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**A Study on the Challenges and Issues Faced by Inexperienced New Teachers in a New Nation: A case Study on Teachers Involved in Literacy and Numeracy Education in South Sudan**



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## **A Study on the Challenges and Issues Faced by Inexperienced New Teachers in a New Nation: A case Study on Teachers Involved in Literacy and Numeracy Education in South Sudan**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study investigated the pedagogical practices, perceptions, and challenges of unskilled teachers involved in literacy and numeracy instruction in South Sudan.

**Methodology:** Using a quantitative research design, the study collected data from 65 respondents across various secondary school types and locations. Questionnaires and formal interviews were administered to capture teachers' perceptions of the newly introduced competence-based curriculum promoted by the government. The study aimed to identify ways of strengthening pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills through a contextualized training intervention.

**Findings:** Key findings show that teachers consider qualifications, experience, training, monitoring and supervision, lesson planning, teaching aids, and appropriate teaching methods as essential factors for improving education quality.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice:** The uniqueness or important of the Gestalt or Whole Teacher Professional Development (WTPD) framework in this study lies in its holistic response to the complex realities faced by unskilled teachers in South Sudan. Unlike traditional Professional Development models that prioritize technical skills alone, WTPD integrates teachers' attitudes, emotions, self-concept, and professional identity—critical factors in a post-conflict context marked by low qualifications, limited mentorship, and weak collegial support. By addressing the “whole teacher,” this approach nurtures reflective practice, confidence, and learner-centered mindsets; helping beginner teachers in literacy and numeracy develop not only instructional competence but also resilience and ethical commitment essential for effective teaching in fragile settings.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Training, Program, Pedagogical, Knowledge, South Sudan*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the current pedagogical practices, perceptions, and challenges faced by unskilled teachers engaged in literacy and numeracy education in South Sudan. The education system in South Sudan continues to face significant instructional challenges, particularly in literacy and numeracy, due to the high number of unskilled teachers in classrooms. Teacher quality is important for improving student achievement (Bruns & Luque, 2018). By using a survey questionnaire, the study aims to gather empirical data on teachers' instructional experiences and professional needs, which will inform the design of a relevant, context-sensitive training model suitable for South Sudan's education system. The program development intervention (PDI) aims at equipping teachers with effective instructional methods, classroom management techniques, and learner-centered approaches, the program belief to directly improve lesson delivery and student engagement.

The effectiveness of educational reforms in South Sudan relies heavily on increasing the number of adequately trained teachers, given that a large portion of the current teaching workforce lacks professional qualifications. This corresponds to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, Target 4.c, which calls for expanding the availability of qualified teachers by 2030 (UN, 2015). Teachers are principal of professional human transformation because they don't only impart knowledge but equally moral values. Therefore, it is important that teacher education is taken seriously, because teachers can only convey what they have, if they are not educated, they cannot impart morals or ethical values for the production of ethical professionals (Amolo & Ganira, 2017).

Unfortunately, it is common in developing countries for many alternative route teachers not to have a bachelor's degree, only having completed secondary schooling and short induction courses before beginning as classroom teachers. In South Sudan, these alternative route teachers are referred to as 'Qualified Teacher Status', 'crash program teachers' the Global Education Monitoring report (UNESCO, 2022). It is a 40-day taught program which is taken in eight separate 1-week courses over a period of two years which is not even effective due to concurrent conflict and economic hardship the country is going through.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is informed by the Whole Teacher Professional Development (WTPD) framework, also known as the Gestalt approach to teacher education (Korthagen, 2001, 2004). The framework has been empirically contextualized for South Sudan in the published manuscript: *Study on the Development of Teacher Training Program to Improve the Pedagogical Knowledge of Unskilled Teachers in a New Nation: Focusing on Improving the Teaching Skills of Teachers Engaged in Literacy and Numeracy in South Sudan* (Mark, 2025). WTPD provides a comprehensive alternative to conventional professional development models that prioritize technical competencies while neglecting teachers' personal and professional identities.

The WTPD framework conceptualizes teacher development as an integrated process encompassing pedagogical knowledge, instructional skills, attitudes, emotions, self-concept, and professional identity. This holistic orientation is particularly relevant in post-conflict and low-resource contexts such as South Sudan, where many teachers enter the profession with limited formal training, weak mentoring structures, and minimal collegial support. As demonstrated in the 2025 study, addressing only instructional techniques is insufficient in such settings; teachers' confidence, motivation, and ethical commitment play a central role in shaping classroom practice.

By focusing on the "whole teacher," the WTPD framework promotes reflective practice, learner-centered orientations, and professional resilience. In literacy and numeracy education, this approach supports beginner and unskilled teachers to develop not only instructional competence but also the professional dispositions necessary for sustained effectiveness in fragile education systems. Accordingly, WTPD serves as the guiding theoretical lens for analyzing teachers' practices and for designing a context-responsive teacher training intervention in this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A study from United States shows that as schools become increasingly prescriptive and standardized, (Gautreaux, 2015) novice teachers encounter challenges that can undermine their confidence and create dissonance because the prevailing instructional norms and policies in schools grind against their pedagogical orientations (Smagorinsky et al., 2015, p. 289). As Stewart et al. (2020) reported from their study of the challenges teacher candidates encounter during their student teaching experiences, the dissonance between the theories they studied in their teacher preparation program and the policies and prevailing pedagogical approaches they were expected to carry out in the field can cause them to question their ability to succeed in the profession, which contributes to the alarming problem of teacher attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012).

