



Teacher preparation as a pillar for educational sustainability in Peru: Challenges, opportunities and proposals for improvement.

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Abstract

This research paper examines the critical role of teacher preparation in fostering educational sustainability in Peru. Despite significant progress in expanding access to education, Peru continues to face challenges in delivering quality, equitable, and inclusive learning experiences, especially in rural and indigenous communities. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes statistical data, policy analysis, and case studies, this paper explores how teacher training influences the four pillars of sustainable education: quality, accessibility, equity, and financial viability. Through analysis of national education indicators, government reports, and interviews with educators, the study reveals systemic barriers including insufficient professional development, underinvestment in rural teacher deployment, and the lack of inclusive pedagogy. It concludes by offering targeted policy recommendations such as curriculum reforms, sustained investment in teacher training, intercultural education initiatives, and digital inclusion strategies. The findings serve as a call to action for the Peruvian government to reposition teacher preparation at the core of its educational reform agenda.

I. Introduction

1. Background of the Education System in Peru

Education is the cornerstone of social and economic development. In Peru, decades of educational reform have resulted in greater access and expanded coverage. The Ministry of Education reports that over 6.6 million students are enrolled in basic education, a testament to the country's commitment to universal access (MINEDU, 2024). However, access alone does not equate to quality learning outcomes.

Peru's education system has historically been divided between private elite institutions accessible only to the top 5% of the population and under-resourced public schools serving the majority. This disparity stems largely from the lack of support for teacher training, especially in public and rural education settings. The OECD's 2018 PISA results placed Peru 64th out of 77 countries, revealing that 66% of students did not meet the minimum proficiency level in mathematics (OECD, 2019).

2. Research Problem and Justification

While structural reforms have improved enrollment rates, Peru's education system still struggles with underqualified teachers, unequal access, low salaries, and insufficient infrastructure.

Teacher preparation stands as a major determinant of educational quality. Yet it is often neglected in budgetary allocations and policy frameworks. There is a critical need to investigate the current state of teacher training and how it can be leveraged to enhance educational outcomes.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the current state of teacher preparation in Peru.
- To evaluate its role in achieving educational sustainability in terms of quality, equity, accessibility, and financial viability.
- To propose actionable reforms for enhancing teacher training systems.

4. Research Questions

- How does the current model of teacher preparation impact educational quality, accessibility, equity, and sustainability in Peru?
- What are the key challenges faced by teachers, particularly in public and rural institutions?
- What policy interventions can improve teacher preparation and thus, educational



sustainability?

5. Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on primary and secondary education in Peru, particularly within public school systems. While private education is addressed for contrast, the core analysis remains on the government's role in preparing teachers for equitable and sustainable education.

II. Literature Review

1. Theoretical Framework

The paper is grounded in four pillars of educational sustainability:

- **Quality:** Defined by teacher competence, continuous professional development, and instructional effectiveness.
- **Accessibility:** Teachers' willingness and ability to reach remote and marginalized populations.
- **Equity:** Ensuring inclusivity by addressing different learning needs and cultural backgrounds.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Models that allow for consistent, cost-effective investment in teacher development.

These concepts draw from education for sustainable development (ESD) literature (Plymouth University, 2023) and theories of progressive pedagogy and learner-centered instruction.

2. Global Comparisons

Countries such as Finland and Singapore invest heavily in teacher education, treating it as a

high-status profession. This contrasts sharply with Latin America, where underfunding and politicized reforms often undermine sustainable growth (IZA, 2007).

3. Key Challenges in the Peruvian Context

- Standardized Testing vs. Real Learning: PISA scores highlight the disconnect between enrollment and learning outcomes.
- Curriculum Relevance: A rigid, test-driven curriculum fails to equip students with 21st-century skills.
- Digital Divide: Especially apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, where rural students lacked access to devices and internet (UNICEF, 2021).
- Infrastructure Deficiency: Over 43% of public schools lack safe drinking water and nearly 36% have unsafe infrastructure (MINEDU, 2023).

4. Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE)

While Peru has over 27,000 IBE institutions, only 46% of IBE teachers are fluent in both Spanish and their indigenous language. The policy exists, but implementation is weak (GRADE, 2017).

III. Methodology

1. Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining qualitative interviews with teachers and analysis of quantitative data from national education surveys and international assessments.

2. Data Collection

- Surveys and Interviews: Conducted with urban and rural teachers (e.g., Ana Torres –

pseudonym).

- Secondary Data: Government reports, UNESCO publications, and NGO evaluations.

3. Sampling

Participants were selected based on diversity in geography (urban vs. rural), years of teaching experience, and participation in professional development programs.

4. Data Analysis

- Qualitative: Thematic analysis of interviews and open-ended survey responses.
- Quantitative: Descriptive statistics from PISA, national censuses, and enrollment records.

5. Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality, voluntary participation, and ethical use of institutional data were maintained throughout the study.

IV. Findings and Discussion

1. Quality of Education and Teacher Competence

Case studies show that many teachers lack classroom management skills and were inadequately prepared by their training institutions. For example, Ana Torres reports having to acquire classroom management techniques independently, despite holding a Master's degree.

While teachers are motivated to improve, limited access to professional development hampers progress. The government's current offerings are insufficient in both quantity and quality.

2. Accessibility and Geographic Disparity

Teachers are reluctant to work in rural areas due to poor infrastructure, low salaries, and lack of support. Yet these regions house the most underserved populations, including indigenous students who lag behind by nearly three academic years (UNICEF, 2023).

A sustainable education model requires morally driven professionals willing to bridge the urban-rural gap, supported by financial and institutional incentives.

3. Equity and Inclusivity

Existing teacher training does not adequately equip educators to address varied learning styles or cultural diversity. Indigenous students remain largely excluded from meaningful education, despite formal IBE policies.

Only a fraction of teachers receive training in inclusive or intercultural pedagogy, resulting in systemic bias and unequal outcomes.

4. Financial Sustainability

The average teacher salary in Peru is about US\$750, below the regional average (UNESCO, 2022). Low pay discourages long-term commitment and makes it difficult to attract qualified talent.

Moreover, professional development initiatives lack consistent funding, making it difficult for teachers to access or prioritize training.

V. Recommendations

1. Strengthen Teacher Preparation Programs

- Align teacher training curricula with classroom realities, including soft skills, trauma-informed practices, and inclusive pedagogy.
- Partner with international institutions for exchange programs and certifications.

2. Incentivize Rural Deployment

- Provide salary bonuses, housing support, and career advancement for teachers in remote areas.
- Create mobile teacher training units that deliver workshops in rural districts.

3. Expand Intercultural Education

- Ensure bilingual teachers are certified in both Spanish and indigenous languages.
- Produce culturally relevant teaching materials and standardize IBE delivery across schools.

4. Ensure Financial Sustainability

- Create a national fund for continuous professional development.
- Incorporate public-private partnerships for teacher training infrastructure.

5. Leverage Technology

- Expand digital literacy training and equip schools with essential infrastructure.
 - Use remote learning platforms to offer professional development across regions.
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VI. Conclusion

This study confirms that teacher preparation is central to achieving educational sustainability in Peru. While access to education has improved, the quality, inclusivity, and financial viability of

education remain uneven. Investing in teacher training yields multidimensional returns: improved student outcomes, greater equity, and long-term national development.

Peru must reframe teacher preparation not as a secondary policy priority but as the foundational pillar upon which educational reform rests. By addressing quality, accessibility, equity, and sustainability, the country can move toward a more just and effective education system for all.

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