

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PRACTICES OF
BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: THE
CASE OF EDUCATION FACULTY



BY
AMERA SEIFU

JUNE, 2004

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A partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Art in Curriculum and Instruction

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List of Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AMES	Annual May Educational Seminar
BDU	Bahir Dar University
BDUEF	Bahir Dar University, Education Faculty
EJE	The Ethiopian Journal of Education
EJTE and SD	The Ethiopian Journal of Technology, Education, and Sustainable Development
EPRDF	The Ethiopian people Revolutionary and Democratic Front
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IER	Institute of Educational Research
MOE	Ministry of Education
RPO	Research and Publication Office
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

The study attempted to assess the trend of BDUEF teachers' practice from recent past to the present, and then indicates various suggestions to the future. Moreover, it evaluates the role of various factors in teachers' participation in educational research. 18 BDUEF teachers were participated in the study as a source of information. Their selection was through snowball sampling. A qualitative case study was employed. The data was collected through interview, FGD, participant observation and document analysis. The study revealed that among various personal factors teachers' knowledge in educational research has a strong positive /negative roles to influence other personal factors and then to direct the teachers towards/away from educational research practices. In few cases even without satisfactory knowledge, strong interest has a power to push teachers towards educational research. Teachers' field of specialization has a strong relation with their participation in educational research. The BDUEF teachers who specialize in Education and Language Teaching participated well in educational research. On the other hand years of teaching experience and level of qualification of teachers have no a unique positive or negative contribution for their practice in educational research. Of the various institutional factors, incentives for the researchers have shown great contribution for teachers' practice in educational research. However, institutional factors have no a peculiar influence for educational research practices. Their role is the same for all types of research. Even to some extent some institutional factors (the library collections and information dissemination accesses) are suitable for educational research practices than other researches. The study also found that, even though it is not satisfactory, the trend of teachers' involvement in educational research has shown improvements from the past to the present. For further improvement of educational research practices of the BDUEF teachers, orienting teachers in education in general and in educational research in particular, working research in-group, and improving incentives for the researchers are some of the points mentioned by the informants of the present study.

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Modern science raises number of questions on the existing theories and then tries to investigate an answer through different ways- starting from simple trial-and-error approaches to the complicated research procedures. Then amendments of the theories or developments of new theories (knowledge) may be realized through research practices. Research helps to evaluate the contemporary “truth” for any natural and social aspects in the world. Therefore, it seems apparent that research activity and its result serve as a source of new knowledge, change and improvement through examining the existing “truth”. In connection with this idea, Masson and Bramble (1997:4) stated that in modern science there is no permanent truth. For them, any truth can be challenged through various investigations for further verification. Therefore, research is a process which mainly stands to search the contemporary truth about some thing.

According to Wiersma (1995), advances in many fields of endeavor are attributed to research, and for much of this research activity there is the inherent assumption that research fosters improvement. In other words, many changes or developments (material or non material) in the world mainly are attributed to research activity results.

Research is a process of careful inquiry of events. It is a systematic attempt to obtain meaningful answers to questions about phenomena or events through the application of scientific procedures (Koul, 1984). Therefore, the features of scientific procedures such as an accurate observation, careful exploration, empirical evidence, carefully designed procedures, objective and logical testing (experimentation), and the researchers' patient, expertise and courage are also some of the basic elements of the research activities (Cooley and Bickel, 1986).

It seems clear that, in one way or another, the outcome of any research has its own contribution for the development of education sector. For instance, technological and medical research results help to improve the technological and medical sciences respectively. In addition to the improvement for the sciences of the specific fields, these research results may have undeniable contribution for the teaching-learning of technology and medicine courses. But educational research, as an independent area of investigation, has got its birth in the early twentieth century (Derebssa, 2000:180); because research activities may begin with some form of curiosity about phenomena that probably reflect the status and quality of life at that time. For instance, in the earlier, people were very interested in maintaining their food supplies. So, they asked questions and tried to find solutions about the natural phenomena such as weather, climate and soil conditions (Masson and Bramble, 1997). They further explained that when men began to live in cooperation among themselves, they became curious about economics, law, politics and other government related issues.

Likewise, according to Mitchell (1985), around 1900-1910, when a complex industrialized society developed a greater need for educated individuals to operate its machines and institutions, educational research started to emerge. When educated people were demanded by the society, he further explained that, education became an issue of discussion, and educators started to question and find answers about educational problems. That was, therefore, an initiation point for the introduction of educational research. As a result, different organizations, which were responsible for educational research activities, like the National Society for the Study of Education, the American Educational Research Association, the Journal of Educational Psychology and the like were established in the years 1900-1910 (Koul, 1984:16).

Different writers defined educational research in their own ways. For Charles (1998), educational research is simply a research related to issues in education to find reliable answers to questions, to discover the best way of doing things, to establish principles that can be followed with confidence. "Educational research is an aspect of scientific discipline that is geared toward the solution of educational problems" (Yalew, 2000:251). Educational research, as Lucio and McNeil (1979), as cited in Adane

(2000:143), is an orderly approach of seeking educational facts and systematic relationship. In general, educational research involves a careful and thorough examination of educational problems that consists of observable facts or events leading to verifiable facts, principles and relationships which are fundamental to the systematic exploration/explanation and understanding of these problems.

Though there may be an overlap in the focal points of educational research and other research streams, it has its own main concern. According to Travers (1968), the content areas of educational research can be classified as: (1) educational psychology, (2) philosophy of education, (3) sociology of education, (4) economic of education, (5) educational administration, (6) comparative education, (7) educational measurement and test development, (8) curriculum construction and textbooks, (9) teaching, and (10) educational technology (media). Habtamu (2000:2) also revealed that the main concern of educational research is an educational phenomenon such as the objective of education, the curricula, the teaching-learning process, the students, the teachers, an administrative issues and the like. Moreover, the discovery of effective procedures to improve a curriculum quality, school quality, instructional quality, and the quality of educational outcomes are some of the principal aims of educational research (Working Group on Education Sector Analysis, 1999).

In short, any issues related to the basic components of education (the teachers, the students, the curricular aspects, the media and the overall physical and administration setup of the schools) have assessed through educational research.

Even though any interested organization can involve in educational research practices, there are institutions which are more appropriate and responsible to engage in it. Different institutions including research centers and schools have been engaged in educational research. In the school, it can be practiced at different levels: primary school to higher learning institutes. ". . . it is assumed that research activities in school enhance and enrich the teaching-learning process thereby contributing to the improvement of quality of education." (Seyoum, 1998:1-2).

Most of the universities around the world help to improve the qualities and quantities of educational research activities (Ward, 1973). Research and teaching have

been traditionally recognized as twin broad functions of higher education (Garnnet and Holmes, 1995). Further, Taye (1993:2) stated that "One of the major reasons for the existence of a university anywhere in the world is to get involved in research activities." It seems apparent that a higher institution/a university is one of the most important institutions that consider research, searching a truth, as its prominent assignment. In relation to this idea, Deutsch (1959) contended that the university is an institution uniting people professionally dedicating to the quest and transmission of truth in scientific terms. Therefore it is clear that, for Deutsch (1959), since truth is accessible to systematic search, research is the foremost concern of the university. Hence, most Universities/ higher institutions have considered research activities to be their basic assignments.

Basically the functions of most universities/higher institutions in the world are teaching and research in combination (Neuman and Lindsay, 1988). However, just like that of various research centers which are concerned mainly in research activities, there are few universities in the world which are assigned only in teaching (Fletcher, 1968; Clark, 1983).

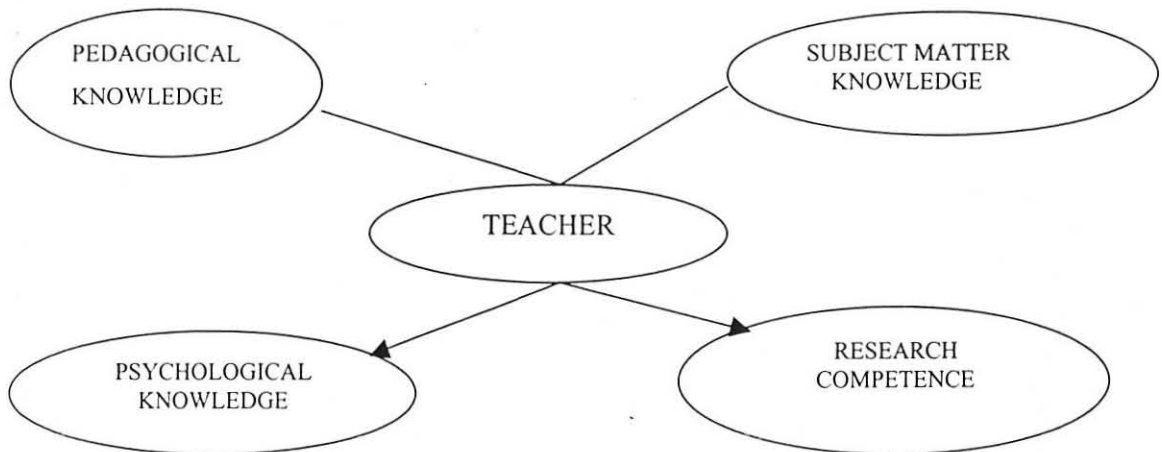
In relation to the researchers who search solutions for educational problems one fact seems true. That is, there is no a strict demarcation between educational researchers and other researchers. However, all teachers, education stream students, educational administrators, educational supervisors and the like can be considered as the main educational researchers. Having this in mind, the focus of this study is to assess higher institution teachers' engagement in educational research activities.

Traditionally, it was believed that research is an activity carried out by people in higher education in order to acquire a research degree, or in order to fulfill a contract made with different research organizations. But the curriculum movement in the 1960s and early 1970s introduced the idea that teachers could be involved in researching the issues around and in their classrooms (Mitchell, 1985). As Hopkins (2002) stated, to enhance their own or a colleague's teaching, to test the assumptions of educational theory in practice, and/or to evaluate and implement the whole school practices, teachers' participation in educational research is highly recommended.

