectional research design to collect primary data from randomly selected secondary school teachers using a lottery method. Researchers developed a questionnaire, which was tested, and a Cronbach alpha value of 0.78 was recorded. Researchers used quantitative data analysis, including measures like mean and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistical methods like one-way ANOVA. The study found that secondary school teachers in the Wolayta Zone demonstrated high dedication to their profession but had moderate commitment to students, colleagues, and the school as a whole. Commitment levels did not differ significantly across schools. The study identified salary, benefits, and recognition as the most influential factors affecting teachers' commitment. The study concluded that the highest level of professional commitment had not been achieved, likely due to these factors. Therefore, the study recommended recognizing and rewarding committed teachers to foster their commitment. The study also suggested addressing factors like recognition, opportunities, and benefits at the education bureau level.*

*Keywords: Colleagues, professional commitment, secondary school, students, teachers*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role in any education system, and the quality of education cannot surpass the capabilities of its teachers (Firestone & Rosenblum, 2000). They are central to schools, colleges, and institutes, and without their willing cooperation, educational reforms cannot be successfully implemented. The impact of teachers on their students is profound and long-lasting, highlighting the need for their commitment, contentment, and dedication to their noble profession.

Professional commitment is a psychological connection or identification that individuals have with their profession, encompassing pride in their professional identity and a strong desire for professional development (Shashi, 2014). A committed teacher is often associated with professionalism and is considered an attribute that is desirable and beneficial. Teacher commitment can vary across different stages of life and career, as well as in different contexts. For example, a teacher may be highly committed to their students and creating a supportive learning environment in the classroom but may not feel an emotional affiliation towards the school organization's goals (Choi & Tang, 2009). Therefore, assessing teacher commitment requires considering multiple perspectives and factors beyond simplistic equations.

Basically, commitment is important for teachers as it signifies a personal interpretation of work as meaningful and absorbing. It plays a significant role in improving school outcomes, particularly student academic achievement (Kushman, 1992). Teachers' professional commitment contributes to students' academic achievement by fostering dedication to helping students learn, regardless of their academic difficulties or social backgrounds. This commitment is particularly crucial for academically at-risk students.

However, the current educational system often falls short in producing students with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet minimum requirements for tertiary education. Factors such as the current salary structure, job satisfaction, resource scarcity, and more contribute to teachers' professional commitment (Yalew et al., 2014). This raises the question of whether teachers possess the required level of professional commitment to improve students' academic achievement and if additional measures are necessary.

The present study utilized the dimensions of teachers' professional commitment identified by Shashi (2014), which include commitment to the profession, learners, schools, and colleagues. Previous research has investigated these variables and provided suggestions. Various studies have examined professional commitment among teachers in different contexts. Some studies have found moderate to low levels of professional commitment among teachers in tribal areas (Arjunan & Balamurugan, 2013), while others have found no significant differences based on gender, habitat, or educational background among teacher trainees (Gajjar, 2014). The relationship between professional commitment and teaching experience and gender has also been explored, with mixed findings (Sing & Kumar, 2015). These studies have primarily focused on external factors influencing professional commitment.

Similarly, teachers' commitment to student learning encompasses their dedication to helping students overcome academic challenges (Celep, 2001; Cheah, 2008). Anderson (1991), Housman (2001), and Dannetta (2002) emphasize the importance of teachers' commitment to student outcomes. However, Tschannen and Barr's (2004) study revealed that teachers with lower levels of commitment tend to develop fewer plans for effective instruction. Conversely, Mutchler (2005) argues that as student learning improves, teachers gain intrinsic rewards that further reinforce their commitment. Committed teachers also tend to form strong psychological connections with their schools, students, or subject areas (Buitendach& Witte, 2005). Consequently, teachers' commitment to their schools as institutions profoundly impacts both students and the school community (Celep, 2001; Day & Kington, 2005). Celep (2001) emphasizes the need for effective teachers to have a high level of commitment to their schools. However, none of the aforementioned studies have investigated the status of teachers' professional commitment in relation to its four dimensions. Therefore, this study aims to primarily investigate the extent of teachers' professional commitment in selected secondary schools in the Wolayta Zone.

