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The current state of secondary school teachers' morale competence to teach

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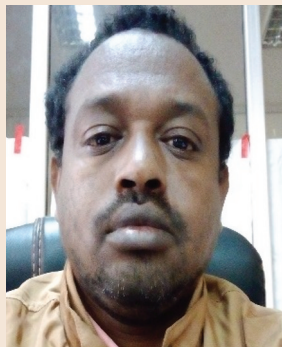
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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' morale competence in the secondary school of Kersa woreda. To achieve this objective, the researchers used a cross-sectional survey research design. The study was carried out on 110 secondary school teachers who were teaching grade nine. A questionnaire and an interview were used to collect data. The analysis of quantitative data was carried out by using descriptive statistics, whereas the qualitative data was analyzed with narrations to substantiate the quantitative findings. Based on the findings, the study recommended that to improve teachers' morale, Woreda education office, secondary school principals, vice-principals, and secondary school supervisors should give special attention to encouraging teachers' morale competence by providing fair and equitable school facilities and services system and creating awareness in the community to support education to achieve school goals and objectives.

Subjects: Education Studies; Post-Compulsory Education; Secondary Education; Teachers & Teacher Education

Keywords: competence; secondary school; teachers' morale; Teach



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Understanding teachers' morale competence has a paramount importance to determine the factors that affect teachers teaching practice. This study focus on assessing teachers' morale competence in secondary schools. The result of the study shows that teachers' morale is low. This shows that teacher have low level of personal satisfaction, do not have a satisfactory standard of living, not respected by the community, and are not treated as professionals. As a result, teachers were not satisfied with their current teaching position. Therefore, to improve teachers' morale, Woreda education office, secondary school principals, vice-principals, and secondary school supervisors should give special attention to encouraging teachers' morale competence by providing fair and equitable school facilities and services system and creating awareness in the community to support education to achieve school goals and objectives.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Teachers' morale is the collective feelings and attitudes of an individual and a group related to their duties, responsibilities, and goals; the state of mind of a teacher with respect to their work (Carroll, 1992). Teachers who have high morale are more likely to motivate students to learn in the classroom, to ensure the implementation of educational reforms and to develop feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment (Evans, 1998). Teachers' morale can be viewed as teachers striving to achieve their individual goals and the educational goals of the school system, and their perceptions of satisfaction stemming from the total school environment (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Henderson & Nieto, 1991).

The success of an educational institution depends on teachers' commitment, which is directly related to the level of morale they have within the institution (Bassett, Behrstock-Sherratt, Jacques & Olson, 2014). Therefore, it is clear that if the enthusiasm and willingness for the work of a group are high, the morale is high as well. Teachers who have high morale have a strong acceptance of the school's values, tasks, and working manner.

If teachers are motivated and have morale competence, they can engage students to learn. The teacher has a direct role in the levels of student engagement through the classroom environment (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). According to Hughes and Kwok (2007) study, classroom engagement is a mechanism of the student-teacher relationship, which has a positive impact on student achievement. There is still an obvious gap in the levels of student engagement from school to school and from course to course in the study area (Gemedo & Tynjälä, 2015). It happens quite often that the student is completely engaged in the process of learning when attending one class but shows no engagement during some other class. Usually, the difference in the level of engagement occurs because of the teacher's morale, behavior, and instructional style. When students engage in classroom learning, there is usually some aspect of the teacher's behavior that plays a role in the initiation and regulation of the engagement (Ehinen, 2017).

Willis and Varner (2010) studied the relationship between teachers' morale competence and students' academic achievement and they confirmed that in schools, having high teachers' morale showed an increase in student academic achievement. Teachers with low morale, on the other hand, are unhappy and dissatisfied with their profession. This implies that when the teachers' morale is high, the students' academic achievement also increases. In addition, those schools who have decreased teachers' morale, students showed less achievement. When the teacher's morale is low, then it results in a decrease in students' achievement due to their sick state of mind.