Teachers of any level, primary to higher institution, have good opportunity to search solutions for different educational problems, because they are true practitioners who face the real problems in classrooms. Lehtinen (1990) mentioned that when a teacher does his regular job, there is every possibility for researching educational problems and acquiring more knowledge and understanding. According to Dewey, as cited in Kincheloe (1991:34), one of the most important roles of a teacher is to investigate pedagogical problems through inquiry. Writing about the 'teacher as investigator', Dewey saw teachers as the most important inquirers into the success and failure of the school. Moreover Dewey, as cited in Kincheloe (1991:15), contended that teachers' investigations do not only lead to knowledge about the school, but also to good teaching. "Indeed, the ultimate benefit of teacher research over sixty years continues to be good teaching, defined not simply as effective ways of getting facts across but as understanding the significance of ideas and their effects on humans" (McCutcheon,1981; Duckworth, 1987, as cited in Kincheloe, 1991:16).

Another writer, Yalaw (2000:251) noted that teachers, by virtue of their important positions in the educational system, are required to participate in educational research to improve the teaching-learning quality and quantity. He further argued that in addition to the three basic components of knowledge (Psychological knowledge of the learner, professional understanding of principles, and knowledge of subject matter content) which make the teacher effective, research competence of teachers is also very crucial to improve the quality and quantity of teaching-learning in schools. In relation to this explanation, Yalaw(2000) has tried to construct the following model which may facilitate teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Figure1. A Model Representing the Qualities that a Competent Teacher Should Possess

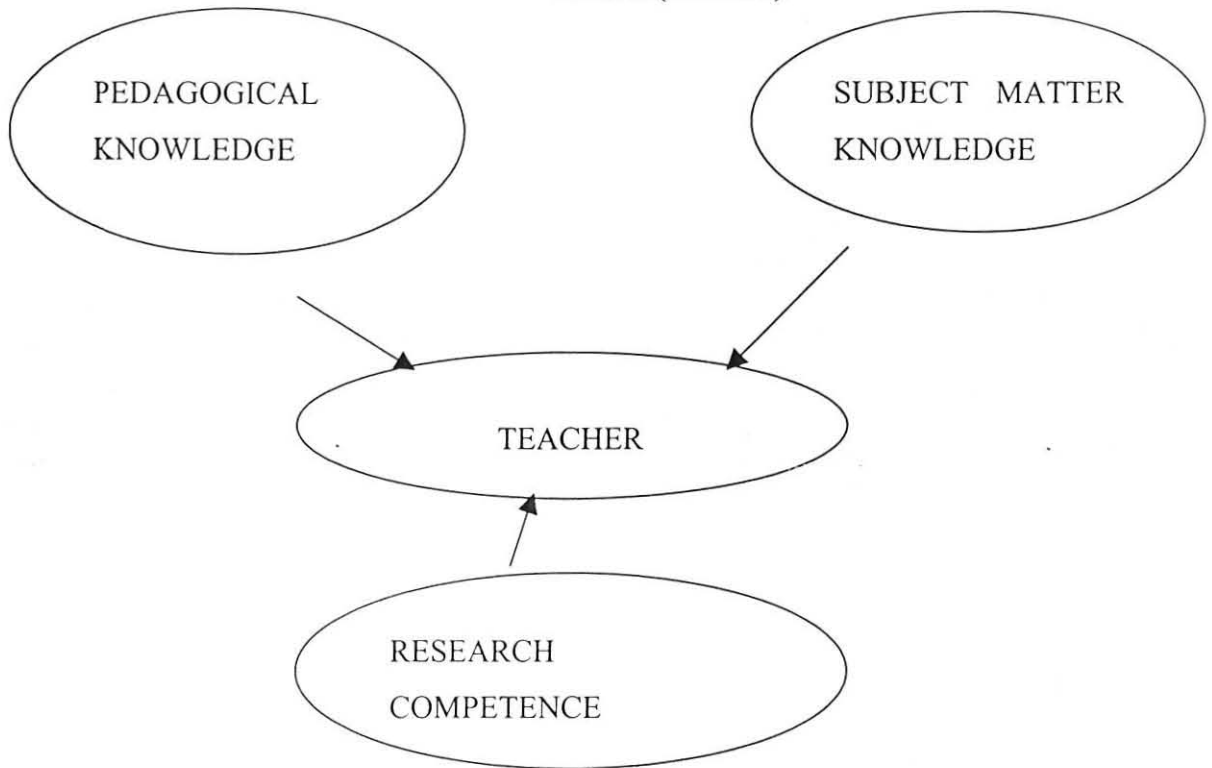


Source: Yalew (2000: 252)

This model presents what an effective teacher possesses. But teacher's psychological knowledge is a knowledge mainly related with overall learners' behavior which is one of the basic elements of professional (pedagogical) knowledge. In line with this idea, Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) contended that the psychological knowledge refers to the knowledge and understandings related to the nature of the learners and their learning processes. Further, they said that Psychological knowledge provides the theories and principles that influence teachers- student behavior within the context of the curriculum, and the school physical and personnel environment. Therefore, they said that it is one of the prominent elements in professional knowledge of teachers. Other writers, Cole and Chan (1994:17-19) stated, that pedagogical knowledge of teachers include teachers' knowledge about goal of instruction, overall learners' nature, teaching-learning strategy, and the overall physical and mental environment of the school.

Therefore, the psychological knowledge can be addressed through (included in) pedagogical knowledge, or else, the model has to indicate all the remaining elements of pedagogical knowledge such as the teaching- learning methodology, the goal of instruction, the physical environment of the classroom etc. The present study attempted to revise the model in Fig. 1 as follows.

Figure 2: - A Model Representing the Qualities that a Competent Teacher Should Possess (Revised).



Furthermore, as observed rightly-by Hawes (1976:17708):

the classroom teacher as a potential research worker starts his task with very great advantages. He knows his own local conditions better than anyone else is likely to do; he has the support and confidence of those with whom he works: the children, the parents, the community members. . .

In general terms, it seems that a teacher has good opportunity (access) to investigate solutions for a problem in education. Moreover, it is natural that anyone evaluates his work. Therefore, a teacher has to evaluate his work (teaching) process through educational research. In this line, Kincheloe (1991) stated that if we are pushing teachers towards participation in educational research, we are in a position to evaluate the teaching-learning process and then defeat a bad teaching.

The educational system of Ethiopia has tried its best to encourage educational research activities in schools, higher learning institutions, and in other educational and research institutions. However, the discussion of the present study focused on the exploration of different issues which have a relation to educational research activities of

higher learning institutions. The following Geez maxim, ከሉ አመክሩ፤ ወዘሠናየ አፅንኡ (ሁሉን መርምሩ፤ የሚበጀውንም ያዙ), used to appear as a motto on the seal of the former Haile Selassie I University, today's Addis Ababa University (Seyoum, 1998:1). Roughly it means "inquire into everything possible; retain all that is good" (1998:1). This Geez maxim on the seal of the former Haile Selassie I University capitalized that one of the main objective to establish the first University in the country is to research or inquire different issues. Commission for Higher Education (1978) revealed that scientific research and investigations, besides teaching, should be one of the major tasks of the universities.

At present, the New Education and Training Policy of the country has mentioned the importance of research and related competencies such as problem solving, creative thinking, and all rounded personality of the citizen. One of the specific objectives in the education policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) (1994a:9) stated as "to make education, training and research be appropriately integrated with development by focusing on research". The policy further explained that overall schooling in general and higher learning in particular should gear their training towards research and development. "Higher education at diploma, first degree and graduate levels, will be research oriented, enabling students to become problem-solving professional leaders in their fields of study and in overall societal needs" (TGE, 1994a:15). One of the objectives in the Education Sector Strategy of the TGE, also strengthen this fact. It states that to promote a higher education of good quality and relevance, focusing on research and development are a very important strategy (TGE, 1994b:13).

Different writers also indicated that educational research is one of the basic components in higher education in general and in teacher education institutions in particular. Rossister (1993) indicated that teacher educators, in order to provide proper help to their trainees, must themselves be educational researchers. Another writer Adane (2000:151) reported that 100% of his subjects who are trainers of teachers believe in the inseparable connection between teaching and research in higher education. University and college teachers should integrate teaching and research and thus, the expected amount of time which must be spent on research and on teaching, must be clear in the term of employment (Hummedi, 1989). Originally universities provided professional training in

different fields, with this teaching function, there was a major concern with the notion of scholarship and the preservation of knowledge (Neumann and Lindsay, 1988). Researchers like Taye (1993), Tsegay (2000), Derebssa (2000) and Abdinasir (2000) also agreed with the idea that there should be a strong relationship between higher learning institutes and educational research activities.

However, activities, perceptions, facilities, etc of teachers and/or institutions of Ethiopia on educational research do not seem to be satisfactory. Therefore, there are discrepancies between what is expected of teachers of higher learning institutions to do and what they actually have done or are doing. In his study of Bahir Dar Teachers College (now Faculty of Education in BDU) instructors' involvement in educational research, Adane (2000:154) found that "the research involvement of instructors of the college was found to be low." In connection with the institution, most of the higher institutions do not provide a dynamic and attractive environment for the production of new knowledge, skill and attitude through research activities. Generally, higher education in Ethiopia is neither sufficiently equipped nor ready for the development of research in education (Derebssa, 2000:185). He further explained that even if there are research units/services in different higher institutions and regional educational offices to initiate and promote educational research, except in the case of Institute of Educational Research (IER), educational research activities are generally weak in most of them. In his work which assesses the training of secondary school teacher education in Ethiopia, Teklehaimanot (2000) concluded that even though it seems very important, the research involvement of teacher trainers is not satisfactory.

The gap between what has been intended by the Education and Training Policy of the country and what is going on in actuality of research practices in general and educational research practices in particular in higher education served as a vantage point for this study. As it is reviewed above, many authors from abroad and local (Hummadi, 1989; Rossister, 1993; Adane, 2000) believed that higher education teacher trainers should recognize educational research as one of their basic assignments in the institution. But higher institution teachers participation in educational research is very weak (Adane, 2000; Derebssa, 2000; Teklehaimanot, 2000). So, the incompatibility of the theoretical

beliefs (what is explained in the literature) and the actual practices of educational research by teachers of higher education served as a second impetus to conduct this study.