Additionally, the study aims to identify the major factors that influence secondary teachers' professional commitment. Various challenges and issues faced by teachers, such as unsatisfactory fringe benefits and limited opportunities for career advancement, contribute to a decline in their commitment (Jalaja & Kumar, 2007). Several key factors, including professional

autonomy, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, educational qualifications, years of teaching experience, psychic rewards, work frustrations, intrinsic motivation, external interruptions, healthy school climate, incorporation of teachers' feedback, feelings of dissatisfaction, support from leaders, leadership styles, monetary incentives, overcrowded and noisy environments, teacher professional growth, administrative interactions, salary, benefits, and recognition, have been found to influence teachers' commitment (Bound, 2000; Celep, 2001; Desseler, 2001; Fred & Allan, 2008; Goldring, 2001; Hausman & Morris, 2004; Mutchler, 2005; Noe et al., 2014; Sylvester, 2010; Tschannen & Barr, 2004). Furthermore, factors such as professional development opportunities, availability of resources, and a collaborative school culture also significantly impact teachers' commitment (Dannetta, 2002; Jalaja & Kumar, 2007; Morris, 2004; Reimers, 2003). If these factors are not effectively managed, they can diminish teachers' commitment and even lead them to consider leaving the teaching profession. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the specific factors that influence teachers' professional commitment in particular areas, such as the Wolayta Zone. Based on the aforementioned issues, the following research questions have been formulated:

- What is the extent of professional commitment demonstrated by teachers?
- What are the major factors influencing teachers' professional commitment?

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, practices, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. Accordingly, the present study employed, a cross-sectional survey design,which provides a snapshot of teachers' commitment levels at a specific point in time. Moreover, it also provides information in a short amount of time, such as the time required for administering the survey and collecting the information(Creswell, 2013).

The primary data was collected from randomly selected secondary school teachers using the lottery method. The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula, which takes

into account the population size and margin of error. Based on this formula, the sample size was calculated as 254.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, N is the number of population of the study and e is the margin error: Using the above proposed formula, sample teachers was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{695}{1 + 695(0.05)^2} = 254$$

To gather the data, a questionnaire was chosen as the most common and efficient method within the time constraints and to reach a large group of research subjects (Kothari, 2004). The questionnaire consisted of self-developed close-ended questions to assess issues related to teachers' professional commitment and hindrances encountering.

Before the actual study, the questionnaires were pre-tested in Gurumokoysha secondary school, which was not part of the final sample. The researchers provided explanations on the study's objectives and how to respond to the questionnaire. Thirty-two teachers from the aforementioned schools responded to the questionnaire. The collected data were then organized and analyzed using SPSS version-20 to determine the reliability of the questionnaire by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003). Accordingly, all the reliability coefficients were higher than 0.70, confirming the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 6: Reliability coefficients of the items (N=32)

| S/N | Variables | No of items | Reliability Coefficient |
|-----|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Domain of teachers' professional commitment | | |
| 1.1 | Teachers' professional commitment to the profession | 9 | 0.84 |
| 1.2 | Teachers' professional commitment to the learners | 8 | 0.82 |
| 1.3 | Teachers' professional commitment to the colleagues | 8 | 0.77 |
| 1.4 | Teachers' professional commitment to the organization | 5 | 0.72 |
| | **Overall Cronbach's Alpha Result** | 30 | 0.78 |

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, senior and experienced professionals in the field of Pedagogy from Wolayta Sodo and Arba Minch University were engaged to provide their professional comments on the face and content validity. Based on their suggestions and feedbacks, irrelevant items were removed, and unclear items were clarified. As a result, the research instrument was deemed valuable for collecting data for the main study.

The quantitative data collected through the close-ended questionnaire were mainly analyzed using measures such as mean and standard deviation. In order to interpret the scaled items ranging from very low to very high, we established cutoff points for the mean value ranges: 1.00-1.80 as very low, 1.81-2.60 as low, 2.61-3.40 as moderate, 3.41-4.20 as high, and 4.21-5.00 as very high (Bluman, 2017). Similarly, for the question items regarding factors hindering teachers' professional commitment, the mean scores were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.80 as least serious, 1.81-2.60 as less serious, 2.61-3.40 as serious, 3.41-4.20 as more serious, and 4.21-5.00 as most serious. Additionally, inferential statistical method like one-way ANOVA, was applied for further conclusions.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. Teachers' Professional Commitment

Teacher commitment is a crucial factor that influences teaching and learning and has been studied from different theoretical perspectives. Researchers have explored the concept of teacher professional commitment in various ways. For this study, we focused on four main areas of teacher commitment, which will be discussed in the following sections (Shashi, 2014).