Lesson planning is yet another fundamental aspect of teaching, and novice teachers often face various challenges in this area. They are significantly challenged due to lack of guidance and resources for lesson planning and lot of factors influencing novice teachers in selecting, developing, and using learning materials, shedding light on the challenges they encounter in this aspect of lesson planning. Among the key aspects of teaching that novice teachers frequently struggle with is lesson planning. For many inexperienced teachers, creating engaging lesson plans is a significant difficult. Along with excitement and energy, new teachers also bring a unique set of demands to their classrooms. While seasoned educators may become defensive when presented with lesson plans, classroom management strategies, and helpful criticism on their teaching, beginner teachers seem to yearn for these kinds of resources. School officials should understand that new teachers require scaffolded guidance just like students do (Bailey & Phillips, 2016).

Similarly, many novice teachers discover that classroom management is a major effort as they learn to properly handle student conduct while also creating a helpful and productive learning environment. For beginner teachers, classroom management is a regular source of difficulty. It

entails organizing the classroom, motivating the pupils, upholding rules, and encouraging effective communication (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Cakmak et al (2019) highlighted that the first few years of teaching are crucial for new instructors since they encounter a range of challenges and strange situations in addition to learning the essential skills. Occasionally, when teaching, an issue will come up that needs a teacher to decide right once how to handle it in the classroom and this require mentorship and coaching from experience teachers.

Student engagement is also another daunting challenges face by novice teachers when it comes to effectively engaging their learners. Student engagement is critical to improving academic achievement and establishing a positive learning environment. These issues can be exacerbated by a teacher's inexperience with teaching methods, lack of knowledge, or ignorance of the needs of their learners. The absence of resources and guidance for effective class planning typically causes new teachers to struggle, which lowers their capacity (Gray et al, 2019). Students' academic engagement is influenced by personal learner characteristics, the teacher, the teaching methodology, peers, and other features in the learning environment.

Time management is yet another key challenge faced by new teachers in managing their daily activities in school rosters. Due to the numerous duties involved in teaching, novice teachers frequently encounter considerable difficulties in efficiently managing their time. Based on these studies, it appears that in order for new instructors to effectively manage their time and deal with daily challenges, they must prioritize work and plan ahead (Olivo, 2021). Stewart and Jansky (2022) asserts that because they have less classroom experience, new teachers frequently have trouble managing their time. For new teachers, the first few years of teaching are a daunting time as they have to learn a lot of new skills, like managing the classroom, delivering the curriculum, and communicating with parents.

Connected to time management, developing lesson plans for several classes, managing deadlines, and creating instructional materials are just a few of the time management issues that novice teachers frequently encounter. Effective time management is an essential skill for teachers, and new teachers may invest more time in preparation than their more experienced counterparts. The study by Bruno et al. (2019) delves into the challenges and barriers faced by novice teachers in public schools. It explores various aspects such as students' disruptive behavior, workload management, stress, lack of support, and the need for coping strategies to help novice teachers navigate their initial years in the profession. The research sheds light on the experiences of novice educators and the importance of addressing these challenges to support their professional growth and development. Novice teachers need to spend additional time and resources on what is considered as routine tasks for veteran teachers.

Adapting to diversity in school settings is a major challenge for new teachers because they often enter classrooms with students from varied cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. Many new teachers lack prior experience or adequate training in inclusive and differentiated instruction, making it difficult to address learners' diverse needs effectively. This

challenge is intensified when classrooms include students with different learning abilities, language proficiencies, or experiences of conflict and displacement. As a result, new teachers may struggle with classroom management, equitable participation, and selecting appropriate teaching strategies, which can affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Beginner Teachers' individual experiences and cultural backgrounds shape their views on diversity. These beliefs may affect their capacity to instruct a variety of student populations (Little et al, 2019).

The significance of fostering cultural competence in new instructors is emphasized by (UNESCO-Hamdan, 2022). This entails recognizing and honoring the various cultural backgrounds of students as well as modifying instructional approaches to suit their requirements. By tackling these issues and offering guidance and materials to inexperienced educators, schools may assist them in adjusting to diversity in the classroom and establishing inclusive learning spaces where every student can succeed. Continual professional development, mentorship, and teamwork among peers can also help new teachers flourish and succeed in working with a variety of student demographics.

To properly adjust to diverse classes, novice teachers require guidance and assistance. This involves giving people regular chances and tools to improve their cultural competency, lessen cognitive dissonance, and lessen opposition to diversity (Haddad, 2019). This is especially very important for a country like South Sudan with diverse cultural backgrounds.

As a result, professional development program has the potential to provide crucial support that enables novice teachers to critically reflect on their pedagogical orientations and the instructional approaches they believe will be effective and find pathways to success—even in the midst of struggle (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). To provide such support, however, professional development program must be sustained and focused “on the problems that teachers encounter in their daily work” (Gibbons & Cobb, 2017, p. 413).