To understand the problem in detail, the investigator has chosen the Bahir Dar University, Education Faculty (BDUEF) as a research setting. Informants of the study were teachers who teach in the Education Faculty of Bahir Dar University (BDU). Since BDU is one of the six universities in the country, it gives certain attention for all research activities in general and for educational research engagement of teachers in particular.

According to the Senate Legislation of BDU, the primary responsibilities of teachers in education faculty are teaching and research. Therefore, the legislation stated that academic staff members in teaching faculties are expected to devote their time in research. To encourage teachers' participation in research, according to the university's legislation, the university has established different regulations. For instance, producing an article for the publication of reputable journals is one of the basic requirements to get promotion to the title assistant professor and above. Moreover according to the Senate Legislation, the university produces an appropriate research fund and subtracts the teaching load, if a teacher has prepared an accepted proposal (BDU, 2000). Having this in mind, the present study attempted to understand different issues which have certain roles in teachers' participation in educational research with specific reference to teachers who teach in BDUEF.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study attempted to:

- show the main affecting/facilitating factors of educational research activities of the BDUEF for the concerned body. Then it helps to upgrade and avoid the facilitating and affecting factors respectively.
- create awareness for teachers, university officers and for other educational personnel about the past, present, and future context of educational research in BDUEF.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to:

- assess the past and present status and then give future suggestions for the improvement of BDUEF teachers involvement in educational research.
- understand factors that affect/facilitate educational research activities of the BDUEF teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

The basic questions of this study are:

- (1) what are the factors that facilitate or hinder BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research?
- (2) what is the status of BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research from past to present?
- (3) what are the possible future suggestions to improve BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research?

1.5 Limitations of the study

This study has the following weaknesses.

- In the BDUEF there was only one female teacher who has less than one year experience. Therefore, the present study has not included female teachers as its informant.
- It was not possible to get list of educational research results in terms of teachers' level of qualification and level of teaching experience from documentary sources. Because in most of the articles and the abstract of the seminar paper, teachers' qualification and years of experience were not mentioned. As a result, the present investigation could not assess educational research contributions of teachers' in relation to their years of teaching experience and qualification level from documentary sources.
- There was shortage of documents which indicate teachers' involvement in various educational research result dissemination accesses such as in workshops, seminars, etc at a regional as well as at a national level.

2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section states different scholars' works that have relations with the problem under investigation. To make the related issues manageable, the chapter is divided into different sub-sections such as definitions and classifications, historical development, focal points and significances, institutes of higher learning, higher institution teachers, and various factors in educational research.

2.1. Definitions and Classifications of Educational Research

2.1.1. Definitions

To understand about educational research, dealing about the overall concept of research seems appropriate. Research is the act of producing and using knowledge (Fernstermacher, 1986). He further noted that research is a process which searches an appropriate solution for different questions- from simple to complex. Research, for Mason and Bramble (1997:3) may be defined simply as "the search for answers to questions." He further explained that various professionals (the teacher, the engineer, the agriculturalist etc) search the answers for their question; each of them will be doing research. Their research may be carefully and systematically done, or it may be haphazard.

According to Charles (1988), the term research was derived from the French word "Recherche", meaning to travel through or survey. It gives the equivalent English meaning as careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, conducted to find facts or principles. Another writer, Koul (1984) defined research as a systematic attempt to obtain meaningful answers to questions about phenomena or events through the application of scientific procedures. For Cooley and Bickel (1986), research demands an accurate observation, questioning, empirical evidence and researchers' patient, expertise and courage. Research, in general, is an effort to gather new information or utilize existing information for different purposes in the world to give solutions for immediate or permanent problems.

Different branches of research may have many characteristics in common. Establishing a problem, designing an appropriate methodology to tackle the problem, identifying a clear step for the research and the like are some of the common characteristics of all research practices. All scientific researches have a common purpose (to increase knowledge and organize things in the surrounding), a common scientific method (reasoning style)-deductive and inductive (Masson and Bramble, 1997:7-8). Where as, the detail techniques that researchers use, the origin of the research activity and a focal point for the research may be different across disciplines (Neuman, 1994).

Educational research has treated questions related to education. For Lucio and McNeil (1979), as cited in Adane (2000:143), educational research is an orderly approach of seeking educational facts and their systematic relationship. Educational research is not a simple matter of discovering facts about education, but rather that it has diverse goals, including the development of theories to explain educational phenomena (Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996). Other writers conceptualize educational research as a scientific approach to find solutions to a given educational problems. For example, Hopkins (1980) considered educational research not only as a process which engages in evaluation of already existing conditions or communication of already established knowledge but also it searches to develop new knowledge.

Another author, Derebassa (2000:179) defined as "Educational research refers to a systematic attempt to gain a better understanding of the educational process, generally with a view to improving its efficiency". Therefore, an educational research may help to promote and adjust the educational activities to the surrounding fast changing environment, because education should serve as an instrument to survive in the environment smoothly and appropriately. Educational research, therefore, according to Muyanda-Mutebi (1993), is a set of systematic activities designed to survey, observe and portray in a clear term what is happening in education and then to challenge the environment. It represents an activity directed towards the development of an organized body of scientific knowledge about the events with which educators are concerned (Travers, 1968).

2.1.2. Classifications

Educational research has different classifications. Based on the purpose of the research activity, educational research can be categorized into basic, applied and evaluation research (Wieresma, 1995; Koul, 1984; Hopkins, 1980; Best and Kahn, 1993; Wellington, 1996; McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). Basic research is a research activity which helps to add an organized body of scientific knowledge. Moreover, it works to find universal solutions for broad problems with maximum amount of time range. On the other hand, applied research is undertaken to solve an immediate practical educational problems. The findings of applied research are evaluated in terms of local applicability rather than universal validity. It is a matter of finding immediate and specific solutions for immediate and specific problems (Wieresma, 1995; Koul, 1984).

Action research is a typical example of applied research. Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science either individually or by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical frameworks (Rapport, 1970). According to Mettetal and Cowen (2000), an educational classroom action research is a research that is conducted by a teacher using his or her own classroom as the laboratory, with the goal of improving practice.

However, as Koul (1984), applied research manipulates practical problems of greater complexity and wider applicability than action research does.

Evaluation research assesses the merit and worth of a particular practice in terms of the values operating at the site(s) (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997:26). It provides information for immediate use as policies are developed, implemented and institutionalized.

Based on the methodological and philosophical approaches of the research, the educational research can be categorized into qualitative and quantitative investigation (Wieresima, 1995; Masson and Bramble 1997; Wellington, 1996). Qualitative research is a form of long term first-hand observation conducted in close proximity to the phenomena under study (JanKowski and Wester, 1991). It is ideally performed in a naturalistic setting with emphasis on every day behavior and is often descriptive in nature. There fore, case

But the practice of educational research is a 20th century phenomenon (Derebssa, 2000:180). In the earlier, when society was less complex and less technological than it presently is, there was little interest or effort in developing methods to improve education, because a person could live a relatively useful life even if he or she could not read or write well (Charles, 1998). Charles further explained that a complex industrialized society, however, has greater need for educated individuals to operate its machines and institutions and to be citizens and leaders. Under this kind of pressure, society becomes curious about the overall education processes. It seems clear that relatively the expansion of industrialization through out the world calls for the activities of investigation in education.

Koul (1984) categorized the historical development of educational research into four phases.

Phase 1 (before 1900):- In this period, educational research was greatly influenced by the experiments in the field of psychology. According to Koul (1984), Psychologists like Pestalozzi in 1803, Sheldon in 1860 and Hall in 1894 practiced different experiments in psychology. However Joseph M. Rice (1897), who researched on the uniform spelling tests given to students, was recognized as the pioneer in the educational research movement.

Phase 2 (from 1900 to 1920):- Early in the 19thC. Many instruments were developed in the field of research in Education and psychology. For instance, in 1904 Thorndike published the first book dealing directly with the subject of mental measurement. In addition, the emphasis upon the development of measuring tools, the activities like school surveys were also taking place to promote the scientific study of education. The Pittsburgh survey in 1907 was the first school survey. The organizations, for example, the National society and the American Educational research association were organized in the United States of America. In addition, the Journal of Educational Psychology and the Journal of Educational Research were found during this phase, phase 2.

Phase 3 (from 1920 to 1945): - This period was characterized by self-criticism and improvement in educational research techniques and designs. A great emphasis was laid

on the concept of validity and reliability of measuring tools and educational research outcomes.

Phase 4 (After 1945):- Since 1945, the scope and fields of educational research have greatly expanded. A number of researches are being conducted all over the world for determining the effectiveness of different aspects of the curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation, guidance, etc. In this period, research methods and procedures have been improved with the aim of attaining more objectives and reliable information. Many new methods of data collection and analysis have developed. Statistical procedures such as analysis of variance and of covariance have been introduced and they helped to extend the possibilities for the study of complex phenomena in the field of education.

Another writer, Landsheere (1988) examined the historical development of educational research into five successive periods. The first period, pre-1900, according to him, was characterized by experimental psychology then to be followed by experimental pedagogy. Due to the influence from the natural science laboratory experimentation, experiments approach of educational research took place in the earlier. The second period, 1900 to 1930, was a time when the flourishing of quantitative research in education has been observed. The third period, 1930s to the late 1950s, was influenced with different social and economic problems. The economic crisis of the 1930s and the new social order (Fascism in Germany, and Italy and socialism in others) had made problems related to research activity more serious and complicated. The fourth period, 1960s to 1970s, has characterized with the better improvement of educational research practices in many countries of the world. The last period, 1980s, according to Landsheere (1995), was a period that indicated the highest scientific status of educational research.

2.2.2. In Africa

In the developed (industrial) world, educational research activities have got many years a go-at least a century. On the other hand, due to rapid expansion of the educational system, the increasing tendency of enrolling for post graduate training programs and growth of interest among the respective governments in Africa, there has been an attempt in the educational research activities during the last three decades (Mwiria and Wamahihu 1995). But its movement in Africa seems at the infant stage. As it is indicated in Amare

(2002:2) " educational research culture is just beginning in many African countries." According to the report made by Eastern and Southern African Universities Research program (1995), as cited in Amare (2002:2), even this small number of research practices in Sub Saharan Africa was dominated by three countries; Nigeria, Kenya and the Sudan where the three account for almost 70 percent of the Region's scientific publications.