It is obviously reasonable to state that a student's successful academic performance is often a matter of concern for both educators and society in general, as well as the student's family in particular. On the one hand, families are often interested in improving students' academic performance. The success of any school is based on the high academic achievement of its students. Academic achievement is a performance judgment test that determines whether a learner has gained specific information or mastered the necessary expertise (Miller et al., 2012). The existence of teachers who have confidence is essential in teaching and learning, and they can influence the teaching-learning outcome either positively or negatively. They are to be considered when addressing issues such as quality assurance, quality delivery (teaching), quality context, and quality learning outcomes (Onacha, 2002).

Some researchers have attributed student disengagement and poor performance to the students themselves. For instance, Kingoina et al. (2015) indicated that student engagement and academic performance largely depended on how teachers promoted classroom interactions. Supportive teachers who created a positive emotional climate for learning demonstrated that the classroom was a safe and valuable place to be and were enthusiastic about learning. As

a result, students felt more connected and engaged in learning and were more successful academically (Kingoina et al., 2015).

Both inside and outside school factors diminish the current situation of teachers' morale, students' engagement and academic performance in secondary school. Recently, teaching is becoming an increasingly more demanding profession in Ethiopia; this is due to an increased number of schools and enrolment in particular (Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015). Therefore, in this paper, the researchers tried to assess the status of teachers' morale competence by using ten dimensions in selected secondary schools in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The teaching profession is one of the most undermined professions in Ethiopia (Gedefaw, 2012). Because of this, the education system in Ethiopia is challenged with high turnover (Workeneh & Tassew, 2013). Many teachers have been leaving the job to seek employment elsewhere, which they think holds promises of better pay and fame for them. Most of the remaining teachers in the profession might experience a lower level of commitment with regard to teaching, thus affecting the standard of students' engagement and academic performance of students. Low morale, however, is characterized by obstructive or non-contributory behavior and normally leads to indifference towards others; cynical attitudes toward students; little initiative when it comes to preparing lessons; preoccupation with leaving teaching for a better job; and bouts of depression (Monica Dede Tekyi & Lawrence Kania Wonnia, 2014).

Classroom learning depends on a great pace of the structure and patterns of inter-personal relationships, particularly pupil with pupil and pupil with teacher relationships, existing at a given point of time within the learning group. The transition from primary school to secondary school of learning is the first life change and time of facing psycho-social problems like peer pressure and different interpersonal relationships for the sake of adolescent age. The major factors for the performance status have been identified as a lack of professional competence among teachers, a lack of instructional materials, and an unsuitable school environment. However, researchers have considered teachers' morale as another important factor that may influence students' engagement and academic performance in secondary schools. Teachers' morale is extremely important in the effectiveness of teaching, which enhances students' learning and their higher performance in general.

A study done in Ethiopia, on secondary school teachers in Hadiya Zone reveals those teachers in the target area were dissatisfied with their teaching (Ayele, 2014). The author observes some variables like teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. The author's conclusion clearly shows that more satisfied teachers are more committed to their job than less satisfied teachers are. In addition, the study done by Girma et al. (2016) showed that the relationship between job satisfaction and professional commitment has a significant and strong relationship. This indicates that there is a positive and very high relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and professional commitment.

The trend of the studies done on the concept of job satisfaction and professional commitment shows that some studies have been done on this topic in some countries, but little emphasis has been given to such studies in Ethiopia. Studies on job satisfaction are mostly centered on organizations, such as corporate offices, but little research, whether in Ethiopia or abroad, is done on job satisfaction among teachers, with the exception of (Ayele, 2014). There have been no recent studies related to this aspect of teachers' morale.

In addition, the frequent absence of teachers from school, aggressive behavior towards colleagues and learners, early exits from the profession, and psychological withdrawal from work are the major problems in the secondary school of the study area (Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015). Some teachers are changing their profession and field of study rather than teaching and applying for

vacancies in other sector offices. Therefore, all the above issues initiated the researchers to conduct a study on teachers' morale competence in selected secondary schools in the study area (Kersea Woreda).

- What is the status of secondary school teachers' morale in Kersa woreda?