### 3.1.1. Level of Teachers' Professional Commitment to Their Profession

Teachers' professional commitment is highest when they perceive their work as relevant and purposeful. Teachers who lack a sense of relevance in their teaching are usually less committed, possibly because they feel frustrated with their work (Nir, 2002). On the other hand, committed teachers find satisfaction and enjoyment in their work and the interactions they have throughout their careers. These teachers are intrinsically motivated by a sense of meaning in their job responsibilities. In this study, we aimed to determine the extent of teachers' professional commitment to their teaching profession using descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 2.

Table 7: Mean and SD values of teachers' professional commitment to their profession (N=254)

| S/N | Indicators | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Teachers show willingness to improve their commitment | 3.12 | 0.12 |
| 2 | Teachers are motivated to create options for their commitment | 3.33 | 0.20 |
| 3 | Teachers make themselves available to help their commitment | 2.84 | 0.04 |
| 4 | Teachers are committed to participate in on-job training like | 3.71 | 0.80 |
| 5 | Teachers engage in training programs to enhance their | 2.29 | 0.11 |
| 6 | Teachers often spend their extra time at the school | 2.79 | 0.09 |
| 7 | Teachers set goals for their professional commitment | 4.68 | 0.10 |
| 8 | Teachers expect themselves as agent to facilitate their | 4.21 | 0.58 |
| 9 | Teachers are responsively to contribute their professional | 3.12 | 0.97 |
| | Grand Mean | 3.65 | 0.33 |

**Note:** VL= Very low, L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High and VL=Very low, M=mean, and SD=Standard Deviation

The scores provided in Table 2 illustrate the average mean scores representing the level of professional commitment among teachers. The mean score of $2.29\pm.011$ suggests that teachers generally do not actively participate in training programs aimed at enhancing their professional commitment to the teaching profession. In contrast, the mean scores of $4.68\pm.10$ and $4.21\pm.58$ indicate that teachers demonstrate a strong inclination towards setting personal goals and having high expectations for enhancing their own professional commitment. The mean scores of the remaining items indicate that teachers exhibit a moderate level of commitment to their profession. However, the overall mean score for teachers' professional commitment, which is $3.65\pm.33$, confirms that they are highly dedicated to their role as educators.

### 3.1.2. Level of Teachers' Professional Commitment to the Learners/Students

According to Housman (2001), commitment to students or learners is a type of commitment that can inspire teachers to engage with students on a more empathetic level, addressing issues related to adolescent development and extracurricular activities. This commitment involves teachers dedicating themselves to assisting students in their learning process and helping them overcome academic difficulties. On the other hand, Mutchler (2005) found that teachers who possess a lower level of commitment tend to have fewer strategies or plans in place to enhance the academic quality of their instruction. By employing mean values, the level of professional commitment of teachers to their students can be determined in the specific study area being discussed.

Table 8: Mean and SD scores of teacher's professional commitment to the students/learners (N=254)

| S/N | Indicators | M | SD |
|-----|------------|-----|------|
| 1 | Teachers are timely punctual to teach their students | 3.34 | 0.27 |
| 2 | Teachers train their students in study skill how to properly use time | 2.48 | 0.03 |
| 3 | Teachers use teaching approaches that address students' academic | 2.67 | 0.17 |
| 4 | Teachers are engaged in solving students' academic challenge | 3.45 | 0.72 |
| 5 | Teachers arrange tutorial program for students | 3.02 | 0.09 |
| 6 | Teachers support students by using student-cantered approach | 3.54 | 0.40 |
| 7 | Teachers encourage students in class room participation | 3.87 | 0.13 |
| 8 | Teachers often spend their extra time at the school to guide students | 2.15 | 0.22 |
| | **Grand Mean** | **3.06** | **0.25** |

**Note:** VL= Very low, L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High and VL=Very low, M=mean, and SD=Standard Deviation

In Table 3, the analysis findings for item 2 reveal that teachers are not adequately training their students in study skills, falling below the expected level (2.48±.03). Additionally, they do not frequently dedicate their extra time at school to providing guidance to these students (2.15±.22). Conversely, teachers demonstrate strong support for students through a student-centered approach and actively encourage classroom participation (3.54±.40; 3.87±.13, respectively). Furthermore, they show a high level of involvement in helping students overcome academic challenges (3.45±.72). However, teachers' professional commitment to the students/learners is assessed as moderate (3.065±.253).

### 3.1.3. Level of Teachers' Professional Commitment to the Colleagues

Teachers' professional commitment extends beyond their own classrooms and students to include their colleagues. Likewise, the level of commitment teachers demonstrate towards their fellow educators can be measured using mean and standard deviation (SD) scores.