Not only the quantity but also the quality of research in Africa is relatively poor (Namuddu, 1991 as cited in Amare, 2002). Another writer Temechehn (2002:8) also concluded that " . . . the state of educational research in Africa is in its infancy and is influenced by many interrelated factors." As it seems natural in every economical and societal activity, it is not that much surprising our Region, Africa, shows relatively poor quality and quantity in educational research practices, because the development of one sector is just a reflection of another sector development.

2.2.3. In Ethiopia

Compared to other countries, Temechehn (2002) and Temesgen (1999:8) reported that educational research in Ethiopia is still in its infancy stage. Although more than 40 years have elapsed since the educational research practice started, educational research is yet at its early stage in Ethiopia (Amare, 2000). Tekeste (1990), as cited in Amare (2000:1), also stated that "the state of educational research in Ethiopia has suffered from lack of imagination" Tekeste (1990) further noted that not more than a dozen of educational research practices were carried out in the early 1960's to the end of 1970's (in Amare , 2000:1). When some one discussed about educational research in Ethiopia, mentioned a general overview about Institute of Educational Research (IER) seems important.

The IER

The IER had its beginning in October, 1968 as research, documentation and publication center of the Faculty of Education (IER, 2000:1). The center was with many up and downs until 1983. For instance, it was virtually closed from May-October, 1982. The former research and documentation center become an autonomous Institute, in 1983. Today, IER is a full-fledged institute with qualified staff and essential office facilities (IER, 2000:3). The Institute's major publications are: the Ethiopian Journal of Education

(EJE), IER Flambeau, workshop proceedings, manuals, technical reports, and leaflets on pedagogical/ educational issues (IER, 2000:11).

Even though there are weaknesses and problems, Ethiopia has struggled to improve educational research participation of educators. It is possible to mention the EJE as an example. The EJE has got its birth in 1967. It is the only reputable educational journal in the country. The center's main Journal, the EJE, in the years, 1967-1999, had published 123 research articles and 63 reviews, news, and thesis abstracts (Amare, 2000). In the years, 2000-2003, the EJE had published 29 research articles and 6 other issues (AAU, IER Library).

2.3. Focal Points and Significances of Educational Research

2.3.1. Focal Points

It seems apparent that research activities across different fields have a common point of discussion. However, each field has its own deep focal point which considers as a content of discussion. Educational researchers struggle for ways to become more visible in the collective national endeavor to do more than a common thinker with classroom environments, teaching methodologies, learning styles, curricula, school finance, assessment techniques, students and teachers (Heath, 1999). Further the content areas of educational research can be classified as (1) educational psychology, (2) philosophy of education, (3) sociology of education, (4) economic of education, (5) educational administration, (6) comparative education, (7) educational measurement and test development, (8) curriculum construction and text books, (9) teaching and (10) educational technology (media) (Travers, 1968).

Moreover, the discovery of effective procedures to improve a curriculum quality, school quality, instructional quality and the quality of educational outcomes are some of the principal aims of educational research (Working Group on Education Sector Analysis, 1999). Another writer, Gordon (1996) also mentioned that the curriculum of various subject areas (geography, history English, chemistry, biology, etc.), education policy, children's learning, special education and gender issues in curriculum can be considered as the main content of educational research. In short the main concern of educational

research is that investigate solutions for all problems related to the human, physical, and curriculum aspects of education.

2.3.2. Significances

The outcomes of educational research have many contributions to improve teachers' material and intellectual aspects, curricular aspects, methodological aspects and overall school environments. The rapid growth of educational research helps to serve as an instrument for guiding educational policy and practice (Härngvist, 1988). Teachers' teaching effectiveness can be evaluated from the point of view that how much they are participated in educational research. In line with this idea, Hargreaves (1996), as cited in Hammersely (2002:15), claimed that " the effectiveness of teaching in schools would be substantially improved if it were a research- based profession. Therefore, teachers should act as educational researchers."

Research in education seems essential for providing useful knowledge through which the process of education can be made more effective.

Some of the advantages which can be obtained from the practices of educational research according to Worthington (1960), as cited in Courney (1965) and Dees (1997), are mentioned below.

- It helps to look at problems in many angles than only in one side.
- It develops confidence, flexibility in thinking and readiness to receive new ideas
- It helps to encourage changes which are essential to progress.
- It develops problem solving and critical thinking abilities.
- It helps to make the skill and knowledge deep and sharp.

Other writers, Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) also reported that since it is dealing with the nature of social reality and how to acquire knowledge in the learning institutions, educational research is an important human activity. There fore, to make school-related activities effective, educational research activities seem very important. In connection

with this idea, Camp (1996), as cited in Fekadu (2000:12), reported that educational research is an important link in the chain of progressive change in our school.

Educational research has also an advantage in a case that evaluating teachers' work-teaching. If we are pushing teachers towards participation in educational research, we evaluate the teaching learning process and then defeat a bad teaching (Kincheloe, 1991). In relation to this idea, Mettetal and Cowen (2000) contended that in addition to teachers' personal and professional benefits, their students also benefited directly from teacher research. They further noted that if teachers participate in educational research, they would facilitate active learning in their classrooms.

2.4. Practices of Educational Research in Higher Learning Institutes

Educational research is one of the basic assignments and for most concern of higher education institutions. The society expects the higher institution as an active changing agent to wards development and improvement. According to Clark (1983), higher education institutions of everywhere are composed by knowledge bearing groups which are able to search, develop and disseminate knowledge. He further noted that "national systems of higher education gather together a good share of those individuals who develop and disseminate the intellectual heritage of the world" (P.1). The University is a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth (Deutsch, 1959). According to him, " the University, then, is an institution uniting people professionally dedicated to the quest and transmission of truth in scientific terms" (P.21). Therefore, it seems apparent that since truth is accessible to systematic search, research is the foremost concern of the University.

Learning in the university has to be active, independent and self explorer than it is in primary & secondary schools. Therefore, Deutsch (1959) contended that to get an intellectual maturity of learners in the university, instruction and research must aim for more than the transmission of bare facts and skills. He further noted that teaching itself in the university is often-even most of the time- stimulating to research. Hence, it may be concluded that as the combination of research and teaching is the lofty and inalienable basic principles of the university. Many writers agree with that research activities is one of the prominent tasks of a university. The recognition that the search for truth, research,

of the country, promotion of scholarship, advancement of the frontiers of knowledge and carrying out research which shall contribute to capacity building and continued growth of the university as well as the development of science and technology in the Nation).

The university in its five year strategic plan revealed that it creates a conducive environment and an appropriate forum (Publications, seminars, workshops and conferences) to disseminate research findings, and teachers' research training programs for promoting research activities. In addition to fostering the over all research activities, the university has established a research and publication office for the faculty of education which is mainly responsible for the conduction, dissemination and improvement of educational research.

2.5. Higher Institution Teachers as Educational Researchers

Teachers are the central facilitators of educational activities. All elements of the teaching- learning process (the student, the curriculum, the teaching-learning methodology and the physical aspects of the classroom) will be coordinated, in accordance to the situations, by the classroom teachers. This implies, they have good opportunities to search solutions for problems of education. In line with this idea, Lehtinen (1990) mentioned that when a teacher does his/her regular job, there is every possibility for researching educational the problems and acquiring more knowledge and understanding. Another writer, Yalew (2000:251) also contended that by virtue of their importance positions in the educational system, teachers are required to participate in educational research to improve the teaching learning quality and quantity.

However, in the earlier, teachers were considered only as a practitioner of different educational research outcomes which produced by the researchers outside them. For Mitchell (1985), due to the assumption that doing an educational research needs a complicated research skills and an independent intensive training, involvement of teachers in educational research seems difficult, rather they are responsible to practice the results of the research. In the traditional approach of educational research, there was a problem that assumes "educational research is something irrelevant to teachers lives and sees little interaction between the world of educational researcher and the world of the teacher" (Hopkins, 2002:35).

To make the teacher training scientific, democratic, holistic, effective, efficient, etc., strengthening and supporting research activities of the teacher educator is a strategic means (Teklehaimnot, 2000). Further zuber- skerritt (1993:1) remarked that ". . . higher institution teachers participation in educational research not only advances knowledge, but also improves practices in higher education by developing people as professionals and personal scientists, and the organizations as learning organizations." So, involvement of higher institution/university teachers in educational research activity seems a professional obligation.

In the higher institutions of to day's world, there is a transformation of teaching and learning process from teacher-centered to learner- centered with more of students' independent activity (Assefa, 2002). For this new paradigm, the student-centered teaching- learning approach, independent searching of a solution for all problems from simple to complex by the student is a central element. To accomplish student- centered teaching and learning approach, the teacher has to use educational research practices as an instrument. As it is mentioned by Wiersma (1995), students do not progress very far in our formal education system without encountering the necessity to do some type of research.

But quite clearly, "teachers who are not doing research about their teaching and related problems cannot encourage self- directed and discovery learning among their students" (Elliott, 1988:80). Adane (2001) also contended that one cannot have the reason and confidence to make others relate theory to practice without him being engaged in such a practice. He further warned that the consequence in teaching will then remain a tell-hear-tell practice, that is, mere transmission of information.

With this assumption one of the duties and responsibilities of the academic staff of BDU, the present research setting, is involving in research activities. The Senate Legislation of the BDU stated that " a member of the academic staff at BDU should conduct research works for the advancement of knowledge mainly in his/her area of specialization and in his/her profession" (BDU, 2001:28).

In general, higher institution teachers' involvement in educational research seems unequivocally accepted by many educators and institutions throughout the world

including BDU. However one thing should be noted. That is, just like that of various research centers which are established only for research activities, there are few higher institutions which are assigned only for teaching (Fletcher, 1968; Clark, 1983).

2.6. Factors Affecting Higher Education Teachers' Involvement in Educational Research

It seems natural that there are various factors which have either positive or negative roles on certain activities, because any thing could not stand alone. Therefore, there may be different factors which have positive/negative contributions to the participation of higher institution teachers in educational research.

Among the factors which were considered as persisting problems for conducting research in Bahir Dar Teachers College, according to Adane (2000:150), are:

heavy teaching load, absence of library and laboratory facilities, the problems of up to date journals and books, absence of budget, absence of experienced researchers, lack of encouragement and administrative support, absence of research link with other colleges, absence of a well established effective and autonomous organizational structure for educational research, and the absence of research culture.