Answering the above research questions would have paramount importance for decision makers at different levels to take the necessary measures for the improvement of teachers' morale competence so that teachers stay in the profession and engage students in the learning process and improve students' academic performance.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

The purpose of this study is to assess current state of teachers' morale competence in selected secondary schools of Kersea Woreda. Cross sectional survey, research design was used for this study. Cross sectional survey, design helps to describe the current situation of the issue in a given time (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

2.2. Participants of the study

This study was conducted in a randomly selected one district (Kersea Woreda). In this district, there are seven secondary schools. From the four grades teachers (grades 9–12) those teachers who teach grade nine were randomly selected as participants of the study. Then all teachers in each secondary school who teach grade nine (9) were taken as participants of the study. In addition, all sample secondary school principals, supervisor, and educational experts at district level are taken as sample of the study. Accordingly, the following table clearly shows the population and the sample for the study.

2.3. Instruments of data collection

The following instruments of data collection were used to collect data: questionnaires, observation, and document analysis.

2.3.1. Questionnaires

The required data was collected through closed-ended questionnaires. Questionnaires were prepared to obtain information from sampled secondary school teachers. This is because a questionnaire is convenient to conduct a survey and to acquire necessary information from a large number of study subjects within a short period. Closed-ended items were created using Likert-scale questions. Strongly disagree = 1, strongly disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5 on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was prepared in English because all of the respondents or teachers could have the necessary skills to read and understand it.

2.3.2. Interview

Interviews help to explore detailed information that cannot be explored with questionnaires. For this study, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with secondary school principals, supervisors, and educational experts at the district level to secure data and validate the information collected from teachers. The interview was conducted in local language and it was recorded, transcribed and translated to English Language. Interview was mainly used to support the quantitative finding.

2.4. Validity and reliability of instruments

The validity and reliability of the instruments were maintained by considering expert review and pilot testing of the instruments.

The validity of the instruments was maintained by reviewing the instruments by curriculum and instruction and educational measurement and evaluation experts to make the instruments

relevant. All the items were developed to address the research questions under investigation to maintain the validity of the instruments of the study. Content validity was established by cross-referencing the content of the instruments to the elements contained in the basic research questions. Content validity addresses to what extent the fit content is represented in questionnaires and observation guide items.

The reliability of the instrument was maintained by conducting a pilot test in one secondary school, which is located in the nearby district. Then the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated and it was found to be 0.88, which is considered good (Jakson, 2009).

2.5. Methods of data analysis

Quantitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the collected data. The data collected by using questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics using mean and standard deviation. Whereas the data collected by using interviews was analyzed by using narrative to support the qualitative findings. Finally, the result is presented by using a table and written form.

2.6. Ethical consideration

Ethical issues were considered during data collection, presentation, and analysis stages. To do so, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and there was no coercion of any of the participants either before or during the study to get full information. The participants were informed that their participation was purely voluntary in this study and they could stop at any time they felt uncomfortable with it. Both procedures were carried out with the participants' consent, without endangering or jeopardizing their personal or school safety. Thus, all communication with respondents was undertaken in an open and honest way, considering the research ethical code issues like anonymity and confidentiality. Privacy was adhered to maintain confidentiality of the information obtained during data collection. Finally, the researcher underlined that their responses were not used for any other purposes except for this academic research.

3. Result

The major findings of the study are presented based on the basic questions.

4. Status of teachers' morale

To assess teachers' morale in the sample districts' secondary schools, a standardized questionnaire that comprises 48 question items that have 10 different dimensions was used. Hence, questionnaires were presented to respondent teachers to rate their agreement or disagreement. The dimensions include teachers' satisfaction with teaching; teachers' status of feeling; teachers' rapport with principals; rapport among teachers; teachers' salary; teachers' load; curriculum issues; community support for education; school facilities and services; and community pressure.

One of the dimensions of teachers' morale competence is teachers' satisfaction in teaching. The [Table 1 and 2](#) below shows ten items that can help to measure teachers' satisfaction in teaching dimensions and teachers' morale competence.

