Barriers to Refugee Teachers' Professional Development Integration into the National Education System: A Study of Bokolmayo Refugee Camp, Bokolmayo, Ethiopia

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Abstract. Refugee camp teachers' professional development (PD) is the backbone of equitable and quality education, particularly in crisis-affected contexts. However, the host state policy is less responsive to inclusive PD, specifically in terms of accrediting camp teachers' prior qualifications and providing them access to accreditation, neglecting global commitment to refugee inclusion in general and teachers' PD in particular. Despite the recognition of systemic barriers faced by camp educators, little is known about how institutional and policy-related barriers shape camp teachers' access to formal accreditation in Ethiopia. Thus, the study explored both institutional and policy-related obstacles that significantly predict camp teachers' perceptions of PD accessibility. Using a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 81 randomly selected camp teachers through a structured survey questionnaire that captured data on PD barriers and demographic information rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Welch's analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated no significant group difference according to teaching experience, gender, and age ($F_{(2, 56.3)} = 1.04$, $p = .36$). However, the regression analysis indicated that both institutional and policy-related barriers predict PD perception ($R^2 = .42$, $p < .001$). The findings reveal that PD perception is shaped by structural exclusion, such as a lack of a structured PD pathway, accompanied by the unrecognition of pre-refugee certification. Therefore,

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addressing these deep-rooted PD obstacles is vital for achieving the SDG 4 target for system inclusive and national pledges under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) for camp teachers' accreditation pathway through comprehensive, structured, and equitable PD.

1. Introduction

Globally, refugee education faces challenges in quality, equity, access, and relevance (Primdahl et al., 2021). In most refugee-hosting states, harmonized education policies between refugees and host communities remain underdeveloped; concomitantly, one of the primary systemic challenges is a lack of consistent teacher professional development (TPD) (Samsari, 2024; UNHCR, 2023). In this regard, teacher training reform is mandatory and recommended to ensure its alignment with both international and national policy frameworks (Xaso et al., 2017). Nevertheless, camp-based schools have experienced a large volume of underqualified teachers, primarily due to structural and policy-related barriers, as well as economic constraints (Sesnan, 2012).

As of 2023, Ethiopia hosts over 926,000 refugees from Somalia, Eritrea, and South Sudan, making it the third largest refugee hub on the continent (Zepro et al., 2024). Primarily, this large influx is due to climatic shocks, prolonged conflict, civil war, economic collapse, and political persecution in the country of origin. This broader context of a protracted refugee situation has shed light on the issues of teachers' professional development (PD), recruitment, and retention and needs close attention to maintain equitable education in fragile settings. The Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2028–2030) explicitly underscores a pre-service qualification echelon; camp teachers' PD remains unaccredited and led by humanitarian agencies, leading to underqualification and fragmented career progression (Keser Ozmantar et al., 2023; Teferra et al., 2018).

Regarding the professional upgrade and/or requalification or promotion of teachers based on previous qualifications, the National Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030) does not explicitly articulate refugee teachers' PD pathway. It has been left to humanitarian agencies, in turn leading to less coordinated and non-accredited PD pathways. Camp teachers face distinct challenges, including a lack of accreditation, limited employment rights, and prolonged in-camp conditions (UNHCR, 2023). Despite Ethiopia's endorsement of most global conventions for refugee inclusion, this has not been put into practice (Nigusie & Cheru, 2022).

In Ethiopia, the national Ministry of Education centrally designs the education policy framework and the countrywide curriculum for secondary and tertiary education. Regional governments, however, have discretionary autonomy to develop the primary education curriculum for their respective regions. Refugee

education should, therefore, adhere to the national and regional government curriculum, which is governed by the country's education policy. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the responsible body for refugee education coordination in compliance with the national education curriculum and policy framework, while closely working with the RRS.