In his investigation entitled "A Comparative Study of Research Activities among Addis Ababa University Faculties: 1988-1993", Taye (1993) mentioned that lack of sufficient budget, absence of incentives, low economic income, unfavorable teaching situations, lack of technical skills and competence, administrative delays, lack of necessary funds, difficulty in securing supplies, and under utilization of research out comes are some of the major problems affecting research activities at Addis Ababa university.

The work of Seyoum (1998), which deals with the research activities among Addis Ababa senior high school teachers, also concluded that ". . . there is a degree of agreement among the teachers that lack of incentive, heavy teaching load, and lack of opportunity to participate in seminars or work shops are the major constraints to carry out research activities in schools" (P.15). Even though there is a difference in degree (may be with more sever in school), problems that affect the educational research activities of the

school teachers also can affect the university teachers, because all are under the umbrella of one nation

On the other hand, there are some factors which have been made a positive contribution for the development of teachers' engagement in educational research. For instance, the AMES, which held at the then Bahir Dar Teachers College and today's Education Faculty of the BDU, exposes the staff to problems related to teaching-learning, as 64.3 percent of the respondents assured, and provokes the staff to do research on the curriculum, man power training and teaching, as 61.7 percent of the respondents assured (Adane, 2000).

In general, most of the factors, which have a relation to educational research, can be manipulated and improved by the individual researchers as well as by the concerned institutions. Here, one reality should be reminded. That is, inappropriate/appropriate manipulation of the factors may lead to them acting as a hindering/ a facilitating agent for teachers' involvement in educational research.

3

METHODS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Methodological Approach

In education, there are two main types of methodological approaches: quantitative and qualitative (Wieresma, 1995; Best and Khan, 1993; Wellington, 1996). As it is true for the different methodological approaches which are employed in teaching, the research methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) are drawn from various psychological theories. The quantitative approach has got its root from behavioral psychology which mainly considered humans as passive organisms that can be governed (manipulated) by the external environment stimuli. On the other hand, the qualitative approaches has emanated from the theory of cognitive psychologists. Cognitive psychologists believe that humans are active and interactive organisms that can be highly influenced by their past experiences and contemporary situations (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995:115-116).

The present study utilized the qualitative way of researching an issue. This is because to investigate issues in education which is a human endeavor, using a qualitative approach seems justifiable. Supporting this idea, LeCompte and Preissle (1993:24) stated that ethnographic or qualitative research can be employed in educational research when the concern is with people, because controlling and manipulating activities of human beings are somehow difficult. The nature of the social world is qualitatively and fundamentally different from the natural reality (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995). They further explained that due to their unique quality (consciousness) human beings are more than just a part of the physical world, because humans are not passive objects, but active subjects with thoughts, feelings, meanings, intentions and the like in accordance to the situation that they live. So using the natural setting of humans as the direct source of data, which is a primary characteristic of qualitative research, is recommended in educational research (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992).

3.2. Design

A case study design has been applied for this investigation. Since the present study investigated issues related to educational research with specific focus of BDUEF, a qualitative case study design can be appropriate. In case study a researcher makes a detailed exploration about a single case rather than making general explanations about a population. In line with this, Wiersma (1995:213-214) noted that a qualitative case study has focused to research on a few cases and many variables. In other words, it takes few research settings (informants) and makes detail explorations around and in the research settings (informants). With this in mind, this study considered one research setting, the BDUEF, 15 informants who are able to give detail explanations about the BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research, and various issues which help to explore the problem in detail.

Merriam (1988) also stated that case study can be utilized to get an intensive and holistic description for a single instance, phenomenon or social institution. Another writer Adelman et al. (1980), as cited in Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2003:83),

case study is the study of an instance in action. The single instance or a bounded system, for example, a child, a clique, a class, a school, a community can be taken as a case for investigation. It provides a unique example of real people in a real situation. Moreover, it enables readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Indeed a case study can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles can fit together through inductive reasoning.

The investigation was carried out in four stages. The first phase engaged in an extensive review of literature and preparation of the proposal. This was necessary to develop a conceptual framework, data collection instruments, and strategies of the investigation. In the second phase, the preliminary assessment which was a contact with different important people in the University took place. Moreover, the researcher made general observation, selective interview and document assessment in the University to get general information and develop appropriate data collection procedures for the investigation. Based on the information obtained, the study identified the information - rich respondents in the Faculty. In the third phase, the main data collection procedures

have been conducted. In the fourth phase, the collected data has been studied, organized, categorized and reported.

3.3 Data Collection

The intended information for the present study has been acquired through interview, focus group discussion (FGD), participant observation and documentary analyses. From Merriam's (1988) perspective, data collection approaches in a qualitative case study are effective interviews, careful observation and document analyses. In addition, Wellington (1996) mentioned that FGD is also a complementary technique to collect data in qualitative case studies.

3.3.1 Interviews

In qualitative case studies, interviewing is a major source of data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1988:86). In order to get detail information from the informants about the overall past and present context of educational research in the BDUEF, in-depth interviews have got great attention by the present study. The process of interviewing was supported by audio-equipment (tape recorder). This helped to minimize lose of information by the interviewer during the interview process. As it is indicated by Wilkinson and Bhandarkar (1999), interviewing is necessary to get deep feelings, values or how people interpret the world around them, and past events that are impossible to replicate. By initiating the interviewees with more than 20 semi-structured interview items, which are related to the BDUEF teachers, the overall contexts of the University and other related institutions, and the past and present statuses of the BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research, and possible suggestions to improve it in the future (see the Appendix), detailed interview was conducted with eight informative people. The interview items were included instructors' knowledge, perception, personal interest, commitment and competency in educational research. Moreover, questions related to teachers' years of teaching experience, field of specialization and level of qualification were treated. This helped to understand different educational research related variables which are associated with the individual teacher researchers. Questions related to the roles of different institutional factors (administration procedures, incentives, work load, work environment, access to information

dissemination and utilization of research outcomes) in educational research engagement of BDUEF teachers have been treated. This helped to draw information about the overall contribution of the University and other related institutions to the educational research practices of teachers.

3.3.2 FGD

Making a discussion among individuals (more than two) may provoke individuals mind to generate more ideas and to make an exhaustive argumentation among each other. Therefore, in addition to the interviews (a discussion between two individuals, the interviewer and interviewee), an FGD among a member of the small group made up of perhaps six to ten individuals has been considered as a good instrument to capture versatile information (Wellington, 1996:59-60).

The reason why the present study utilized FGD is that to obtain stronger, well discussed and versatile information, because multi-heads are better than a single-head. Moreover, FGD helps to understand issues with consensus and variation among the member of the discussion. "Focus group discussions are best suited for obtaining data on group attitudes and perceptions by initiating members for active discussion" (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995:122). To make a focus group discussion, the present study identified seven informative people who are assumed to have adequate information about educational research in BDUEF. Items utilized in the detail interview were used in the FGD to initiate active discussions.

3.3.3 Participant Observations

As it is indicated by Merriam (1988:102), "Participant observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research. It gives a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated". In participant observation which is more appropriate in qualitative study, the researchers' sense organs are the key instrument to collect data (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995). With this in mind, in the present study, informal participant observations have been conducted by the researcher.

Informal participant observation helped to collect data about BDUEF teachers' participation in educational research from the informal talk of instructors, officers, and other personnel in the University. This helped to get data which was not affected by the artificiality of the informants. So, the informal participant observation had a great advantage to get the natural belief, outlook, activity and the like of the informants. According to Bailey (1978), as cited in Cohen, Marrion and Morrison (2003:18), observation studies are superior to experimental and surveys to collect non artificial (natural) data including from the non verbal behavior of the informants.

The researcher stayed in the campus of the University for 85 days to observe the activities and discussion of teachers in their free and informal discussions. During the participant observation, notebook was utilized.

3.3.4 Documentary Source

Documentary sources are one of the data collection instruments of the qualitative case studies (Best and Kahn, 1993; Merriam, 1988).

To collect information about the instructor's teaching load, the present investigation analyzed the class schedules (time tables) of the BDUEF. Moreover, to analyze educational research outcomes (teaching materials, articles, seminar papers, etc) done by the instructors of the faculty, the present study assessed relevant archives such as list of AMES presenters, list of the BDUEF articles authors, list of IER article authors, and the like.

3.4 Selection of Research Settings

Identifying an appropriate research setting is one of the prominent tasks. Therefore, this study, which investigated factors, past and present status, and future suggestions about higher education teachers' involvement in educational research, has selected its setting.

Among the various faculties which are found in the universities of the country, the investigation has been focused on the teacher education faculties. The reason is teacher trainers have a more professional obligation to participate in educational research (Rossister, 1993:52), because they engage in the training of the would-be teachers who

will face many educational problems after their graduation (Mitchell, 1985:20). Moreover, most of the teacher educators who have graduated in fields such as education, language, geography, history, chemistry, mathematics, etc have better orientation in educational research than engineers, business managers, etc instructors. Therefore, taking the staffs of an education faculty seems justifiable for the present study.

BDU is selected as a research setting of the present study. Of the six universities in the country, the selection of BDU as a research setting is justifiable at least due to the following three reasons.

- a. It is the oldest university next to AAU in training teachers. It has started to train teachers since 1972 as an Academy of Pedagogy (BDU, 2000).
- b. In contrast to AAU, BDU has an independent faculty, Education Faculty, which trains subject area teachers. But AAU has only recently established such a faculty (college).
- c. The present investigator has better past exposure, better access to different information, and better knowledge about BDU than other universities in the country. This helps to improve the quality of the study which is a qualitative case study of its nature. Because in the qualitative case studies, the involvement of the researcher is very active and crucial (Merriam, 1988; Burgess 1985; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992).

As it is discussed above, due to its better relation to the problem under study, among the three faculties in the BDU (Education, Engineering and Business and Economics), the present study has taken the Education Faculty as its research setting.

3.5 Selection of Key Informants

Teshome's (1998:45) explanation of the term "selection", as to locate information-rich sources of data rather than to seek a representative portion that possesses the qualities of the whole, works well for the purpose of this study. Therefore, selecting an appropriate faculty and information-rich persons in the University has been accomplished through

non probability sampling technique. The present investigation found key informants who participate in the interviews as well as in the FGD through snowball strategy.