Table 9: Mean and SD values of teachers' professional commitment to their colleagues (N=254)

| S/N | Indicators | M | SD |
|-----|------------|-----|------|
| 1 | Teachers are collaborative in sharing material resources | 2.21 | 0.11 |
| 2 | Teachers act in both formal and informal ways | 3.48 | 0.12 |
| 3 | Teachers facilitate interactions among in their staff | 3.22 | 0.02 |
| 4 | Teachers are volunteer to discuss about results of students with their group | 2.44 | 0.15 |

| S/N | Indicators | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Teachers establish positive interpersonal relationship with their staff | 2.87 | 0.03 |
| 6 | Teachers work together to create healthy school climate | 3.25 | 0.21 |
| 7 | All teachers have a common motives with colleagues | 2.01 | 0.15 |
| 8 | Teachers are engaged to fight harmful tradition in their group | 2.88 | 0.16 |
| | Grand Mean | **2.79** | **0.12** |

**Note:** VL= Very low, L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High and VL=Very low, M=mean, and SD=Standard Deviation

According to the data presented in Table 4, it can be observed that teachers exhibit a relatively low level of commitment when it comes to sharing material resources (2.21±.11), volunteering to discuss students' test results (2.44±.15), and having common motives (2.01±.15) with their colleagues. However, they demonstrate a high level of engagement in both formal and informal interactions with their colleagues (3.48±.12). The average scores for the remaining factors indicate a moderate level of professional commitment among teachers towards their colleagues. This finding is further supported by the overall average score of 2.79±.12, indicating a moderate level of commitment among teachers in the study area towards their colleagues.

### 3.1.4. Level of Teachers' Professional Commitment to the Organization/School

Teachers' dedication should also encompass their organization or school. Therefore, Table 5 displays the average scores of teachers' professional commitment, providing insight into the extent of their commitment to the organization or school.

Table 10: Level of teacher's professional commitment to the organization (N=254)

| S/N | Indicators | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Discuss the priorities and direction stated by the school | 2.55 | 0.13 |
| 2 | Belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values | 3.65 | 0.08 |
| 3 | Teachers prefer working at this school even though there are choices for working at the other school | 2.05 | 0.01 |
| 4 | Teachers work hard for the success of the school | 3.59 | 0.22 |
| 5 | Teachers deal with the future of the school to make to school conducive for teaching and learning process | 2.67 | 0.13 |
| | Grand Mean | 2.90 2 | 0.114 |

**Note:** VL= Very low, L=Low, M=Moderate, H=High and VL=Very low, M=mean, and SD=Standard Deviation

According to the table above, the mean values for the first and third items are as follows: $2.55\pm.13$ and $2.05\pm.01$, respectively. These statistical findings indicate that teachers in the study rarely engage in discussions about school priorities and directions, and they also do not have a strong preference for working at the school. Despite their lack of interest in staying at the school ($3.59\pm.22$; $3.65\pm.08$), they still work towards the success of the school and accept its goals and values. The overall mean score of $2.90\pm.114$ suggests that the professional commitment of secondary school teachers to their organization/school is at a moderate level.

Table 11: Summary for teachers' professional commitment (N=254)

| Teachers' professional commitment to the; | M | Sources of Variation | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learners | 3.065 | Between groups | 5.901 | 3 | 1.967 | |
| Profession | 3.653 | | | | | |
| Colleagues | 2.795 | Within | | 26 | 0.526 | 3.74 |
| Organization/School | 2.902 | Group | 13.667 | | | |
| Grand Mean | 2.663 | | 19.568 | 29 | | |

**Note:** M=Mean; Df=Degree of freedom

In summary, according to the above summary Table, the grand mean of 2.66 indicates that teachers demonstrate a moderate level of professional commitment towards the teaching profession, learners, colleagues, and organization/school. The results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that there are no significant variations among the different dimensions of teachers' professional commitment within the study area. This suggests that teachers' level of commitment does not significantly differ across the secondary schools, emphasizing the need to enhance teachers' commitment in the present study area.

### 3.2. Factors Affecting Teachers' Professional Commitment

The present study area utilizes descriptive statistics, such as the mean and standard deviation, to examine the factors influencing teachers' professional commitment. These statistical measures are employed to analyze the data presented in the following table.