However, instructional decline, due to inadequate school infrastructure, extreme student overcrowding, a lack of educational facilities, and a poor hygiene system, has negatively impacted both the retention and recruitment of qualified teachers. Qualified teachers are reluctant to work as "incentive teachers" in the camp schools due to poor working conditions and limited or no PD opportunities (Keser Ozmantar et al., 2023). As a result, recruitment focuses on secondary school graduates with refugee status who also want to serve as incentive teachers while receiving a minimal stipend rather than a formal salary.

This has worsened the instructional quality, resulting in a poor working environment (Çelik et al., 2023). Therefore, the provision of quality education is a shared responsibility between the Ministry of Education, the UNHCR, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and the RRS. The Ministry of Education and the regional education bureaus have an exclusive role in overseeing the implementation of refugee education in compliance with the national policy framework, while other stakeholders, led by the UNHCR, are responsible for the management of camp-based schools.

Therefore, despite policy intentions for inclusion, this fragmented governance system hampers integration, maintains teachers' underqualification, and results in poor instructional quality at camp schools (Celik et al., 2024; Keser Ozmantar et al., 2023). Moreover, deferring the education service interventions of NGOs and their competition over refugee education has complicated the quality of education in camps. To overcome such an overarching obstacle, various pilot programs have been implemented. For example, in Türkiye, accessible competency-based PD, combined with language skills and motivation, helps to overcome systemic exclusion and social stigma (Çelik et al., 2023).

Yet, refugee-hosting sub-Saharan states, including Ethiopia, lack a structured, formal PD pathway for camp educators (Jamaludin et al., 2024; Mogli, 2024; Rosen & Lengyel, 2023; Wiseman & Galegher, 2019), undermining the instructional quality of camp-based schools (Busch et al., 2018). According to a 2023 UNHCR report, Bokolmayo Refugee Camp hosts over 40,000 refugees, of whom 60% are under 18 years and 98% are ethnic Somali. The camp has only four primary schools, which do not meet the minimum standards due to a large number of unqualified teachers, poor hygiene, and inadequate facilities.

1.1 Study Aim
This study aimed to evaluate the impact of institutional and policy-related barriers on teachers' perceptions of accredited PD opportunities.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the global efforts to align refugee education with the respective national education systems, integrated teacher training faces fierce challenges (Özdemir & Polat, 2024). These challenges highlight the need for accredited, competent, and professional teachers. Nevertheless, participatory state and UN agency-led TPD approaches of the host state exemplify a promise of integration, which is constrained by the entrenchment of bureaucracy and structural hurdles (Keser Ozmantar et al., 2023).

Therefore, the chief determinants impacting the PD integration of camp teachers are poor recruitment, undesirable learning conditions, lack of national certification, unrecognized pre-qualification, PD marginalization, limited earnings associated with refugee status, and a lack of social acceptance and reputation (Ring & West, 2015). Researchers have agreed that TPD for refugee educators is imperative to support millions of displaced children's right to education and overcome the unique challenges encountered by camp teachers. Mendenhall (2024) affirmed that the trauma and stress experienced by camp educators due to unfavorable camp situations of teaching in ill-equipped and highly under-resourced classrooms have negatively affected the mental well-being of refugee teachers.

Most camp teachers are unqualified, often lacking the basic skills and knowledge necessary to implement context-responsive pedagogy (Akin-Sabuncu, 2022; Mackenzie Davey & Jones, 2020). The majority of these underqualified teachers are refugees and referred to as "incentive teachers". Due to their refugee status, they are treated as a financial incentive with a stipend and governed by a humanitarian-managed employment system. In addition, the few from the host community also fall under this governance system. Although not incentive teachers, they are not regulated under the national employment system nor are they entitled to any other duty-bound right except those applicable to camp schoolteachers/incentive teachers (Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015).

In Ethiopia, camp schools often face a shortage of well-trained and experienced teachers (Abebe & Woldenhanna, 2013). Thus, almost all camp teachers are underqualified, working in a poor academic environment, which hinders their motivation and professional capability to handle the situation effectively. Camp teachers face inadequate support in relation to PD accreditation and inclusivity in career progression (Cohen, 2023), which are the most pressing challenges but are neglected by both the state and the humanitarian policy applications.