Snowball sampling involves asking a number of people about the concerned issues and locating information-rich informants (Patton, 1987, as cited in Teshome, 1988:52). Therefore, in order to get the right informants, the researcher contacted and discussed with different people who have a good knowledge about the issues under study and about the overall contexts of the University. Based on the discussions with well experienced and oriented instructors in educational research, and readings of different literatures related to the problem, years of teaching experience in the Faculty, level of qualification, academic title, involvement in research, willingness to participate, present office posts which have relation to the academic issues, and to some extent field of specialization have been considered as a reference point to select information rich informants.

By taking these factors and the researcher's talk with the three informants during phase two in to consideration, 15 teachers (8 for the detail interview and,7 for the FGD) were selected as the informants of the study. Even though other factors considered, the three informants who participated in the preliminary interview have been selected by using their field of specialization and academic office posts as the main selecting criteria. Two instructors from pedagogical science department who would help to give a detail professional comment on the interview items as well as on the data collection procedures, and one key academic officer who could give detail explanations about the overall material and personnel contexts of the University, in relation to the issues of educational research were selected.

One informant participated only in one of the three contacts (preliminary interview, detail interview or FGD) between the researcher and the informants. The reasons why it is so are:

- to avoid possibilities of being bored informants as a result of issues repeatedly rose in different forms.
- to get relatively new information from new informants.

- to minimize time constraint on the part of informants, and then to increase their willingness to participate in the study.

3.6. Background of the Research Setting and the Informants

In this sub- section, some characteristics of the research setting and the informants, which have relevance to the present investigation, will be discussed. This is because knowing the nature of the research setting and the informants may give a clue about the justification that they are to be a target for the present study.

3.6.1. The Research Setting

As it is mentioned here and there the research setting of the present study is BDUEF. Bahir Dar University is found in Bahir Dar Town, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State. **The Profile of Bahir Dar Teachers College** which was published in 1997 describes the town in the following way. The town is located in the southern shore of Lake Tana, the largest lake in the country. It has a strategic location in the sense that it is surrounded by Lake Tana and the Abay River (Blue Nile). It serves as the bridge between the two former administrative regions of Gondar in the north and Gojjam in the south (Bahir Dar Teachers College, 1997:2-4).

The area within which Bahir Dar is situated is endowed with attracted, beauty, and outstanding natural and cultural wealth. Lake Tana is full of abundant fish and other aquatic resources. Its water provides possibilities of recreation for tourists both from the locality and distant places. The churches and monasteries in the islands and head lands along the lake are the mysterious hiding places of priceless religious and cultural treasures of the country. The immense natural beauty and outstanding cultural and natural resources of the area have contributed to the emergence of the town of Bahir Dar as the political center of the region. Today Bahir Dar is one of the fastest growing towns in the country. It has a total of 150,000 people (Bahir Dar Teachers College, 1997:2-4).

The two fraternal institution of higher learning, the Polytechnic Institute and Bahir Dar Teachers College, were integrated to form Bahir Dar University following the Council of Ministers regulation no. 60/1999. The University was inaugurated on May 6, 2000. The Polytechnic Institute and Bahir Dar Teachers College were renamed Faculty of

Engineering and Faculty of Education, respectively (BDU, 2000). The university's main campus, according to the Bahir Dar University Quarterly Newsletter (2002), is situated in relaxed surrounding on the edge of Bahir Dar town. The Faculty of Education is located in the University main campus. The campus covers an area of 280 hectares. It is located three kilometers south east of the center of the town, the University is bounded by the Blue Nile river in the east, by the main town in the north and north west and by open country side in the south and south east(BDU,2002).

The main focus of the present study, the Education Faculty, has its own historical development. Bahir Dar Teachers College, the present Education Faculty of the University, was established nearly three decades ago. The College, then, known as Academy of Pedagogy, was established in 1972 by the tripartite agreement of the Imperial Government, UNESCO and UNDP and started actual work in the following year under the auspices of the MOE and Fine Arts. Its objectives were to train primary school teacher trainers, supervisors, educational leaders, adult education organizers and community development agents (BDU, 2000).

Soon after its beginning, however, the program focused only on offering pedagogical science as a major area of study and Amharic, English, Geography, and Mathematics as minor areas of study. Later, further changes were introduced and additional diploma offering departments that trained junior secondary school teachers in social and natural sciences came into existence and its name was changed from Academy of Pedagogy to Bahir Dar Teachers' College. In 1996 the diploma offering departments were raised to degree level. All in all the college has to date graduated about 6931 students and provided instructors to the different levels of the education sector through its regular and extension programs (BDU, 2000).

In addition to Engineering and Education Faculties, the university has established more faculties and departments with a number of disciplines of learning. For instance, Faculties like Business and Economics have established and run their program with eight fields of study (BDU, 2002).

According to the Personnel Office of the University, today, the University has 1,255 (325 academic and 930 administrative) workers. In both the extension and the

regular programs, the University has 17,050 (10,050 extension and 7,000 regular) students (Registrar Office of the University). Of the 17,050 students, 6,988 (3,634 regular and 3,354 extension) students are found in the Education Faculty. The Education Faculty is running its teaching and learning with 103 (1 female and 102 male) teachers. The other 40 BDUEF teachers have engaged in their further study (Dean Office of the Education Faculty).

3.6.2. The Informants

Of the total 103 (1 female and 102 male) teachers in the Faculty, 18 male teachers were involved as informants of the study. Three teachers in the preliminary interview, eight teachers in the deep interview, and seven teachers in the FGD were selected through snowball sampling technique. All the information related to the informants' background were collected from themselves at the beginning of the interview or FGD. By doing so, relevant informants' bio data are summarized in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table1: Informants who Participated in the Preliminary Interview

Informants	Qualification & Fields of Specialization	Academic Title	Years of Teaching Experience	Research out puts		Present Office Posts	
				Educ.	Non educ.	In the University	In the Faculty
Inst. A(I _A)	MA in Curr. And Inst.	Asst. Professor	16	5	–	–	–
Inst. B (I _B)	PhD in Geography	Asst. Professor	18	4	6	–	√
Inst. C(I _C)	MA in Educ. Psychology	Asst. Professor	8	6	–	–	–

NB. √ (the instructor has a certain post)

As it is observed in Table 1, informants who participated in the preliminary interview have 8-18 years of teaching experience, good participation in educational research and an assistant professor title. Except I_B all are specialized in education.

Table 2: Informants who Participated in the Main Interview

Informants	Qualification & Fields of Specialization	Academic Title	Years of Teaching Experience	Research out puts		Present Office Posts	
				Educ.	Non educ.	In the University	In the Faculty
Inst. 1 (I ₁)	MA in Teach. Amh.	Asst. Professor	15	3	1	–	–
Inst. 2 (I ₂)	Msc in Chemistry	Asst. Professor	14	1	4	–	√
Inst. 3 (I ₃)	PhD in Biology	Asst. Professor	20	2	4	–	√
Inst. 4 (I ₄)	MA in Curr. and Inst.	Lecturer	11	5	–	√	–
Inst. 5 (I ₅)	MA in School Adm.	Lecturer	18	6	–	–	–
Inst. 6 (I ₆)	MA in Linguistics	Asst. Professor	23	1	3	–	–
Inst. 7 (I ₇)	MA in Hist.	Lecturer	13	–	3	–	–
Inst. 8 (I ₈)	MA in Geog.	Lecturer	19	1	2	–	–

NB. √ (the instructor has a certain post)

Informants who participated in the main interview have 11-23 years of teaching experience in the Faculty. Of the 8 informants, 4 were assistant professors and the other 4 were lecturers (Table 2). Moreover, Table 2 indicates that 3 informants have various posts in the institution.

interview, FGD, Participant observation, and documentary sources. The interview items also increased from 12 items to 23 items. The other main duty during the second phase of the study was, selecting information- rich teachers (informants) from the BDUEF teachers. By using the snowball sampling technique, eight informants (each two from the four main fields of study) have been selected

In phase three of the study the main data collection activities were conducted. An interview was conducted with all the eight teachers who are working in the BDUEF. On the average, the time taken to make an interview with one informant was 2-2:30 hours. For all interview activities which were conducted with each informant, there was a short break: In all the interview processes tape-recorder was utilized.

After the interview had finalized, an F G D was conducted with seven informants. Selection of members for the FGD has faced problems such as time inconvenience and feeling of discomfort to participate in it. As a result, the FGD was tried twice, and has failed twice. Lastly, in its third attempt, it was conducted for six hours, of course with a break for lunch and coffee. It was on Thursday, 26/02/2004 from 10 A.M-4 P.M. The F G D was assisted with one degree qualified assistant researcher. The assistant researcher served as a secretary of the discussion and as an operator of the tape-recorder. The discussion was chaired and coordinated by the researcher. When it is necessary, the chairman (the present researcher) forwarded discussion provoking issues from the items of the interview. The communication language for both the interview as well as the F G D had no restriction. It was either in Amharic or in English. It was deliberate, because it helped to avoid language barriers during the discussion. So that the informants able to express their feeling with the language that they prefer.

An observation was conducted at any time and place by the investigator. Fortunately, since the researcher is a member of the Faculty, it was very easy and comfortable to conduct a participant observation. A critical observation about what teachers do and talk had taken place in the staff lounge, in the library, and in and around the offices. Observation was conducted in all the appropriate and comfortable time when the researcher was stayed in the campus of the Faculty.

Document analysis was made on various documents. Documents which show the presenters on the Annual May Educational Seminar (AMES) of the Faculty, the authors of BDUEF Bulletin, and the writers of various teaching materials were analyzed. More over, to assess the contribution of BDUEF teachers for the consumption of AAU, IER publication, authors in the IER flambeau and in the EJE who are from BDUEF were sorted out from the archives found in the Library of IER, AAU.

In the last phase of the present investigation, analysis and interpretation of the data were done. Then the data obtained from interview, FGD, participant observation, and document analysis were studied, organized, categorized, summarized, interpreted and reported.