Table 12: Factors that affect professional commitment of teachers(N=254*)*

| S/N | Factors | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Current scale of salary | 4.23 | 0.30 |
| **2** | Opportunities to lift up commitment | 3.09 | 0.04 |
| **3** | Capacity building training | 3.41 | 0.60 |
| **4** | School priorities and directions | 2.31 | 0.02 |
| **5** | Counseling and guidance | 2.05 | 0.16 |
| **6** | Additional benefitsand incentives | 4.33 | 0.93 |
| **7** | Interest to continue in teaching profession | 1.43 | 0.76 |
| **8** | Collaborative school culture | 3.41 | 0.55 |
| **9** | Adequate and appropriate educational resources | 3.01 | 0.08 |
| **10** | Extrinsic motivation | 2.72 | 0.17 |
| **11** | Recognition being provided to the teaching profession | 4.42 | 0.11 |
| **12** | Professional upgrading opportunities like in-service training | 2.98 | 0.21 |

**Note: M=mean, and SD=Standard Deviation**

According to Table 6, certain factors have been categorized as least serious or less serious in terms of their impact on the professional commitment of secondary school teachers. These factors include interest to continue in the teaching profession (mean score: 1.43±0.76), counseling and guidance (mean score: 2.05±0.16), school priorities and directions (mean score: 2.31±0.02), and extrinsic motivation (mean score: 2.72±0.17).

On the other hand, there are factors that are considered more serious hindrances limiting teachers' professional commitment in the study area. These include professional upgrading opportunities, such as in-service training (mean score: 2.98±0.21), availability of adequate and appropriate educational resources (mean score: 3.01±0.08), opportunities to enhance commitment (mean score: 3.09±0.04), collaborative school culture (mean score: 3.41±0.55), and capacity building training (mean score: 3.09±0.60).

Furthermore, the current scale of salary (mean score: 4.23±0.30), additional benefits and incentives (mean score: 4.33±0.93), and the recognition provided to the teaching profession (mean score: 4.42±0.11) are identified as the most serious factors affecting teachers' commitment.

To summarize, the study reveals that while factors like interest in teaching, counseling and guidance, school priorities and directions, and extrinsic motivation are considered to have less impact on professional commitment, factors such as professional development opportunities, availability of educational resources, collaborative school culture, and salary, benefits, and recognition significantly influence the commitment of secondary school teachers in Wolayta zone.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The concept of teacher professional commitment has been examined from various theoretical perspectives, and researchers have explored it using different approaches (Shashi, 2014). In this particular study, the aim was to investigate the extent of teachers' professional commitment in selected secondary schools in the Wolayta Zone, South Ethiopia Region, focusing on commitment to the teaching profession, students, colleagues, and the school. The findings indicate that secondary school teachers in the Wolayta zone demonstrate a high level of dedication to the teaching profession. However, their commitment to students, colleagues, and the school is assessed as moderate. Overall, they display a moderate level of professional commitment towards the teaching profession, learners, colleagues, and schools. It is worth noting that there were no significant differences in commitment levels across schools.

These results align with the findings of Housman (2001), who highlighted that commitment to student learning involves teacher dedication to helping students overcome academic difficulties. Similarly, Dannetta (2002) emphasized the importance of teacher commitment to student outcomes, considering academic difficulties and social background. Furthermore, committed teachers often have strong psychological connections to their schools, students, or subject areas (Buitendach & Witte, 2005). In this context, teachers' commitment to their schools as organizations has a significant impact on students and the school community (Day & Kington, 2005). Celep (2001) emphasized the need for effective teachers to have a high level of commitment to their schools, and this commitment is crucial for promoting students' academic achievement. Additionally, Tschannen and Barr (2004) suggested that teachers under pressure and stress may struggle to maintain a high level of commitment, which can affect their effectiveness in teaching. Similarly, teachers with lower levels of commitment tend to develop

fewer plans to enhance the academic quality of their instruction. They may also display less empathy towards students, experience more anxiety, and have less tolerance for frustration in the classroom (Mutchler, 2005). Mutchler also asserted that when student learning improves, teachers gain intrinsic rewards that further strengthen their commitment.

Teacher commitment to students plays a vital role in fostering student academic achievement. Cheah (2008) highlighted that a higher level of teacher commitment is associated with greater overall academic success for students. The involvement of supervisors in decision-making processes that affect teachers' commitment can stimulate higher levels of dedication (Cheah, 2008). When teachers have a high level of commitment, there is an opportunity to enhance student academic achievement as a whole. Leaders who provide support and cooperation to teachers in fulfilling their tasks play a significant role in fostering teacher commitment and promoting students' academic progress (Hausman & Goldring, 2001). In general, effective or committed teachers consistently prioritize and focus on their students' learning, whether through direct or indirect means (Anderson, 1991).