The above [Table 2](#) indicates the aggregate result of teacher respondents was ($M = 2.422$, $SD = 0.68$), showing that the grand mean of responses of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in the table above. It challenged the status of satisfaction with teaching. Thus, we can understand that the aggregate mean rating of the teachers regarding their satisfaction with the nature of work is low, which indicates that the status of teachers' morale is low in the study area. Supporting the above idea, one of the supervisor has to say this "Nowadays, teachers are not satisfied with their work. They are mostly talking about how to leave their profession". This indicates that teachers are not happy with the work they are doing.

The second dimension to measure is the teachers' status of feelings. Six items were presented to the respondents, and their responses are summarized in [Table 3](#) below.

Table 1. Participant population and sample size

No	School	Population	Sample size	
			No	%
1	Serbo Secondary School	24	24	100
2	Lemlem Secondary School	12	12	100
3	Kera Gora Secondary School	16	16	100
4	Bulbul Secondary School	18	18	100
5	Biftu Gibe Secondary School	14	14	100
6	Wacho Secondary School	12	12	100
7	Dibu Bijit Secondary School	14	14	100
	Total	110	110	100

Table 2. Teachers' satisfaction in teaching (N = 110)

No	Items	M	SD
1	Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction	2.92	0.73
2	Teaching enables me to make my greatest contribution to society.	2.53	0.67
3	I love to teach.	2.64	1.00
4	If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	2.32	0.57
5	If I could earn as much money in another occupation, I would stop teaching	2.90	1.01
6	I feel successful and competent in my present position.	2.11	0.58
7	I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs, and societies.	2.27	0.64
8	Most of the actions of students irritate me	2.25	0.79
9	My students regard me with respect and confidence in my professional ability.	2.14	0.40
10	I am well satisfied with my present teaching position	2.09	0.39
	Aggregate	2.42	0.68

1.49 = Agree, 1.5–2.49 = Disagree, 2.5–3.49 = Undecided, 3.5–4.49 = Agree, 4.5 = Strongly Agree

Table 3. Teachers' status of feelings (N = 110)

No.	Teacher Status of Feeling	M	SD
1	My teaching position gives me the social status in the community	2.12	0.490
2	Teaching enables me to enjoy many of the material and cultural things I like	2.21	0.64
3	Teaching gives me the prestige I desire.	2.09	0.41
4	My teaching job enables me to provide a satisfactory standard of living for my family	2.11	0.44
5	Community respects its teachers and treats them like professional persons.	2.20	0.52
6	It is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people in the community.	2.47	0.75
	Aggregate	2.20	0.54

The above Table 3, shows the aggregate mean score of teacher respondents ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.54$), implies that the total mean of the respondents articulated their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 3 above, which impacted the current teacher status. From the above table, the responses of the respondents to one of the items “it is difficult for teachers to gain acceptance by the people in the community” ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 0.75$) were higher than the aggregate result, but it is still in the range of disagree. Hence, the aggregate mean rating of the teachers regarding their satisfaction with the teacher status was low in the study area.

Smooth and collaborative relationships among members of the school community are essential for the success of school activities. In particular, teachers and principals' relationships are imperative for teachers' morality to the profession. Hence, respondents were requested to rate their agreement or disagreement on items related to teacher-student rapport, and the result is summarized in Table 4 below.

As shown in Table 4, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was 1.97 with 0.28 SD, which means most of the teachers expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 4 above, which are one of the factors that can contribute to low teachers' morale in the area understudy.

Nevertheless, careful looking at individual items indicates different interpretations. For instance, according to the mean value of items, teachers feel free to go to the principal about problems of personal and group welfare ($M = 2$, $SD = 0.48$); the principal makes teachers' work easier and more pleasant ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 0.16$); the principal shows a real interest in the teachers' department ($M = 2$, $SD = 0.23$); the principal acts interested in me and teachers' problems ($M = 2$, $SD = 0.23$); and the principal has a reasonable understanding of teachers' teaching assignment ($M = 2$, $SD = 0.23$) were higher than the aggregate mean. Whereas other items such as “I feel that teachers' work is judged fairly by the school principal ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.24$), and my principal tries to make teachers feel comfortable when visiting my classes ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.37$) were lower than the aggregate mean. Therefore, the responses of the respondents to each item showed that there was disagreement on teacher-principal rapport. From this result, we can understand that the