Additionally, research indicates that it is particularly important to provide teachers with effective professional development during their first five years in the profession (Du & Wang, 2017). Despite a long history of arguments that sustainable, effective professional development is a significant factor in novice teacher support and reducing teacher attrition rates (Dunn et al., 2019), the kinds and amounts of professional development or induction support that novice teachers receive as they enter the profession can be described—at best—as uneven or unpredictable (Izadinia, 2016; Kidd et al., 2015). For instance, induction program for new teachers that formally pair novice teachers with experienced mentors are commonplace in U.S. schools (Chu, 2019; Gordon, 2017). Providing a novice teacher with a supportive mentor can be, as Izadinia (2016) argued, an invaluable source of “encouragement and emotional backing” (p. 398). However, such pairings alone do not guarantee growth or success because “the personalities, abilities, and persona of teachers vary widely” (Gay, 1995, p. 104).

The reviewed literature clearly identifies global patterns of challenges novice teachers face, but most studies are drawn from well-resourced contexts and formal teacher-education systems unlike

South Sudan. While the findings highlight the value of mentoring, induction, and sustained professional development, they offer limited guidance for countries with severe shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate materials, and weak administrative structures. Therefore, applying these models in South Sudan requires adapting them to realities where unqualified teachers need highly contextualized, low-cost, and practice-focused interventions rather than assuming existing systems can support conventional induction or mentoring programs.

### **Situation of education system in South Sudan**

South Sudan, the world's newest nation, has faced persistent challenges in rebuilding its education system since independence in 2011. As documented in the 2025 study: *Study on the Development of Teacher Training Program to Improve the Pedagogical Knowledge of Unskilled Teachers in a New Nation*, the sector continues to be constrained by shortages of trained teachers, weak institutional capacity, limited instructional resources, and underdeveloped professional development structures. These constraints have had a particularly adverse impact on literacy and numeracy instruction.

Historically, teacher training institutions existed across several regions prior to the escalation of conflict in the 1980s. Prolonged war, however, led to the closure of most training colleges and disrupted pre-service and in-service teacher education. Although schooling expanded following the 2005 peace agreement and independence, the education system became heavily dependent on untrained and volunteer teachers. The 2025 study highlights that short-term "crash" programs and alternative certification routes have been insufficient to compensate for the absence of comprehensive professional preparation.

Educational indicators further illustrate systemic fragility. South Sudan records high levels of adult illiteracy rate of 73% and low enrollment and completion rates, particularly at secondary level according to the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (2016). While national policies specify minimum qualification standards for teachers, enforcement remains inconsistent, and supervision capacity is limited. As a result, unskilled teachers continue to constitute a substantial proportion of the teaching workforce. Consistent with the 2025 study, improving education quality in South Sudan therefore requires context-specific, practice-oriented, and scalable teacher training programs, with a particular focus on strengthening pedagogical capacity in literacy and numeracy.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To identify the current pedagogical practices used by unskilled teachers in teaching literacy and numeracy in South Sudanese schools.
2. To explore teachers' perceptions of the challenges they face in implementing effective literacy and numeracy instruction.
3. To analyze the professional development needs of unskilled teachers as revealed through survey data.

4. To develop recommendations for a teacher training program that enhances pedagogical knowledge and supports effective teaching practices in literacy and numeracy.

Unlike prior studies conducted in more developed or stable education systems, it focuses on the unique realities of South Sudan, including inadequate pedagogical skills, scarce resources, and minimal professional support. The study offers original, context-specific insights for developing an evidence-based teacher training program aimed at improving literacy and numeracy instruction, thereby contributing to the reconstruction and strengthening of the national education system. The above-mentioned problem of unskilled teachers in South Sudan is going to be addressed through the following research questions:

1. What current pedagogical practices employed by unskilled teachers in teaching literacy and numeracy in South Sudan?
2. What challenges do unskilled teachers face in implementing effective literacy and numeracy instruction?
3. How do teachers perceive their professional development needs in relation to pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills?
4. What key elements should be incorporated into a teacher training program to improve the pedagogical capacity of unskilled teachers in South Sudan?

### **Origin of the study**

The data used in this study originated from primary sources, precisely collected through structured questionnaires administered to teachers in secondary schools selected from Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria states out of 10 states of South Sudan. The study targeted 13 schools out of a total of 109, where five respondents from each school (both trained and untrained teachers) participated, resulting in 65 valid responses and a 100% response rate. The primary aim was to understand the current practices, perceptions, and professional challenges of teachers, particularly unskilled or beginner teachers involved in literacy and numeracy instruction in secondary schools in South Sudan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study adopted a quantitative research approach employing a survey research design to examine the pedagogical knowledge, instructional practices, and professional training needs of secondary school teachers in South Sudan. The survey design was considered appropriate as it enabled the systematic collection of standardized data from a defined population and facilitated statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships relevant to teacher training and instructional improvement.

### **Population and Sample**

The target population comprised teachers from 109 public and private secondary schools. Using a purposive sampling strategy, 13 secondary schools were selected to participate in the study in order to ensure institutional diversity and feasibility of data collection. From each selected school, five (5) teachers were chosen, resulting in a total sample size of 65 respondents. This sample size was considered adequate for a survey study aimed at generating empirical evidence on teachers' pedagogical competencies and training experiences. The respondents of this study consisted of classroom teachers drawn from both urban and rural secondary schools.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on relevant literature on teacher education, pedagogy, and instructional practices in post-conflict and developing education systems. The questionnaire consisted predominantly of closed-ended items measured on a Likert scale assigning the values 5 to 1 for the options Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, respectively, allowing for objective measurement of teachers' perceptions, practices, and self-reported competencies. The instrument had two (2) sections; sections A to B. Section A consisted of demographic information while section B consisted of qualification /experience/ training, policies and implementation, teaching and learning methods; and planning and preparation of teachers. The survey questionnaire distributed to secondary school teachers contained 24 questions.