In Ethiopia, refugee teachers are subjected to poor working conditions, unrecognized qualifications, and little or no government support (Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015). This, again, strengthens not only the need for accreditation but also socio-political awareness of the host community (Woldegiorgis & Monari, 2023). Therefore, while both national governments and global humanitarian guidelines articulate integrated PD practice, this has not yet been realized.

1.3 Research Questions
1. What institutional and policy-related barriers are refugee teachers facing in accessing accredited and nationally recognized PD?
2. Do demographic factors such as age, gender, and teaching experience influence refugee teachers' perception of PD obstacles?
3. How do policy-related and institutional barriers predict camp teachers' perception towards PD participation?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Global Context of Refugee Teachers' Professional Development
Globally, refugee educators have consistently experienced limited PD opportunities, particularly in accessing nationally accredited training programs. This is due to non-recognized pre-refugee qualifications and teaching experience, structural blockades, and systemic exclusion (Pherali et al., 2020). Almost all camp educators rely on NGO-led informal training certification, which does not result in national recognition (Maher, 2020). Refugee teachers face tremendous obstacles in navigating classroom instruction, meeting the host country's teaching requirements, and obtaining a work permit, again resulting in PD exclusion and unemployment (Proyer et al., 2022).

In addition, the training programs available for camp teachers are decontextualized and do not address the psychosocial challenges and the unique training needs of refugee teachers (Pherali et al., 2020). The languages and legal measures of Middle Eastern and European countries are major obstacles to PD integration (Bradley et al., 2022), while most African countries, particularly refugee-hosting sub-Saharan states, face resource scarcity and encampment-driven isolation as major bottlenecks to PD (Mendenhall et al., 2021). The decontextualization by Global North countries is identified as a significant barrier (Wiseman & Galegher, 2019). The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2023) minimum standard underscores the importance of PD equity through inclusive training and national accreditation, aimed at ensuring the instructional needs of refugee children (Arvanitis, 2021; Celik et al., 2024).

Globally, these standards emphasize equitable and nationally accredited PD in the training of emergency and fragile-context educators, promoting an inclusive learning environment, social cohesion, and learner well-being. Similarly, studies in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp and Austria have suggested a participatory model where teachers are involved in PD design to ensure the responsiveness and relevance of the training program (Mendenhall et al., 2019). As a result, PD should not be limited to traditional pedagogy but rather acknowledge cultural aspects, psychosocial support, and linguistic training to help teachers deal with classroom diversity and support system integration.

A study from Uganda's Bidi Bidi settlement revealed the importance of accredited and nationally integrated PD for refugee teachers' resilience and inclusion (Sempebwa, 2024). Furthermore, studies from Germany and Lebanon have also affirmed that accredited PD empowers camp educators, reduces marginalization, and enhances professional identity. Therefore, the global evidence suggests that

while differing international frameworks view nationally accredited PD as a foundation for quality education in fragile and emergency settings, the actual implementation remains limited, mainly due to the absence of an accreditation mechanism and systemic recognition

2.2 Barriers to Professional Development Integration

Despite the overarching international concern, PD integration between the national teaching workforce and the refugee educators remains feeble in African refugee-hosting states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia. One of the most frequently and consistently cited barriers is the unrecognition of prior qualifications from the country of origin (Bengtsson et al., 2020). This might lead to diminishing confidence, frustration, and exclusion from a nationally accredited PD pathway, which in turn perpetuates a vicious cycle of underqualification and lack of access to formal PD opportunities.

The second challenge is NGO-led PD training, which lacks national accreditation and recognition. Badawi (2021) stated that NGOs and other humanitarian agencies serve as the primary PD providers to refugee teachers. However, such training, though crucial to skill building and empowerment, is not nationally recognized nor does it lead to a change in salary, promotion, and career growth; consequently, teachers tend to be demotivated, less interested, and even quit the teaching profession.