All the informants who participated both in the interview as well as in the FGD were not interested in mentioning their name in the discussion of the study. As a result the present study has utilized a coding system of naming throughout its discussion in the text.

3.8. Data Analysis Strategy

Qualitative data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, and between description and interpretation (Merriam, 1988). Borgan and Biklen (1992) have shown that data analysis in qualitative studies basically involved in words argumentation than numerical explanation.

The data drawn from interviews, participant observation, document analyses and FGD were studied carefully and repeatedly. This was done by referring the notebook and the tape recorder cassettes. After the collected issues were studied, they were categorized in line with their similarities. This categorizing or grouping of issues served to put related issues together in a series of chapters in the analysis. By doing so, the data was presented, interpreted, and concluded in the following four chapters.

4

PERSONAL FACTORS AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The collected information, about the problem under investigation, revealed that there are two broad classifications of factors which have either a positive or a negative contribution for the involvement of BDUEF teachers in educational research activities. These categories are **personal** and **institutional** factors. Factors such as teachers' knowledge, perception, interest, commitment, and competence in educational research, field of specialization, level of qualification, and teaching experience of teachers have been given due attention in the discussion of this chapter.

4.1. Teachers' Knowledge in Educational Research

Basically, not only in educational research but also to engage in any activities, overall knowledge about the activities seems crucially important. Therefore, the knowledge which usually develops through different exposures, such as in training, seminars, workshops and the like serve as a base line to promote both the quality and quantity of the activities. It seems unequivocally accepted that teachers' knowledge in educational research is very important to involve in it. Wieresma, 1986 (cited in Temesgen, 1999:4) stated that it is increasingly important for educational professionals to be knowledgeable and skillful about educational research. A knowledge and skill of educational research methodology are essential for engagement in the practice.

In line with this issue the study presented the following discussion. Almost all of the informants who participated in the study have agreed on the importance of knowledge of educational research as a prerequisite for doing educational research.

However, some informants who have a natural science background said that knowledge of educational research is important, but any one with MA/MSc degree in any field of studies can easily involve in educational research practices through independent reading. So that, according to them lack of prior knowledge in educational research is not as such a problem for the staff of their faculty to do educational research. On the other hand, the other group of informants remarked that, in their faculty, lack of training in educational research is a prominent obstacle to their participation in educational research

activities. As they explained, the problem is not of equal magnitude for all teachers rather it is severe for natural science and social science teachers. This is because their training gives very limited orientation about education in general and educational research in particular.

One of the informants, I₅, strongly remarked that

most of the teachers in the faculty consider educational research as an easy task. But they are not involved in it. Even though some of them tried to be involved in it, they failed. This indicates that most natural science and social science teachers' belief that assumes educational research as a simple task, I think, emanated from their lack of knowledge about it (22/01/2004, morning).

Another informant, I₁, said that the knowledge that develops during training and the like is very important to conduct educational research. However some teachers in their faculty consider all pedagogical issues in general and educational research activities in particular to be easy and less valuable practices.

I₁ further explained that teachers in the Faculty believe to the extent that they can teach effectively even without any training about why to teach and how to teach. But, as he further indicated, the reality which is observed in this faculty is that teachers' low knowledge about education in general and educational research in particular is a serious problem that affects their involvement in it. I₄ also mentioned that shortage of teachers' knowledge in educational research is an obstacle for teachers to do educational research. He further explained his idea by mentioning the actual situations in the Faculty as an example. He said "we observed that the pedagogical science and language teachers who have better training and then better knowledge in educational research have produced more educational research articles and presentations than natural science and social science teachers." Therefore, I₄ remarked that in the Faculty, it can be concluded that teachers' lack of knowledge about educational research is a hindrance to engage in it.

In the FGD, there was a heated discussion concerning teachers' knowledge in educational research. The discussion was with two groups; one group said that someone with second degree in any field of study can do educational research through his reading. The second group in the FGD argued that knowledge about educational research is very important to engage in it. Lastly, all the members of the FGD, except F₂ from the first

group, agreed that knowledge in educational research is very important to do research in education. In line with this idea, F₅ from the second group, explained about not only the importance of knowledge but also the importance of skill in educational research with more emphasis. He said that

taking educational research courses and participating in educational research conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. with theoretical bases are not satisfactory by them selves to do educational research, rather trying to practice it (the skill) is more important to involve in it. Therefore, teachers' knowledge in educational research is a prerequisite to engage in it but not an end by itself (26/2/2004, 10 A.M-4 P.M).

According to another informant in the FGD, F₁, shortage of knowledge in educational research is one of the main problems of teachers in their faculty to engage in it, because other factors such as teachers' perception, interest, commitment and competency are guided by the level of teachers' knowledge in educational research. Almost all members of the FGD agreed with this explanation, which gives more stress for teachers' knowledge in educational research.

From the discussion in the detail interview and FGD, the present study has understood that knowledge in educational research is crucially important to shape other personal factors and then to involve in educational research. However, few informants who have a specialization in Chemistry, Mathematics, and History underestimated the role of teachers' knowledge in educational research to involve in it. This may be rooted from their training nature for specialization. Since their training lacks educational research orientations, their view about educational research seems confused. They consider educational research is easy, less valuable, less scientific, and inappropriate for them. All these beliefs result from their shortage of knowledge in educational research. Moreover, from the document analysis (as indicated in Table 4), very few educational research outcomes were contributed by the natural and social science teachers. This further indicates that teachers' knowledge of educational research influence their actions.

From this data, it can concluded that teachers with better knowledge (training) in educational research have better attempt in educational research activities than teachers with less knowledge in it. Therefore, lack of teachers' knowledge in educational research has a negative influence in their participation in it.

4.2. Perception of Teachers in Educational Research

Perception plays a great role to facilitate or hinder individuals' activity. This is because, according to Morgan et al (1986:1580), perceptions of an individual refers to the way any event in the world and the world itself looks, sounds, feels, tastes, or smells to him. Therefore, it seems apparent that teachers' perception in educational research has an important role in determining their engagement in educational research either positively or negatively. Discussions of the informants about BDUEF teachers' perception in educational research and its role on their involvement in educational research has been presented as follows.

All the eight informants who participated in the detail interview agreed that all teachers in the Faculty, except some teachers in pedagogical science and language departments, have perceived the practices of educational research are not their task. As a result even a small number of research activities attempted by teachers are focused in their subject areas (I₁).

The two informants who were from natural science, I₂ and I₃, explained their perception towards educational research as follow. They said that they as science teachers do not believe the research in education, which takes place through questionnaire, interview and the like, as a research. They further explained that this may be emanated, they don't know, from their training that deals mostly with measurement, accuracy, etc. in non-human subjects. I₃ further explained by saying how collection of different opinions or suggestions through various subjective ways could be considered a research finding which is assumed as a true knowledge (science).

Another informant, I₅, on the other hand, explained that their Faculty teachers' perception towards educational research is just a reflection of their perception towards the pedagogical aspects of education which looks pedagogical issues are inferior to support their teaching-learning activities. As a result, he said that, " how they develop perception which encourages to do research in different pedagogical issues" (22/01/2004, morning). Another informant, I₁, also explained that " there are some teachers who perceive all research activities in general and educational research activities in particular as difficult, abstract, and then unachievable within their scope" (08/01/2004, morning).

In the FGD, all members agreed that all teachers in the faculty, except the pedagogical science and some language teachers have a perception which sees educational research is not part of their task. Lack of training in education, considering educational research a less valuable task, undermining the processes and outcomes of educational research, and assuming educational research is the task of pedagogical science department are some of the basic backgrounds for the different perception of their faculty teachers towards educational research (the FGD). Therefore, the FGD concluded that it is one of the main problems of teachers in the Faculty to engage in educational research.

From the participant observation of the study, the researcher observed the following discussion in the staff lounge. There were six instructors (three from natural science, one from language and two from social science departments) in the lounge. The discussion was about the newly introduced programs for the Education Faculty students who are supposed to take only 30 cr. hrs subject area courses, and other pedagogical related trainings for teachers in the Faculty such as Higher Diploma in face to face training, and Masters of Education in distance training. To show a clear picture of the discussion, the present investigator wanted to put in Amharic as it was there. All participants of the discussion, without any objection, forwarded their ideas as follows “ት/ሚኒስትር ሁላችንንም ወደ ፕዳጎጂካል ሳይንስ ሲቀላቅሱን ያሠበ ይመስላል። ምን እንደነካቸው እንጂ ሁሉ ነገር ፕዳጎጂካል ሳይንስ ብቻ ሆነ። የተማሪው ኮርስ ሙሉ በሙሉ ፕዳጎጂካል ሳይንስ ሆነ ስሁን ደግሞ ወደ እኛ እየመጡ ነው። ከሚገባው በላይ የበዛ ይመስላል “ (20/01/2004, afternoon). Roughly, it translates as

The Ministry of Education (MOE) seems to have a plan to integrate us with Pedagogical Science [Department]. We don't know what is happening there (in MOE), their focuses are entirely on pedagogical science. The courses offered for students are extremely full of pedagogical courses, and now MOE is running to give us pedagogical science training. It seems too much and more than the expected.

This indicates that some of the teachers in the BDUEF have not completely agreed that they are teachers who are responsible to train the would-be teachers in the near future. As a result, they have less value for the knowledge, skill and attitude of the teaching profession which are usually addressed through different pedagogical issues. Implies, they give less values for educational research practices which mostly accomplish on various

pedagogical aspects. Therefore, almost all teachers from natural and social science departments have different perception about all pedagogical issues in general and educational research practices in particular. On the contrary, the FGD and most of the informants who participated in the detail interview assured that teachers from pedagogical science and language departments have perceived educational research is some how important and part of their task.

4.3. Interest, Commitment and Competence of Teachers in Educational Research

Interest is the major driving force behind research (Jones 1957, as cited in Seyoum, 1998:7). This is indeed true, according to Seyoum (1998:7), "... because interest in research activity is not something that can be imposed from without unless it comes from within the individual." This implies that it seems clear that teachers' interest towards educational research has a great role to do educational research either positively or negatively. The other work of Seyoum also warned that without interest it would be very hard to imagine that one could engage in productive research work (Seyoum, 1985, as cited in Temesgen, 1999:18). Commitment, a persistent engagement in certain activities, can be promoted through individual interest towards that activity (Mayer and Sutton, 1996:36). The other point in this topic, competence, the ability to do a certain task, has a strong relation with interest and commitment. Therefore, even though basic research skills are the main sources to develop competence in research, a continuous effort that can emanate from interest and commitment also has great contribution to it. In line with this idea, Seyoum (1998:8) stated that " basically the only way to acquire competence in research is by doing it."

