

Teachers' Conception of and Perception towards the New Curriculum of Ethiopian Higher Education: A Case of Debre Birhan University

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Abstract : The purpose of this study was to explore the awareness of teachers and the attitude they have to the curriculum they implement as well as to assess the actual and desired magnitude of teachers' participation in curriculum development process. It also aimed at investigating the factors that affect teachers' level of conception and perception towards the new higher education curriculum. The study was carried out in Debre Birhan University. Teachers, course coordinators, team leaders and presidents were included in the study as research subjects. Teachers were proportionally selected from each department (of the six faculties) based on available sampling technique. Accordingly, a total of 103 teachers were chosen as a subject of the study. In order to collect first hand data from the teachers, a questionnaire with four parts was developed by the researcher. To this end, scales were designed for measuring the extent of teachers' awareness and attitude. Each of the scales encompasses 11 and 17 items respectively. An open ended questionnaire was also attached for the purpose of obtaining elaborated data on the issue. Information was also obtained from interviews with presidents, team leaders and course coordinators. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively using descriptive statistical tools. The overall results of the analysis revealed that the awareness of teachers on the curriculum was low. The meager participation of teachers in the process of curriculum development and the deficiency of trainings on the concern were major factors. Teachers' perception towards the existence and implementation of the new curriculum was also inclined to the negative, though difficult to generalize. Lack of awareness, administrators poor approach and lack of facilitating appropriate incentives as well as absence of room for evaluating the curriculum etc plays big role in endangering teachers attitude while the up to datedness of the new curriculum, involvement of teachers in the curriculum development process, the wide ranging quality of the new curriculum etc laid a better ground to boost teachers attitude towards the curriculum. This may have implication to the university in that there is a need to facilitate workshops or awareness creation trainings, to have positive and cooperative administrators, and embracing committed teachers to implement the curriculum efficiently.

Keywords : conception, perception, curriculum, higher education, Ethiopia

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