Table 4. Teacher-principal rapport (N = 110)

No	Items	M	SD
1	I feel free to go to the principal about problems of personal and group welfare.	2.00	.48
2	My principal makes my work easier and more pleasant.	1.97	.16
3	My principal shows a real interest in my department.	2.00	.23
4	My principal acts interested in my problems and me.	2.00	.23
5	My principal has a reasonable understanding of my teaching assignment.	2.00	.23
6	I feel that my work is judged fairly by my principal	1.93	.24
7	My principal tries to make me feel comfortable when visiting my classes.	1.88	.37
	Aggregate	1.97	0.28

relationship between teacher and principal is not good, which may contribute to poor teachers' morale in the study area.

Likewise, the interviewed supervisor of the school stated that the relationship between the school principal and teachers is not smooth. Teachers are frequently heard when the complaint with the principal by saying they are not doing their work properly and treat all staffs equally. This implies that principals also contribute for teachers' dissatisfaction with teaching.

On the other hand, the relationships among teachers in the school also have an influence on the teachers' morale in their profession. Respondent teachers were requested to respond, and their response is presented in Table 5 below.

As indicated in Table 5 above, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was (M = 1.698, 0.479 SD), which implies that most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 5 above, which were the factors affecting teachers' morale in the area understudy.

This table shows the mean value of items; the teachers in the school cooperate with each other to achieve common, personal, and professional objectives (M = 1.76, SD = 0.42); experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues (M = 1.74, SD = 0.43); and the teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the values and attitudes of their students (M = 1.7, SD = 0.51) were higher than the aggregate mean. Whereas the items on: teachers in the school work well together (M = 1.61, SD = 0.48) and teachers in the school cooperate to make work more enjoyable (M = 1.65, SD = 0.53) were lower than the aggregate mean. Conversely, each item of the respondents' responses shows the disagreement on the issues listed in the above table in relation to the rapport among teachers. From this result, we can understand the low relationship among teachers in the study area.

Table 5. Teachers' rapport among themselves (N = 110)

No	Items	M	SD
1	The teachers in our school cooperate with each other to achieve common, personal, and professional objectives.	1.76	.42
2	Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.	1.74	.43
3	The teachers in our school work well together.	1.61	.48
4	The cooperativeness of teachers in our school helps make our work more enjoyable.	1.65	.53
5	The teachers in our school have a desirable influence on the values and attitudes of their students	1.70	.51
	Aggregate	1.69	0.47

Table 6. Teachers' salaries (N = 110)

No	Items	M	SD
1	I feel that not paid a fair salary for the work I do	1.90	.64
2	I am satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted.	1.63	.48
3	Teachers clearly understand the policies governing salary issues.	1.70	.46
4	The salary schedule in our school adequately recognizes teacher competency.	1.84	.43
	Aggregate	1.77	0.5

One of the factors that can enhance or decrease teachers' morale towards the teaching profession is the salary they earn. Thus, teachers were requested to show their agreement or disagreement on items related to a teacher's salary, and the result is summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6 reveals that the aggregate mean score of the respondents was 1.77 with 0.5 SD. The result shows that most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 6, including the teacher's salary. The above table shows the mean value of items; teachers feel that they were not paid a fair salary for the work they do (M = 1.9, SD = 0.64) and the salary schedule in the school adequately recognizes teacher competency (M = 1.84, SD = 0.43) were higher than the aggregate mean. Whereas, teachers satisfied with the policies under which pay raises are granted (M = 1.63, SD = 0.48) and teachers clearly understanding the policies governing salary issues (M = 1.7, SD = 0.46) were lower than the aggregate mean. Nonetheless, each item of the respondents' responses showed disagreement on the issues listed in the above table with the teachers' salary. Generally, from this data, one can learn that low teachers' salaries can contribute

to poor teachers' morale in the area of the study. The interviewed school principal also confirms that teachers always complain about their salary, they think that they got less salary than their colleagues did with the same qualification in other sectors.