Moreover, institution-related factors also exacerbate the problem, including a lack of leadership support, resource constraints, and ineffective monitoring and supervision systems (Spanner & Maué, 2022). Socio-cultural stigma and status-driven intersectionality barriers from the host have further marginalized refugee teachers' PD (Celik et al., 2024; Cohen, 2023). Similarly, the absence of a structured monitoring system and co-working space for peer learning is also affirmed as a bigger PD hurdle (Akin-Sabuncu & Kasapoglu, 2024). In conclusion, all these obstacles collectively restrict PD opportunities and undermine quality education in camp-based schools.

2.3 Ethiopian Context and Policy Implementation Challenges

Ethiopia hosts a large number of refugees and is a signatory member of the most prominent global refugee frameworks, including the Leaders' Summit on Refugees, hosted in 2016 in New York City. All these documents articulate the right of refugee inclusion into the state policy directive and equitable access to public services. However, in Ethiopia, the right to refugee inclusion and PD integration remains limited, and refugee teachers' PD is practiced outside of the national education policy framework (Gemeda & Tynjälä, 2015; Pherali et al., 2020).

Major harmonized PD policy implementation challenges in Ethiopia include structural barriers, systemic exclusion, gender inequity, and inadequate support (Mendenhall & Falk, 2023; Reynolds, 2024). According to Nigusie and Cheru (2022), administrative and operational challenges, including insufficient funding for PD, bureaucratic procedures, and unclear institutional responsibilities, have threatened viable PD implementation in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the first national

proclamation (Proclamation No. 1110/2019) for refugee rights and inclusion into public service was established in 2019 (UNHCR, 2019a); however, it was not effectively put into practice but remains mainly on paper. Furthermore, among the neighboring states in the region, Uganda has shown improved efforts toward inclusion compared to Ethiopia (Woldegiorgis & Monari, 2023).

2.4 Synthesizing Barriers and Opportunities in Refugee Teachers' Professional Development

Throughout the reviewed literature, both institutional and systemic policy barriers emerged consistently as major bottlenecks to refugee teachers' access to PD (Arvanitis & McLoughlin, 2023). Although the international legal frameworks emphasize equitable access to PD, a huge gap exists between the policy promises and the actual implementation level, more specifically, for refugee-hosting low-income countries such as Ethiopia. As evidenced by studies from Uganda (Sempebwa, 2024) and Türkiye (Celik et al., 2024), harmonized PD policy implementation between host and refugee educators yields significant teacher motivation and instructional quality, particularly in camp-based schools.

Unfortunately, however, most of the transit states do not accredit prior qualifications, which negatively affects refugee teachers' access to accredited PD admission. This is further worsened by a lack of structured and coordinated PD strategies (Spanner & Maué, 2022). Though Ethiopia is a signatory member of the most binding global legal frameworks for refugee inclusion, the policy implementation pace remains limited (Abebe & Aase, 2007; Nigusie & Cheru, 2022; UNHCR, 2019b).

Therefore, to ensure an inclusive PD pathway, a holistic policy reform should be undertaken to bridge the gap and foster a collaborative stakeholder model for refugee well-being, including stakeholders such as state ministries of education, the UNHCR, and other local affiliates. Similarly, comprehensive and structured policy reform, accompanied by state intervention and ownership, is profoundly important for improved accreditation accessibility and PD sustainability (Berg, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2021).