### **Pilot Survey**

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot survey was conducted to assess the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the questionnaire items. The pilot study helped to identify ambiguous wording, estimate completion time, and ensure that the instrument was appropriate for the South Sudanese educational context. Feedback from the pilot survey informed minor revisions to improve the overall quality of the instrument.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected from the survey were coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data and describe teachers' pedagogical characteristics and practices. Where appropriate, inferential statistical techniques were applied to examine relationships among key variables and address the study's research objectives. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated acceptable internal consistency of the measurement scales.

## FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

### Response Rate

According to the finding on the response rate, out of the total number of 109 secondary schools under this study, the sample size targeted was 13 schools. Out of the total of 13 schools' questionnaires were distributed to 5 respondents in each school, response was got from all the 65 respondents posing a response rate of 100% who managed to fill and give appropriate information. This implied that the outcomes were reliable because they represented 100% of the study as shown in the table.

*Table 1: Sample Distribution and Response Rate*

School distribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sample size	13	100%
Response rate	13	100%
Non-response rate	0	0%
<b>Total school</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Primary Data 2025)

### Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents findings on the respondents' background information. It shows the respondents by their: gender, age, occupation, level of education, status of school. First, demographics were asked to gather more information about the respondent and to be able to describe the sample in more detail. Demographic data offer insight into the characteristics of the participants and help determine whether the sample reflects the larger population, allowing for meaningful generalization of the findings. It also helps to determine the accuracy and representativeness of information drawn from the sample to the population.

### Findings on the gender of the respondent

Respondents were asked to state their gender to determine its influence on their responses. The following data was obtained.

*Table 2: Respondents' gender composition*

Gender composition	Frequency	Percent
Male	40	61.5
Valid Female	25	38.5
Total	65	100.0

(Source: Primary Data 2025)

From table 2, it can be noted that respondents included both the male and female participants. The majority were male being represented by 61.5% while female was represented by 38.5%. This implies that, a study was gender representative and sensitive. It also means it gives mixed ideas on how gender was affected by teaching strategies and how they influenced performance of students in South Sudan.

### **Age bracket of the respondents**

Findings on the age bracket of the respondents were considered to find out whether the information was from mature people and therefore viable. The findings are as verified in the table;

**Table 3: Age bracket of the respondents**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
20-25	7	10.8
26-30	21	32.3
31-35	9	13.8
Valid 36-40	12	18.5
41-50	8	12.3
51 and above	8	12.3
Total	65	100.0

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

From table 3, most of the respondents 21(32.3%) were between 26-30 years, 12(18.5%) were between 36-40 years, 9(13.8%) were between 31-35 years, 8 (12.3%) were 41-50 and 51 years respectively and 7(10.8%) were between 20-25 that were interviewed. This meant that data was well distributed because all categories of years were represented in this study and hence would lead to establishing valid information in regards to teaching and performance of students in secondary schools in South Sudan.

This suggests that a large proportion of teachers in South Sudan fall within the 26–40 age range. Therefore, most participants belonged to this age group, indicating that they are sufficiently mature to offer reliable and informed responses for the study. This also can help in making informed decision when planning for the capacity building of the unskilled teachers based on the identified training needs.

### **Occupation of the respondents**

Findings on the Occupation of the respondents were considered to find out whether the information was from target respondents and therefore viable. The findings are as verified in the table;

**Table 4: The participants' employment status**

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Valid Trained teacher	26	40.0
Untrained teacher	15	23.1
Volunteer teacher	7	10.8
Student teacher	16	24.6
Others (Banker)	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

Findings presented in table 4 show that most of the interviewees (40%) were trained teachers, 24.6% were student teachers, 23.1% were untrained teachers and volunteer teachers were 10.8% and lastly 1.5% Banker Officer. This implied that the mentioned staff understood well the questionnaire such that they are researchers themselves something that made the study more reliable. However, nearly 60% of the respondents were untrained teachers as confirmed from the statistical data above and this validated the earlier statement that only 20% of teachers in South Sudan are unqualified teachers.

#### **Education level of respondents**

The researcher also collected data in relations to the education attained by the respondents and findings as summarized in the table.

**Table 5: Respondents educational background**

Educational background	Frequency	Percent
Valid Secondary	36	55.4
Tertiary institution	14	21.5
University	15	23.1
Total	65	100.0

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

From the table 5, the finding indicates that a large proportion of the respondents possess relatively low levels of formal education, with more than half (55.4%) stopping at secondary school, while only a minority (23.1%) hold bachelor's degrees and 21.5% possess diplomas. Such a distribution reveals a significant gap in professional qualifications among those currently involved in teaching or educational activities for secondary schools in South Sudan.

#### **Status of schools**

Findings on the status of the school were considered to find whether they are in rural or urban. Their statuses were evidenced in the table 6;

**Table 6: status of the schools**

School status	Frequency	Percent	
Valid	Rural	27	41.5
	Urban	38	58.5
	Total	65	100.0

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

Findings from table 6, reveals that a large proportion of the respondents (58.5%) were in urban centers within Juba city and Torit town, 41.5% were in rural areas of Eastern Equatoria and Central Equatoria states. This implied that the study considered schools in both rural and urban areas in order to clearly understand the challenges and policy issues for consideration in South Sudan.