The other determinant of teacher morale is the teachers' workload. Accordingly, teachers were requested to show their rating on teachers' workload and the result is summarized in Table 7 below.

As shown in Table 7, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.38$), which implies most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues related to teachers' load, which was considered as the factors that contributed to teachers' morale in the area understudy.

Clearly, the above table shows mean values of items, such as; teachers' teaching load at the school is unreasonable ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.42$) was higher than the aggregate mean, and the item related to the number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.47$) and the school schedule places the classes at a disadvantage ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 0.34$) was lower than the aggregate mean. While the extra-curricular load of the teachers in school is unreasonable ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.3$) and was equal to the aggregate mean. However, each item of the respondents' response signifies disagreement on the issues listed in the above table with the teacher load. From this idea, we can conclude that it is related to the teachers' load and low teachers' morale in the study area.

Similarly, school supervisors explained that when they go to schools for supervision, one of the issue they raise is the workload they handle in each week. They stated that they are expected to teach up to 30 periods per week in addition to other extracurricular and school wide committee responsibilities. This implies that it has an effect on teachers' morale to teach.

Curriculum issues are one of the determinants of teachers' morale in teaching. If teachers are interested in the curriculum materials, it positively contributes to the teachers' morales in the teaching profession. Accordingly, teachers were requested to rate their views on items related to curriculum materials, and the result is presented in Table 8 below.

As can be seen from the above Table 8, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was ($M: 1.9$, $SD: 0.4$). That shows the disagreement of most of the respondents on the issues listed in the Table 8 above, which indicated the factors affecting teachers' morale in the area understudy.

In particular, Table 8 shows the mean value of items such as the school curriculum makes reasonable provision for student individual differences ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.28$) and the school

Table 7. Teachers' workload (N = 110)			
No	Items	M	SD
1	Extra-curricular load of the teachers in school is unreasonable	1.90	.30
2	The number of hours a teacher must work is unreasonable	1.87	.47
3	The school schedule places my classes at a disadvantage.	1.89	.34
4	My teaching load at the school is unreasonable.	1.94	.42
	Aggregate	1.9	0.38

Table 8. Curriculum considerations (N = 110)			
No	Items	M	SD
1	The curriculum has a well-balanced	1.88	.40
2	The curriculum has makes reasonable provision for student individual differences.	1.93	.28
3	The curriculum does a good job of preparing students to become enlightened and competent citizens.	1.90	.54
	Aggregate	1.9	0.4

curriculum does a good job of preparing students to become enlightened and competent citizens ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.54$), which were higher than the aggregate mean. While the curriculum has a well-balanced ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.4$), which was lower than the aggregate mean. However, all items showed that the respondents' responses were in disagreement on the curriculum issues. From this idea, we can understand that it is related to the curriculum issues and poor teachers' morale in the study area.

Teaching is not only the responsibility of teachers; it is also the responsibility of the community. Therefore, the community should support the teachers' work so that they can successfully carry out their duties with interest and commitment. Accordingly, teachers were requested to rate the level of community support and the result is summarized in Table 9 below.

As shown in Table 9, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.438$), which implies that most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 9 above, which were considered the factors affecting teachers' morale in the study area.

Table 9 shows that the mean value of items like "community supports ethical procedures regarding the appointment and reappointment of members of the teaching staff" ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 0.28$) was higher than the aggregate mean. Whereas other items such as most of the people in the community understand and appreciate good education ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 0.56$) and the community's willingness to support a good educational program ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.47$) were

Table 9. Community support (N = 110)			
No	Items	M	SD
1	Most of the people in this community understand and appreciate good education.	1.81	.56
2	Community supports ethical procedures regarding the appointment and reappointment of members of the teaching staff.	1.95	.28
3	Community is willing to support a good program of education.	1.87	.47
	Aggregate	1.88	0.43

lower than the aggregate mean. Nevertheless, each item of the respondents' responses showed the disagreement on the issues listed in the table with the interest of community educational support. From this result, we can learn that lack of community support for education can contribute to teachers' morale in the study area. Correspondingly, the interviewed educational expert also affirmed that the community do not respect teacher as it was before, this implies that teaching profession and teachers are not valued by the society as a result they are not happy with it.