Figure 1 below is a cumulative synthesis of key study variables and the resultant implications for integrated PD.
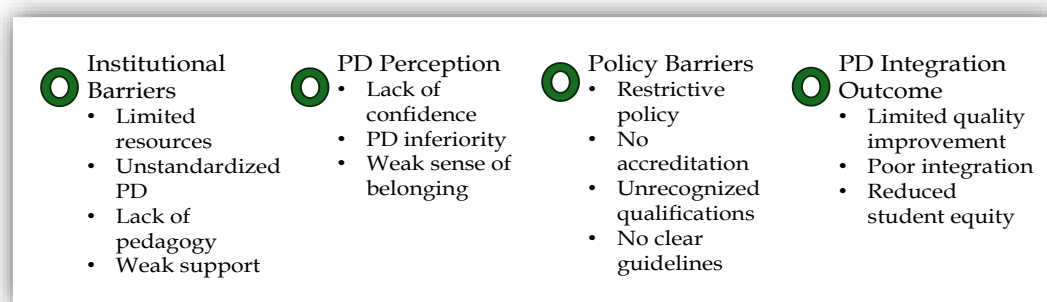

Institutional Barriers
- Limited resources
- Unstandardized PD
- Lack of pedagogy
- Weak support

PD Perception
- Lack of confidence
- PD inferiority
- Weak sense of belonging

Policy Barriers
- Restrictive policy
- No accreditation
- Unrecognized qualifications
- No clear guidelines

PD Integration Outcome
- Limited quality improvement
- Poor integration
- Reduced student equity

Figure 1: Barriers to refugee teachers' professional development

3. Methods

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive survey design within a positivist framework to closely examine policy-related and institutional barriers to nationally recognized and accredited PD for refugee camp teachers in Ethiopia. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended items, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*), was administered to 81 randomly selected refugee teachers, who proportionally represented four primary schools in Bokolmayo Refugee Camp. A pilot test was conducted with 35 teachers to assess content validity and clarity. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were acceptable (institutional barriers = .82, policy-related barriers = .79, and perception = .84).

Explanatory factor analysis (EFA) supported construct validity (KMO = .81, Bartlett's Test $p < .001$). Data were collected by trained local enumerators who are fluent in and well-acquainted with the local language and context. Data was analyzed using SPSS v26.0. Levene's Test confirmed the assumption of equality of variance before Welch's ANOVA. Regression assumptions were checked and satisfactory, including multicollinearity (VIP < 2), independence (Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.84), normality (Shapiro-Wilk Test), and homoscedasticity (scatterplots).

3.1 Method of Data Analysis

SPSS version 26 was used to summarize demographic data and perceived barriers to PD. Welch's ANOVA examined group differences by gender, age, and teaching experience. A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the predictive value of policy-related and institutional barriers. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation was used to explore the association between policy-related barriers, institutional barriers, and PD perception.

3.2 Study Limitations

The small sample (N = 81) of the study and single-site focus limited its generalizability. Furthermore, due to the cross-sectional study design employed, the study did not consider the shift of perception over time. In addition, the exclusive use of a quantitative approach limits understanding of teachers lived experiences, which may have resulted in unmeasured confounding variables that affect perception. It is thus recommended that future study efforts pursue a mixed methods design to bridge the gap.

4. Results

4.1 Respondents' Profile

The demographic data is presented in Table 1. Demographic variables revealed that 79% of the sample were male, showing male dominance. Furthermore, 85% of the sample had completed the 12th grade, indicating huge inaccessibility to PD admission or post-secondary qualifications. Moreover, over 50% of the sample had 4 to 6 years of teaching experience, making them early- to mid-career professionals. Such homogeneity in terms of gender, age, and educational experience is crucial in building upon the interpretations of PD implementation and its policy alignment, as detailed in the subsequent analysis section.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents' demographic characteristics (N = 81)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	25–34	73	90.1%
Gender	Male	64	79.0%
Highest educational level	Preparatory completed	71	87.7%
Teaching experience	4–6 years	41	50.6%

4.2 Group Differences in Professional Development Barriers and Perception by Demographic Characteristics

Welch's ANOVA was conducted to understand whether perceived PD barriers differ by years of teaching experience, gender, and age, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Welch's ANOVA results for the effects of age, gender, and teaching experience on professional development barriers and perception