Teachers' commitment is influenced by several key factors, including salary, benefits, and recognition. The importance of these factors has been consistently supported by previous research (Desseler, 2001; Morris, 2004; Fred & Allan, 2008; Noe et al., 2014). In addition to these factors, other elements such as professional development opportunities, availability of resources, and a collaborative school culture also play a significant role in shaping teachers' commitment. These findings align with the research conducted by various scholars (Dannetta, 2002; Morris, 2004; Jalaja & Kumar, 2007; Reimers, 2003).

However, it is worth noting that certain factors can diminish teachers' commitment and even lead them to consider leaving the teaching profession altogether if given the chance. Adeyemo (2001) found that various factors contribute to this, including frustration and the allure of alternative activities. Additionally, overcrowded, dark, and noisy environments, as highlighted by Kaila (2007), can also reduce teachers' professional commitment. Tschannen and Barr (2004) suggest that teachers under pressure and stress may exhibit low commitment and be less effective in their teaching roles. Therefore, the leadership styles demonstrated by principals can significantly impact staff commitment (Bogler, 2001). Principals who motivate their staff, foster morale, and

ensure commitment satisfaction can enhance teacher performance (Tony & David, 2005). Furthermore, providing optimally challenging tasks can maximize teachers' intrinsic motivation and commitment (Nir, 2002). Therefore, administrators should aim to reduce paperwork and offer support in resolving parental disputes and minimizing classroom interruptions. These measures can contribute to improving teachers' professional commitment (Day & Kingston, 2005).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusions

In conclusion, the study shows that secondary school teachers in the Wolayta zone are highly dedicated to their profession. However, their commitment to students, colleagues, and the school is assessed as moderate. There are no significant variations in commitment levels across different schools. The most influential factors affecting teachers' commitment are salary, benefits, and recognition. Other factors like professional development opportunities, availability of resources, and a collaborative school culture also play a significant role. Also, our work has led us to conclude that the highest level of professional commitment of teachers was not yet ensured, probably due to these influential factors. To sum up, the findings of the present study might not be generalized to other contexts due to its narrower geographical and conceptual scopes. Additionally, self-reported data in the study may be influenced by response biases, potentially affecting the accuracy of the results. We are also aware that our study primarily examined dimensions like salary, benefits, recognition, and professional development, neglecting other important variables such as teacher workload, job satisfaction, and school leadership. Consequently, this limited the scope and depth of the findings.

### 5.2. Recommendations

Based on findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Low level of teacher's professional commitment can have negative impact on students' academic achievement. Therefore, Woreda education offices, zone education department and regional education bureau shall better encourage teachers to try their best to support

their students as teachers are role models and get work motivation by the success of the students in the school.

- The school principals, cluster supervisorsand teacher development program directors give an emphasis on teachers' commitment and find the reason why and in what professional area teachers are less committed to enhance students' academic achievements.

- It is also recommended for schools, woreda and zone education department administrators to reward committed teachers in order to motivate and initiate for professional commitment of teachers.

- South Ethiopia region education Bureaus and Wolayta zone education department have to work aggressively on factors that affect teachers' profession commitment such as recognition, salary, opportunities and benefits of teachers which reduce the level of teachers' professional commitment which in turn have direct influence on students' academic achievement.

Based on the major findings, several potential directions for further studies on secondary school teachers' professional commitment are proposed:

- Conduct a longitudinal study to examine the stability and changes in teachers' professional commitment over time. This would provide insights into the trajectory of commitment and identify factors that contribute to its fluctuations.

- Supplement the quantitative findings with qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain a more in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, perceptions, and motivations related to professional commitment.

- Compare the professional commitment levels of secondary school teachers in the Wolayta zone with teachers from other zones or regions. This comparative analysis can help identify cultural, contextual, or systemic factors that influence commitment and provide insights into potential best practices or interventions.

- Examine how commitment levels influence teachers' decisions to stay in the profession or leave, and identify factors that contribute to long-term commitment and retention among secondary school teachers.

- Explore the link between teachers' professional commitment and student outcomes, such as academic achievement, engagement, and well-being. Investigate how teachers' commitment levels impact student motivation, learning outcomes, and overall educational experiences.

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