Another important dimension for teacher morale competence is the availability of school facilities. The availability of school facility is one of the determinant factors that can affect teachers more competently. Accordingly, respondents were asked to respond to questions related to school facilities and the result is summarized in Table 10 below.

As indicated in Table 10 above, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was ($M = 1.727$ with 0.6 SD). That shows that most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed in Table 10 above influence teachers' morale in the area understudy.

More specifically, the aggregate mean was higher than the mean of items such as "school provides teachers with adequate classroom supplies and equipment" ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.54$). Other items, such as school provides adequate audio-visual aids and projection equipment for teachers ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 0.55$) and library facilities and resources are adequate for the grade or subject area in which they teach ($M = 1.7$, $SD = 0.71$), were lower than the aggregate mean. Nevertheless, most of the list in the above table of the respondents' responses showed disagreement on the issue of the school facilities for services. From this result, we can understand that the lack of school facilities and services contributes to poor teachers' morale in the study area.

The community expects teachers to act ethically both inside and outside the school. They are expected to be role models for the students. Thus, the community members pressurize the teachers to believe in the way they are expected. Accordingly, sample teachers were requested to respond to questions related to this, and the result is summarized in Table 11 below.

Community pressures ($N = 110$) are shown in Table 11.

As shown in Table 11, the grand mean of the respondents was ($M = 1.8797$, $SD = 0.46$), which implies most of the respondents expressed their disagreement on the issues listed above, which were considered as the factors affecting teachers' morale in the area under study.

The above Table 11, shows the mean value of specific items like; the community expects the teachers to participate in too many social activities ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.47$), was higher than the

Table 10. School services and facilities (N = 110)

No	Items	M	SD
1	My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.	1.98	.54
2	My school provides the teachers with adequate audio-visual aids and projection equipment.	1.50	.55
3	Library facilities and resources are adequate for the grade or subject area, which I teach.	1.70	.71
	Aggregate	1.72	0.6

Table 11. Community Pressures

No	Items	M	SD
1	Community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable personal standards.	1.82	.55
2	Community expects the teachers to participate in too many social activities.	1.93	.47
3	Community pressures prevent me from doing my best as a teacher.	1.84	.36
	Aggregate	1.86	0.46

aggregate mean but the rating in the Likert-scale of disagree with the raised issues. Whereas other items such as the community expects its teachers to meet unreasonable personal standards ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.55$) and community pressures prevent teachers from doing their best as teachers ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 0.36$) were found to be lower than the aggregate mean and rating in the Likert-scale disagree. However, each item of the respondents' responses in the above table showed that community pressures are affecting teachers' morale with the raised issues. From this result, we can learn that community pressure seems to contribute to low teachers' morale in teaching in the study area.

5. Discussion

The status of teachers' morale competence is measured in terms of 10 specific dimensions identified by Blackburn (2015). These include satisfaction with teaching; teacher status; teacher rapport with the principal; rapport among teachers; teacher salary; teacher load; curriculum issues; community support of education; school facilities and services; and community pressures.

Regarding teaching satisfaction, the finding of this study shows that teachers are not satisfied with the nature of work and unhappy with their teaching position. This implies that teaching morale is affected by teachers' satisfaction with the work they do. Substantiating this idea, Yawson and Wonnia (2014) stated that teachers who are satisfied with their jobs have a high degree of professional competence, they feel qualified in terms of their knowledge of subject matter and their teaching skills, and they feel secure about classroom management.

Another factor that can contribute to teachers' morale competence is the recognition given to the teaching profession in the community or teacher status. The findings of this study revealed that teachers' status is low. This indicates that teachers' morale competence is not as expected. Supporting this finding, Yawson and Wonnia (2014) identified that recognition is among the factors, which are identified to be morale boosting or morale lowering. Similarly, McClelland and Varma (1996) affirm that teachers in the public domain need recognition, just as it is by anyone else working for others.