Outcome variable	Grouping variable	Welch's F(Df1, Df2)	P
Institutional barriers	Age group	0.36(1, 8.65)	.565
Policy barriers	Age group	0.30(1, 8.33)	.600
PD perception	Age group	0.02(1, 73.74)	.897
Institutional barriers	Gender	0.01(1, 41.30)	.927
Policy barriers	Gender	0.05(1, 28.70)	.823
PD perception	Gender	0.86(1, 68.90)	.358
Institutional barriers	Teaching experience	1.87(2, 27.0)	.173
Policy barriers	Teaching experience	0.70(2, 22.6)	.507
PD perception	Teaching experience	2.82(2, 36.5)	.073

No significant difference was observed between respondents aged 25 to 43 and those aged 35 to 44. The results for policy-related barriers ($F(1, 8.33) = 0.30$, $p = .600$), institutional barriers ($F(1, 8.65) = 0.36$, $p = .565$), and PD perception ($F(1, 73.74) = 0.02$, $p = .897$) suggest consistently observed challenges among older and younger age groups. Concurrently, no significant differences were observed between female and male respondents in any of the outcome variables. Thus, the results suggest that gender does not affect camp teachers' perception of accessing PD opportunities, despite not being available.

Furthermore, Welch's ANOVA was conducted on years of service (1–3 years, 4–6 years, and 7–10 years). No significant differences were observed for institutional barriers ($F(2, 27.0) = 1.87$, $p = .173$) and policy-related barriers ($F(2, 22.6) = 0.70$, $p = .507$). A slight but significant difference was observed for PD perception ($F(2, 36.5) = 2.82$, $p = .073$), although it is not statistically significant at the conventional alpha level ($p < 0.05$). However, this still indicates a positive perceptual trend among

teachers with 4 to 6 years of experience (M = 3.42) in comparison to those with 7 to 10 (M = 2.89) and 1 to 3 years (M = 2.60) of teaching experience. Thus, the findings reveal that consistent PD barriers were perceived across respondent categories.

Table 3 illustrates the demographic analysis by teaching experience, age, and gender. The data show that younger respondents (25–34 years) perceived slightly higher policy-related barriers and relatively fewer institutional barriers compared to older respondents (35–44 years). There were no significant differences by gender, as both male and female respondents reported indistinguishably similar perceived barriers. Respondents with more teaching experience (7–10 years) reported the least perceived PD barriers, while respondents with 4 to 6 years of experience reported the highest number of PD barriers compared to experienced teachers.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for barriers and PD perception by age, gender, and teaching experience

Outcome variable	Grouping variable	N	Mean	SD
Institutional barriers	Age 25–34	73	1.48	0.25
	Age 35–44	8	1.53	0.25
Policy-related barriers	Age 25–34	73	1.91	0.59
	Age 35–44	8	1.77	0.65
PD perception	Age 25–34	73	3.05	0.49
	Age 35–44	8	3.00	0.13
Institutional barriers	Male	64	1.48	0.27
	Female	17	1.49	0.17
Policy-related barriers	Male	64	1.90	0.61
	Female	17	1.87	0.53
PD perception	Male	64	3.14	3.72
	Female	17	2.70	0.43
Institutional barriers	1–3 years of experience	30	1.53	0.25
	4–6 years of experience	41	1.47	0.25
	7–10 years of experience	10	1.38	0.21
Policy-related barriers	1–3 years of experience	30	2.00	0.68
	4–6 years of experience	41	1.82	0.48
	7–10 years of experience	10	1.87	0.74
PD perception	1–3 years of experience	30	2.60	0.45
	4–6 years of experience	41	3.42	4.63
	7–10 years of experience	10	2.89	0.34