### **Descriptive statistics**

#### **Findings on the current practices and perceptions of unskilled teachers on teaching literacy and numeracy in secondary schools.**

Respondents were asked about the current practices and perceptions of unskilled teachers on teaching literacy and numeracy in secondary schools. The responses were summarized by aggregating participants' answers based on a five-option Likert measure, scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This section presents the mean scores and standard deviations related to unqualified teachers' current practices and perceptions of teaching literacy and numeracy in secondary schools. The opinions on each aspect under the current practices and perceptions of unqualified teachers on teaching literacy and numeracy in secondary schools were as highlighted in the table;

**Table 7: Teachers response on the qualification/experience/training and personalities on teaching literacy and numeracy**

Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teaching quality does not depend on teachers' academic qualifications	81.2	15.4	3.4	0%	0%	1.15	.364
I believe that training and refreshment for teachers makes them more effective in the classroom.	0%	0%	0%	15.4	84.6	4.85	.364
I have received some of the training and refreshment program that helps in effective teaching.	0%	2.7	0%	80	17.3	4.20	.403
Teachers with more experience will have more knowledge of effective teaching practice.	0%	0%	0%	43.1	56.9	4.57	.499
Teachers' personalities, attitudes, and behaviors encourage students to pay attention in the classroom.	0%	0%	3	13.8	83.2	4.86	.348
Teachers' personal teaching skill and strategy does not make any difference in encouraging students in classroom activities.	47.7	52.3	0%	0%	0%	1.52	.503
A good student-teacher relationship is not important to enhancing students' performance	13.2	84	0%	0%	2.8	1.85	.364
Students can show better performance in class when they get individual support from the teacher.	0%	0%	0%	15.4	84.6	4.15	.364
<b>Average Scores</b>						<b>27.15</b>	<b>3.209</b>

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

Table 7 shows strong consensus among respondents that teachers' qualifications, training, experience, and personal attributes significantly influence the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Most teachers strongly disagreed that teaching quality is independent of academic qualifications ( $M = 1.15$ ), indicating that formal education is widely regarded as essential for effective teaching.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that training and refresher programs enhance classroom effectiveness ( $M = 4.85$ ), and most reported having participated in such programs, though a small proportion indicated limited access. Teaching experience was also strongly valued, with all respondents agreeing that experienced teachers demonstrate more effective instructional practices ( $M = 4.57$ ).

Teachers' personalities, attitudes, and behaviors were perceived as critical for maintaining student attention ( $M = 4.86$ ). Similarly, respondents strongly rejected the view that teaching skills and strategies do not matter ( $M = 1.52$ ), highlighting the importance of pedagogical competence. In

addition, most teachers disagreed that student–teacher relationships are unimportant ( $M = 1.85$ ) and strongly affirmed that individual learner support improves student performance ( $M = 4.15$ ).

Generally, the findings confirm that both professional competencies and interpersonal factors are central to improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

### **Overall Averages**

- Average Mean: 3.209
- Average Standard Deviation (SD): 27.15. This average mean suggests that respondents generally agree with positive statements about effective teaching (since 3 = neutral, and the average is above that). Low standard deviations indicate strong agreement and consistency in responses.

### **Key Insights**

- Academic qualifications and experience are both seen as important for teaching quality.
- Teacher training and refreshers are widely believed to enhance effectiveness.
- Teacher personality and teaching strategies significantly impact student engagement.
- Supportive relationships and individual attention are key to student performance.

### **Interpretation of the Survey Results**

Teaching quality and academic qualifications; most people in this survey clearly believe that academic qualifications really do matter when it comes to effective teaching. In fact, hardly anyone disagreed with that idea. This shows that there's a strong belief that formal education helps lay the foundation for good teaching.

Ongoing training makes a difference; everyone agreed that training and refresher courses are important and most strongly agreed. This tells us that teachers value professional development and see it as something that genuinely helps them improve in the classroom.

Teachers believe that useful training is key; a large number of respondents said that taking part in training helped improve their teaching skills and teaching. This is a good sign not just that training is happening, but that it's actually useful and making a difference in teaching.

Experience matters; there's a clear belief that more experienced teachers have more insight into what works in the classroom. While newer teachers may bring fresh ideas, respondents strongly feel that experience leads to deeper teaching knowledge.

Personality plays a big role; almost everyone agreed that a teacher's personality, attitude, and behavior can really impact how well students pay attention in class. This shows that human connection and approachability are seen as key parts of good teaching.

Teaching style makes a difference; most respondents pushed back against the idea that teaching strategies don't matter they clearly believe that how a teacher teaches is just as important as what they teach. Effective methods and techniques are essential.

Relationships with students' matter; the overwhelming majority disagreed with the idea that student-teacher relationships aren't important. This shows a shared understanding that when students feel supported and understood by their teacher, they tend to perform better.

Individual support helps students succeed; finally, most respondents agreed that students do better when they get personal attention from their teacher. This reinforces the importance of recognizing individual student needs rather than treating everyone the same.