The interaction between teachers and principals and among teachers is considered one of the important dimensions for the increase or decrease of teachers' morale competence. The result of this study made clear that the relationship is not positive and contributes to the enhancement of teachers' morale. Related to this issue, researchers such as Adhikari (2020) stated that the interaction of teachers with their immediate headmaster and co-workers plays a role in the teacher's morale. That means if teachers lack confidence in the school's leadership, morale is affected. The relationship with the principal is considered a very important aspect in determining the effectiveness of the school.

Another important factor that contributes to teachers' low morale competence is the teacher's salary and the workload they have. Accordingly, the results of this study revealed that teachers' salaries are very low and the workload they have is high. This in turn contributes to low teacher morale and competence. Likewise, researchers such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) found that workload and time pressure were main contributors to the challenges and stresses experienced in the teaching profession. Furthermore, Frank Kevin (2018) added that in addition to the planning and preparation of teaching, attending meetings, communicating with parents, communicating with other specialists, and keeping records of meetings and communications all add to the time pressure. On the other hand, low salary ranges may be seen as a lack of respect for the profession and inequitable when compared to the salaries of other professions (Willis & Varner, 2010).

Finally, factors such as community support/pressure and school facilities and services also contribute to teachers' morale and competence. The findings show that respondents consider both community support and school facilities and services to be factors in low teacher morale competence. In other words, if the community does not support the teachers' tasks as well as if there is a lack of school facilities and services, teachers' morale and competence become low. Substantiating the above idea Adhikari (2020), revealed that if teachers are negative and unhappy about their workplace, feel unappreciated and as if they cannot satisfy their goals and needs, their morale is low or negative. Similarly, Mackenzie (2007) noted that support from parents motivates teachers to work harder for schoolchildren and even stay longer at those schools, and the reverse is true.

6. Conclusions

The present study was conducted to assess teachers' morale and competence in the secondary school of Kersa woreda. Based on the above findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study pointed out that the status of teachers' morale in the study area was found to be low. The present study revealed that teachers have a low level of personal satisfaction. If teachers could earn as much money in another occupation, they would stop teaching and change their job. The status of teachers was not successful and competent in their present teaching position. They are found to be interested in working with student organizations, clubs, and societies. In addition, students do not regard their teachers with respect, and teachers do not seem to have confidence in their professional ability.

Another concerning issue concerning teacher status is that teachers do not have a satisfactory standard of living, are not respected by the community, and are not treated as professionals. As a result, teachers were not satisfied with their current teaching position.

The study also revealed that the status of teachers' morale was influenced by different factors such as lack of teacher rapport with the principal, lack of rapport among teachers, related to the teachers' salary, related to the teachers' workload, related to the curriculum issues, and related to the level of community support for education and school facilities and services. From this result, one can deduce that teachers' morale competence is affected by a multitude of factors that range from the teachers themselves to their colleagues and the community at large.

7. Recommendations

The present study has tried to assess teachers' morale in Kersa woreda secondary schools of the Jimma zone. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

The Woreda education sector, secondary school supervisors, and secondary school principals should pay special attention to teachers' morale in the areas focusing on improving working

conditions, such as teachers' morale in teaching, by encouraging constructive and continuous support that helps teachers to increase teachers' morale.

The concerned bodies should support the teaching profession to enable teachers to have a better social status in the community, bridge the gap between the community respecting its teachers and treating them as professional people, and to gain acceptance by the people in the community to help them to increase teachers' morale by creating awareness in the community related to the support of education.

Secondary school supervisor, secondary school principal, and vice principal should work together on the relationship among teachers. Teachers should work together to achieve common, personal, and professional goals by facilitating experience sharing programs for teachers within a school, facilitating discussion times among teachers to solve any problems between teachers, and cultivating forgiveness awareness.

Woreda Education Office, secondary school supervisor, secondary school principal, and vice principal should boost teachers' morale and maximize the status of teachers' morale by creating attractive teaching and learning environments by creating competition programs like sports, question and answer, and experience sharing between secondary schools. This promotes the satisfaction and competence of teachers in their profession as well as improves the students' engagement and academic achievements.

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