4.3 Predictors of Professional Development Perception

4.3.1 *Multiple linear regression analysis*

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether institutional and policy-related barriers predict camp teachers' perceptions of PD participation. The model is significant with an approximation of 10% variance (R^2 = .099), F(2, 78) = 4.30, p = 0.017. Thus, institutional barriers (B = 2.93, β = .214, t = 2.06, p = .043) and policy-related barriers (B = 1.22, β = 0.198, t = 2.04, p = 0.45) are both positive predictors of teachers' perceptions toward PD. The findings suggest that the higher perceived policy and institutional barriers are associated with lower or negative perceptions toward accredited PD participation

Table 4: Regression weights for policy-related and institutional barriers (N = 81)

Predictors	B	β	T
Policy-related barriers	1.22	.198	2.04
Institutional barriers	2.93	.214	2.06

4.3.2 *Correlation matrix analysis*

Table 5 illustrates the correlational analysis results between perception, institutional, and policy-related barriers.

Table 5: Pearson correlation coefficients between key variables (N = 81)

Variable	1	2	3
1. PD perception	—		
2. Institutional barriers	.227*	—	
3. Policy-related barriers	.225*	.027	—

*Note. * p < .05*

The data in Table 5 show that a positive correlation exists between PD perception and institutional barriers (r(79) = 0.227, p = 0.042), indicating that a perceived increase in institutional barriers results in more visible PD participation barriers. Likewise, PD perception is significantly correlated with policy-related barriers (r(79) = 0.225, p = 0.044), indicating that PD participation is positively correlated with the perceived policy alignment. However, the relationship between policy-related barriers and institutional barriers is not statistically significant (r(79) = .027, p = .811), indicating that the two are distinct in PD discourses. This is because the two occur independently at their own pace, whereby the participants may experience one without the other and vice versa.

Furthermore, institutional barriers are viewed as internal operational challenges, such as weak leadership and management, less administrative concern for PD training, and limited resources at the school level. In contrast, policy-related barriers are regarded as externally imposed omissions at the system level, such as exclusion from the national accreditation system and lack of recognition of pre-refugee qualifications for PD admission and/or employment. It is, therefore,

justifiable to claim that the two are not directly related, nor do they occur concurrently, due to their different sources of influence.

4.4 Statistical Analysis and Interpretation of Quantitative Findings
This study undertook a rigorous investigation into institutional and policy-related influences on refugee teachers' perceptions of accredited and nationally recognized PD. A blended analysis, encompassing ANOVA, multiple regression, and correlational analysis, was conducted to examine demographic differences in perceptions and the predictive value of these structural barriers. Demographic variables such as gender, years of teaching experience, and age were not significant predictors of respondents' perceptions of PD.

This could be due to sample homogeneity, as the majority of the respondents fell within a similar educational and age category; alternatively, this could be due to the small sample size contributing to "Type-II error". However, despite being modest, the bivariate relationship reveals a statistically significant positive association between institutional barriers and perceptions of PD, as well as policy-related barriers and perceptions of PD. This provides robust evidence that both institutional and policy-related barriers shape and significantly influence camp teachers' perceptions of PD.

More interestingly, policy-related and institutional barriers are not significantly correlated or have a significant difference, affirming that the two arise from distinct sources. This is despite the multiple regression outcome, indicating a positive predictive relationship between both institutional and policy-related barriers and perception toward PD, with $R^2 = 10$ in the perception score, which also suggests a meaningful effect size in social science studies (Cohen, 1988). Similarly, these results were reinforced by the Pearson correlation product, indicating a positive association between perception toward PD and lower perceived barriers. However, analysis revealed no significant difference between policy-related and institutional barriers, affirming that the two are from distinct sources.

In contrast, institutional barriers highlight local constraints, such as a lack of leadership and resource limitations. Policy-related barriers include systemic exclusion, such as the lack of formal accreditation and recognition of pre-refugee credentials. In addition, the lack of group differences by age, gender, and years of teaching experience manifests that these challenges are systematically implanted and call for a coordinated and structured joint intervention. Thus, the overall finding implies that as perceived policy-related and institutional barriers decrease, camp teachers tend to develop a positive view of the accessibility, relevance, and importance of PD, and vice versa.