Overall, beginner or untrained teachers in South Sudan show a strong belief in the importance of professional, personal, and interpersonal factors in teaching, indicating readiness for structured training and professional development.

**Table 8: teachers' response on policy and implementation**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	<b>Disagree (D)</b>	<b>Not sure (NS)</b>	<b>Agree (A)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (SD)</b>
Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of teachers are not essential to maintain the quality of the education.	80.3	15.4	4.3	0%	0%	4.68	.471
Quality education is not dependent on curricular and pedagogical strategy.	15.4	84.6	0%	0%	0%	1.15	.364
Quality education depends upon educational policies and their proper implementation.	0%	0%	0%	32.3	67.7	1.85	.364
<b>Average Score</b>						7.68	1.199

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

**Performance auditing, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of teachers are not essential to maintain the quality of education.**

Most respondents strongly disagreed with this statement — in fact, 80.3% strongly rejected it and 15.4% disagreed with the statement. What this really tells us is that people see oversight and accountability as crucial. Although 4.3% of respondents were unsure whether performance auditing, monitoring, supervision, and evaluation are essential for maintaining the quality of education. Teachers clearly feel that regular evaluation and supervision help maintain (and likely improve) the quality of education. It's not about "checking up" on teachers — it's about supporting

growth and maintaining standards. On the strong notice, the beginner or untrained teachers' belief that regular feedback, performance auditing, and supervision help them refine their skills, maintain standards, and ensure effective classroom practices. This belief indicates a positive and receptive attitude toward oversight as a constructive process essential for enhancing both teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

### **Quality education is not dependent on curricular and pedagogical strategy.**

Again, there's a strong rejection of this idea — most disagreed or strongly disagreed, meaning they do believe that a good curriculum and effective teaching methods are essential. Teachers seem to agree that both instructional methods and content play an important role in shaping educational quality. Strategy matters — it's not just about showing up and delivering content; it's about delivering it well and in the right way. The finding of the beliefs of beginner or untrained teachers in South Sudan show a clear understanding that quality education depends on both curriculum and pedagogy. Their strong disagreement indicates that they value well-structured curricula and effective teaching strategies as central to improving learning outcomes

### **Quality education depends upon educational policies and their proper implementation.**

Here, the responses were very positive: about 68% strongly agreed, and the rest agreed. This shows a clear understanding that big-picture factors like policies and how well they're put into practice directly affect what happens in the classroom. Even the best teachers need systems that support quality education — whether through resources, curriculum design, or professional development. The high agreement level response of beginner or untrained teachers in South Sudan on this statement reflect a strong awareness of the role of educational policies and effective implementation in ensuring quality education. This belief demonstrates a broad and informed perspective—that quality education depends on strong institutional frameworks as much as on classroom practices.

#### Average Score

- **Mean score:** 7.68 (note: this looks like a typo or mix-up — likely meant to be the average of means or part of a different scale)
- **Standard Deviation (SD):** 1.199 (higher than before, suggesting slightly more variation in responses)

If this score is meant to reflect an **average of the mean scores** of the three items, here's the correction:

- Teachers clearly feel that regular evaluation and supervision help maintain (and likely improve) the quality of education
- There's strong recognition that educational quality is influenced by strategy, structure, and people.

- The respondents clearly value collaboration, reflection, and professional growth as pillars of a strong education system.

**Table 9: Teachers response on teaching and learning method**

Response	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Not sure (NS)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Teacher-centered pedagogy enhances students' performance compared to student-centered teaching	0%	6.1	0%	12.4	81.5	4.85	0.364
Creative activities in classroom encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding	0%	0%	0%	80.0	20.0	4.2	0.403
Teaching and learning are effective, if a teacher provides equal opportunities for students and shares their ideas and knowledge	0%	0%	5.4	6.2	88.4	4.94	0.242
A group discussion and presentation in a classroom enhances students' understanding and helps in creating new ideas and concepts	0%	0%	0%	6.2	93.8	4.94	0.242
<b>Average Score</b>						<b>18.93</b>	<b>0.8883</b>

(Source: Primary Data 2025)

**Teacher-centered pedagogy enhances students' performance compared to student-centered teaching.**

An overwhelming 81.5% strongly agreed, and 12.4% agreed that teacher-centered pedagogy enhances students' performance compared to student-centered method. However, 6.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement that teacher-centered approaches are the best way of improving students' performance in schools. The overwhelming response suggests a strong belief among respondents that structured, teacher-led approaches are effective. However, this finding is notable as it appears to contrast with modern trends that emphasize student-centered learning approaches. It could mean that teachers still value clear instruction and authority in the classroom, especially in contexts where student readiness for independent learning varies. This clearly signifies more orientation and refresher trainings are needed for teachers based on current education reforms in South Sudan which advocates for student-centered approaches. It also highlights a gap in awareness and practice regarding student-centered approaches promoted by current education reforms, emphasizing the need for ongoing orientation and refresher training to help teachers adopt more interactive and learner-focused teaching methods.

**Creative activities in the classroom encourage students to participate by exploring their knowledge and understanding.**

A full 100% agreed or strongly agreed, with 80% in agreement and 20% strongly agreeing. This indicates teachers recognize the power of creativity to make learning more engaging and meaningful. Even though many value teacher-centered approaches, they also clearly believe that creativity helps students connect with the material and encourages active participation.

**Teaching and learning are effective if a teacher provides equal opportunities and encourages students to share ideas.**

Almost 94% strongly agreed, and the rest agreed. This response shows that equity and student voice are highly valued. Teachers clearly believe that inclusive practices, where all students can contribute and feel heard, make for better learning outcomes. This finding also demonstrates a strong commitment that even without formal training, these teachers understand the importance of fairness, collaboration, and student voice as essential elements of effective teaching and learning.

**Group discussion and presentation in the classroom enhances students' understanding and helps create new ideas.**

Identical results to the last question: 93.8% strongly agreed, with the rest agreeing. The support for collaborative learning is strong. Teachers believe that when students talk, present, and interact, they deepen their understanding and build critical thinking skills. This aligns with best practices in active learning and student engagement. The overwhelming response from most of unskilled teachers highlights that they value peer learning and teamwork as ways to deepen comprehension and promote critical thinking, indicating openness to adopting modern, participatory teaching practices.

**Key insights from Part 3**

- While there's support for teacher-led instruction, it doesn't exclude valuing creative, inclusive, and collaborative methods.
- Teachers see creative tasks, group work, and equal opportunities as key ingredients for an effective learning environment.
- There's a balanced perspective here: structure and creativity, leadership and collaboration, all play essential roles.
- Teachers believe that when students talk, present, and interact, they deepen their understanding and build critical thinking skills.

**Table 10: Teachers' response on planning and preparation**

Response	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Not sure (NS)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Preparation by the teacher (before class) helps him/her in teaching with a clearer vision	0%	0%	0%	7.7	92.3	4.92	.269
Subject matter knowledge would not help for the better performance	15.4	84.6	0%	0%	0%	1.85	.364
Lesson planning does not aid better student performance.	84.6	15.4	0%	0%	0%	1.15	.364
Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more.	84.6	15.4	0%	0%	0%	1.15	.364
<b>Average score</b>						<b>9.07</b>	<b>1.361</b>

**(Source: Primary Data 2025)**

**Preparation by the teacher (before class) helps him/her in teaching with a clearer vision.**

Nearly all respondents (92.3%) strongly agreed, with the rest agreeing and no one disagreed or was unsure. Both trained and untrained teachers clearly value preparation. This suggests that they believe coming into class with a clear plan and vision helps them teach more effectively, stay focused, and deliver lessons that make sense to students. This belief reflects a professional attitude toward teaching, showing that even without formal training, they value structure and foresight as essential components of successful and meaningful classroom delivery.

**Subject matter knowledge would not help for better performance.**

Everyone disagreed or strongly disagreed — with 84.6% strongly rejecting this idea. This shows that teachers see strong subject knowledge as essential. They know that being confident in the material they teach improves their own performance — and likely, their students' learning too.

**Lesson planning does not aid better student performance.**

Again, most respondents strongly disagreed (84.6%), with the rest disagreeing. This means teachers highly value lesson planning — not just for their own benefit, but for how it supports better outcomes for students. Planning helps make lessons more focused, interactive, and aligned with learning goals. Their complete disagreement reflects an understanding that careful planning helps teachers deliver structured, goal-oriented, and engaging lessons that enhance learning outcomes.

### **Homework and feedback do not encourage students to learn more.**

Same pattern: 84.6% strongly disagreed, and 15.4% disagreed. Teachers believe that homework and feedback are powerful tools. Feedback helps students reflect and improve, while homework reinforces learning and encourages independent effort. It's clear they see value in both when used effectively. Their unanimous disagreement indicates that they view these tools as essential for reinforcing lessons, encouraging independent effort, and guiding student improvement.

### **Characteristics of unskilled teachers in South Sudan compared with novice teachers in developed contexts.**

Unskilled teachers in South Sudan differ from novice teachers in the USA and other developed countries primarily in terms of entry qualifications, pedagogical preparation, and institutional support, rather than professional attitudes. Findings from this study show that many teachers in South Sudan enter classrooms with limited formal education and minimal professional training, often relying on secondary-level education and short induction courses. In contrast, novice teachers in developed contexts typically begin teaching after completing a bachelor's degree, supervised practicum experiences, and certification requirements, which provide foundational pedagogical knowledge and classroom exposure.

Pedagogically, South Sudanese beginner teachers tend to rely more heavily on teacher-centered instructional approaches, which they perceive as effective for maintaining structure and supporting student learning. However, the study also found strong endorsement of creative activities, group discussions, and equal student participation, indicating openness to learner-centered practices. In developed contexts, novice teachers are generally trained within learner-centered or constructivist paradigms but often struggle to implement these approaches consistently due to curricular constraints and accountability pressures. Thus, while novice teachers in developed systems experience a theory–practice gap, unskilled teachers in South Sudan face an access and exposure gap to pedagogical alternatives.

With regard to classroom management and instructional confidence, beginner teachers in South Sudan emphasize authority, preparation, and planning as key to effective teaching. The study shows strong agreement on the importance of lesson planning, subject-matter knowledge, homework, and feedback. By comparison, novice teachers in developed countries frequently report difficulties with classroom management despite stronger theoretical preparation. In South Sudan, classroom management challenges are intensified by large class sizes, limited resources, and absence of mentoring, leading teachers to prioritize structured, teacher-led approaches.