4.5 Implications for Policy and Practice
The multifaceted finding reveals that both institutional and policy-related barriers are significant predictors of perceptions of PD. Camp educators consistently face structural barriers and systemic policy exclusion, including a lack of administrative support, unrecognized qualifications, limited resources, and a lack of a formalized accreditation system. However, causal inferences were not made

due to the cross-sectional design employed in this study. No significant difference was found between institutional barriers and policy-related barriers, indicating the urgency of a joint intervention by the immediate stakeholders. State policy often fails to address the needs of refugee teachers through adequate support, recognized certification, fair compensation, and clear career pathways.

An accessible formal accreditation system, adequate funding, and policy support have been observed to serve as a cornerstone for camp educators' PD inclusion (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Supporting government policy structure could bridge the rift (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2015). It is essential that camp educators obtain formal accreditation and sufficient financial backing (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The Ethiopian Government needs to be urged to prioritize a comprehensive reform to ensure inclusive PD (Jamaludin et al., 2024).

In addition, studies recommend prioritizing formal accreditation and recognition of prior qualifications, participatory and context-driven PD, financial and resource support, and leadership and interagency coordination (Anderson et al., 2024; Atkinson, 2019; Bačáková & Closs, 2013; Karsli-Calamak & Kilinc, 2021; Rose, 2019). In the same way, personal motivation and organized structural assistance are the cornerstones to diminishing institutional and policy-related obstacles (Reynolds et al., 2012). In Ethiopia, refugee teachers face systemic exclusion and institutional barriers, leading to underqualification, poor classroom instruction, and quality compromise. This calls for an inclusive policy reform for viable PD integration through multidimensional support, including but not limited to financial and academic support.

This reform promotes PD that is not only accessible and existing but also perceived as vital by all teachers, particularly those in displacement settings (UNESCO, 2020). This finding implies systemic reform through a divergent effort geared toward camp teachers' PD. This includes formalized PD policy integration and an inclusive national framework for accreditation, access to resources and leadership support, and alignment of NGOs and humanitarian efforts with national education policy directives. The reform also includes acknowledgment of prior qualifications and teaching experience, reduced internal operation barriers, as well as a joint focus and determination by stakeholders to ensure PD accessibility and an accreditation pathway tailored to the needs of refugee teachers.

5. Conclusion
The study identified both policy-related and structural barriers to refugee teachers' PD, such as the absence of a formal accreditation system, inadequate infrastructure, lack of leadership support, and misrecognition of prior qualifications, which all hinder nationally inclusive PD in Bokolmayo Refugee Camp, Ethiopia. Moreover, camp teachers assume these barriers as longstanding, persistent, and systemic obstacles to PD, regardless of their demographic differences. Thus, to tackle these challenges, potential stakeholders such as the UN Agency for Refugees, INGOs, the Ethiopian Government, and refugee

education representatives should work together to ensure a unified PD pathway for camp educators as prescribed by both national and global policy documents such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), National Proclamation No. 1110/2019 for refugee inclusion (UNHCR, 2019a), the Global Compact for Refugees and Global Refugee Forum (Global Compact on Refugees, 2018, 2019), etc. Failure to undertake such a joint effort might exacerbate the issue, resulting in PD fragmentation and risking the viability of refugee education integration.

6. Conflict of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest in relation to the study, its authorship, or the publication of this article.

7. Acknowledgment of AI and Digital Tool Usage
In accordance with the AI policy guideline of the *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research (IJLTER),* the authors acknowledge the use of AI digital tools in the preparation of this manuscript as follows. For minor language clarity, Grammarly was used, and for reference formatting, ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025) was utilized solely for adherence to the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition referencing style. However, the use of these AI applications was only for linguistic clarity and editorial consistency, while the overall conceptualization, interpretation, analysis, and intellectual contribution are entirely the authors' work.

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