Institutional support and professional induction further distinguish the two contexts. Novice teachers in developed countries often have access to formal induction programs, mentoring, and administrative support, although the quality and consistency of such support vary. In South Sudan, such systems are largely absent; nevertheless, teachers in this study strongly valued supervision, monitoring, and evaluation and viewed them as supportive mechanisms for improving practice.

This suggests a high level of professional receptiveness among unskilled teachers, contrasting with the ambivalence toward evaluation sometimes reported in developed systems.

Largely, while novice teachers in developed countries struggle mainly with alignment between theory and practice, unskilled teachers in South Sudan struggle with limited preparation, scarce resources, and weak institutional structures. Despite these challenges, the study demonstrates that beginner teachers in South Sudan possess strong professional motivation, positive beliefs about effective teaching, and readiness for development. These characteristics indicate that, with appropriate and context-sensitive professional development, unskilled teachers in South Sudan have significant potential to improve instructional quality, particularly in literacy and numeracy education.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study found that a large proportion of teachers involved in literacy and numeracy instruction in South Sudan are unskilled or underqualified, with most respondents possessing only secondary-level education and limited professional training. Despite this, teachers demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance of academic qualifications, subject-matter knowledge, and continuous professional development for effective teaching. This indicates that the challenge facing the education system is not teachers' attitudes toward professionalism, but the lack of structured opportunities for pedagogical training.

Pedagogical practices reported by teachers reveal a dominant reliance on teacher-centered instruction, which most respondents believe enhances student performance. However, this preference coexists with strong support for creative classroom activities, group discussions, equal participation, and collaborative learning. These findings suggest that teacher-centered practices are largely shaped by contextual constraints—such as limited training, guidance, and resources—rather than resistance to learner-centered approaches. Teachers appear receptive to pedagogical change when appropriate support is provided.

The study further shows that lesson preparation, planning, subject knowledge, homework, and feedback are universally regarded as critical to effective teaching and improved student performance. Teachers strongly rejected the view that planning or feedback are unnecessary, reflecting a professional orientation toward structured and purposeful instruction. These findings highlight the presence of foundational pedagogical awareness among unskilled teachers, even in the absence of formal training.

In terms of governance and support, respondents strongly affirmed the importance of supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and effective policy implementation in maintaining education quality. Teachers viewed oversight as supportive rather than punitive, indicating openness to accountability and instructional guidance. This presents a significant opportunity for improving teaching quality through strengthened school leadership and supervisory systems.

Overall, the findings indicate that unskilled teachers in South Sudan are professionally motivated, aware of effective teaching principles, and ready for development. The central issue is the absence of coherent, context-sensitive professional development structures. These results support the adoption of a holistic Whole Teacher Professional Development approach that addresses pedagogical skills, attitudes, and professional identity in post-conflict education systems.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that improving teaching quality in South Sudan depends on the development of teacher training programs that are responsive to local educational realities rather than the direct transfer of models from developed contexts. Consistent with the literature, the findings show that many teachers lack formal pedagogical preparation and face constraints such as limited resources and large class sizes, underscoring the need for practical, context-based professional development. The results further indicate that school-based and practice-oriented training focused on core instructional skills—lesson planning, classroom management, assessment, and learner-centered strategies—can significantly enhance teachers’ pedagogical competence. Sustained improvement is most effectively achieved through continuous professional development embedded within schools, supported by mentoring and peer collaboration. Overall, the study reinforces the literature’s position that context-specific teacher training is essential for strengthening instructional practice and improving learning outcomes in South Sudan, thereby contributing to long-term educational reform.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Establishment of a national in-service teacher training framework should be prioritized by the government of South Sudan, particularly ministry of education. The Ministry of General Education and Instruction should institutionalize a low-cost, scalable in-service training program targeting unskilled teachers, with emphasis on literacy and numeracy pedagogy, lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement. Training should be modular, school-based, and aligned with teachers demonstrated readiness for professional growth.

Transitioning from teacher-centered to guided learner-centered pedagogy need to be initiated by the government and the stakeholders as a way of formalizing education quality in the country. Policy should promote gradual integration of learner-centered methods through structured coaching rather than abrupt reform mandates. Professional development programs should explicitly model how creative activities, group work, and equal participation can be implemented within existing classroom realities.

Strengthening institutional supervision and support systems are another way of improving the quality of teaching not only for literacy and numeracy but for entire education curriculums. Given teachers’ positive perceptions of supervision and evaluation, school inspection and mentoring systems should be strengthened and reframed as developmental rather than punitive. Headteachers

and inspectors should be trained as instructional leaders responsible for continuous feedback and pedagogical support.

Prioritizing lesson planning and subject mastery in teacher development is key in championing quality education. Policy guidelines should mandate continuous support in lesson planning, subject-matter mastery, assessment, and feedback practices. Provision of standardized planning templates and subject-specific teaching guides would directly address gaps identified in the study.

Adaptation of the Whole Teacher Professional Development (WTPD) model is very important for improving quality of teachers in South Sudan. Teacher development policies should adopt a holistic approach that addresses not only technical teaching skills but also teachers' attitudes, confidence, motivation, and professional identity. This is particularly critical in post-conflict contexts where resilience, ethical commitment, and teacher–student relationships are central to educational recovery.

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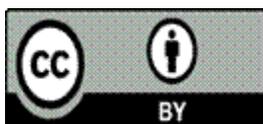
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