Based on the view of these writers and the nature of the information gathered from the informants, the study has presented the discussion about teachers' interest, commitment, and competence in educational research in interrelated approach as follows.

All the informants mentioned that interest is a force behind any activity including educational research. When they evaluate it in relation to their faculty teachers, they forwarded various suggestions. I₄, I₁ and I₃ said that most of them do not have a real interest towards educational research. As a result, they are poor in educational research activities. On the other hand, I₈ and I₇ indicated that all teachers in the Faculty have

interest to do any kinds of research, because it has rewards particularly in promotion from one academic title to the next. But due to different hindering factors, they are not engaged in it.

The other informants, I₂, I₅, and I₆ were in the same position. They said that interest does not develop from nothing. In another saying it means that someone's knowledge and perception about some thing are the basic foundations for the development of interest about that thing. Therefore, according to them, their faculty teachers' interest towards educational research has a root from their level of knowledge and perception in it. Even though it is difficult to generalize for all, teachers who have better knowledge and perception about educational research tend to have better interest, commitment, and competence in it. On the other hand, teachers who have less knowledge in educational research tend to have less interest, commitment and competence in it.

Moreover, all the informants who participated in the detail interview uniformly reported that all the personal factors (knowledge, perception, interest, commitment and competence in educational research) are interrelated, that is, one is a facilitator or a hindrance of the other. But most of the informants strongly argued that deep interest can break all weaknesses, which are related to the other factors. This is because, they said, better interest has a power to push towards commitment, and commitment obviously leads to competence. Two informants, I₃ and I₅ strengthen the idea by saying " ከስብ ካስቀሱ እንባ አይገደም " (13/01/2004 morning and 22/01/2004 morning). Roughly, this is translated as " If there is a commitment from the bottom of the heart, every thing can be achieved or attained."

I₅ further explained that a teacher with deep interest can develop a better perception, commitment and competence. For instance, I₅ explained, " there are few natural and social science department teachers who produced competent educational articles which have been published in known educational journals" (22/01/2004, morning). He further explained that this may be due to their deep interest which makes them devoted to the educational research activities. Such devotion in educational research again leads towards competence in it. On the other hand, some teachers who have better knowledge in educational research during their training (teachers from pedagogical science and language departments) have not been engaged in educational research as

expected. According to I₅, this is a consequence of their weak interest in educational research.

From the discussions in the interview, the present study has understood that even though people do not have enough knowledge and orientation in educational research, their interest in it has a power to make them conscious about it and then participate in it with maximum effort. On the other hand, if people have poor interest in educational research, they may not involve in it even though they have satisfactory training and orientation about it.

The members of the FGD, in this issue, had two main positions. F₁ and F₂ said that teachers in the Faculty have no interest in educational research. As a result teachers' commitment and competence in educational research are also poor. The reasons why it is so, according to them, are the poor working environment and poor rewards in the institution. Otherwise, it is possible to do educational research even without satisfactory knowledge from the training. F₁ and F₂ strengthened their position by mentioning two or three natural and social science department teachers who have authorized educational articles which are published in educational journals.

On the other hand, the participant observation and interviews made about institutional factors assured that the institution has given more support and encouragement for educational research activities than other research activities in the Faculty.

The other group of the FGD argued that teachers who teach in our faculty have weak interest to engage in educational research. This weak interest has strong relation to their own problems than institutional problems. They further explained that teachers' minimal knowledge and different perception in educational research lead to weak interest, commitment, and competence in it. Otherwise, the BDUEF has done more support to encourage educational research culture than others.

Some teachers in the Faculty have interest towards educational research, which emanated from the incentives (e.g. promotion) given by the institution. But for most of them, it couldn't create commitment and competence. Therefore, according to the FGD, even though there are some exceptional instructors (who have better training in educational research but less involvement in it, or who have less training in educational

research but better involvement in it), their faculty teachers' interest, commitment, and competence are strongly linked or related to the nature of their knowledge in the training.

During the lunch time in the staff lounge, the investigator observed a heated debate about research. One of the participants in the discussion said that these days it seems that educational research has changed to action research. Another member said that it is good for less oriented teachers in educational research, because it does not demand complicated research skills. By continuing the discussion, another member said that he didn't see any advantage changing the name from educational research to action research and vice versa. In general, in the Faculty it is difficult to do any research including educational research. This is because, he continued, in the Faculty there is no interest, culture, and commitment in research. All the members of the discussion seem to have agreed with this idea. Further, in the discussion it was remarked that even though there are some problems related to the institution, most of the problems are related to the individual teachers' knowledge, perception, and commitment in educational research.

4.4. Teachers' Field of specialization and Educational Research

By merging the related subject areas together, the present investigation has considered the four main fields of study. By doing so, biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics departments considered as natural science, Amharic and English departments as language, geography and history departments as social science, and the pedagogical science department.

Teachers' specialization, that is, their knowledge, attitude and skill in the training, has played a great role to determine their teaching and research activities. According to Arrends (1994), even though workshops, seminars, conferences and the like have some contributions to influence and guide teachers' activity, most of their activities have been influenced and governed by their training when they specialize in certain level of qualifications such as diploma, degree, etc. With this in mind, the present investigation has tried to assess the role of BDUEF teachers' field of specialization on their involvement in educational research. By doing so, the information gathered through detail interview, FGD and documents analyses will be presented as follows.

All the informants participated in the detail interview as well as in the FGD uniformly agreed that in accordance with their field of specialization teachers in the

Faculty have differences in their engagement in educational research. Almost all of the informants who participated in the study without any difference put the teachers in the four main fields of specialization into their degree of engagement in educational research. Teachers who specialize in pedagogical sciences and language teaching take the first and second position respectively. Teachers who specialize in social sciences and natural sciences have almost equal degree of participation in educational research with a little bit more advantages to the social science specialists. The reason why this is so, according to the participants of the interview and FGD, seems natural. That is, teachers (from pedagogical science and language teaching areas) with better knowledge, attitude and skill about education in general and educational research in particular during their specialization involved in educational research activities in a better position than social science and natural science specialists do.

From various relevant documents (articles in the AAU, IER and BDUEF libraries, AMES abstracts in the RPO of BDUEF, and teaching materials in the library of BDUEF), the investigation has collected information about the BDUEF teachers' activity in educational research with relation to their field of specialization. The information will be presented in the following table.

Table 4:- Educational Research Outcomes of BDUEF Teachers with Reference to Their Field of Specialization (1985 – 2003).

Educational research outcomes of BDUEF	Field of Specialization				
	Pedagogical Science	Language	Social Science	Natural Science	Total
Number of articles published in EJE	9	6	1	3	19
Number of articles published in IER flambeau	4	2	-	-	6
Number of articles published in BDUEF Bulletin	16	5	3	2	26
Number of papers presented in May educational seminar of the BDUEF.	21	16	10	7	54
Number of teaching materials prepared	10	7	7	6	30
Total	60	36	21	18	135

As observed in Table4, the involvement of BDUEF teachers in educational research has been found consistent with the explanation of the informants. That is, in their involvement in educational research, pedagogical science teachers are better than language teachers, language teachers are better than social science teachers, and social science teachers are slightly better than natural science teachers. This shows that the nature of teachers' training (field of specialization) has a meaningful role for their participation in educational research.

4.5. Teachers' Level of Qualification and Educational Research

The BDUEF has teachers with diploma, first degree, master's degree, and few doctorate degree qualifications. The present investigation has attempted to assess the contribution of teachers' qualification level on their involvement in educational research practices. The information about the role of teachers' qualification level in their participation in research will be presented as follows.

All the informants participated in the detail interview as well as in the FGD assured that almost their entire faculty teachers have been interested and engaged in any research activity in general and in educational research activity in particular when they immediately graduated their master's degrees. They gave the following reasons.

- Teachers may be pushed towards research activities in order to get a promotion from lecturer to assistant professor.
- Teachers' engagement of hard working and intensive reading during their master's degree training may encourage them to involve in different research practices.
- The basic skills about how to do research are mainly studied in master's degree training than any training before it.

In relation to the PHD qualified teachers, the informants mentioned that they are very insignificant in number and they seem unstable in the faculty. This is because when a certain teacher gets a PhD, as a normal culture of the faculty, he/she looks for another institution, in most cases the AAU. As a result, they are few in number and unstable in their work behavior. The participant observation of the study also assured this fact. In the Faculty, of the 103 teachers on duty, only six have PhD qualification.

4.6. Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience and Educational Research.

Experience in teaching is one of the basic factors to facilitate or hinder teachers' teaching effectiveness in general and their research activities in particular. Johnston (1994:199) concluded that " The value of teaching experience in teacher education seems to be accepted almost in blind faith." This implies that there is a general assumption, that is, when a teacher gets more experience, he will be effective in his work including research activities. On the other hand, there are writers, for example Duke (1990), who summarized that year of teaching experience, in and itself, is not a guarantee for effective investigation and teaching.

The present investigation has attempted to assess the role of BDUEF teachers' teaching experience on their participation in educational research. Then, the information which was collected from the informants will be presented as follows. Concerning this I₁ had to say:

" ብዙ ዓመት በፋካሲቲው ውስጥ ያገለገሉ መምህራን እኔን ጨምሮ ሰአድስ ተቀጣሪዎቼ አርአያ ብሎም አማካሪ መሆን ደጠበቅብን ነበር። ይህ ግን በእኛ ግቢ ፈፅሞ አይታይም። እንዲያውም ማስትራታቸውን ደዘው የሚመጡት አዳዲስ መምህራን ጥሩ የምርምር ሥራ እንቅስቃሴ ያሳያሉ።"

(08/01/2004, morning). Roughly, this means

teachers with long service years in the Faculty, including myself, should have to be models and advisors to young and newly employed teachers. But this has not been observed in our Faculty. Contrary to this, those fresh teachers who received their master's degree are involved in research activities more than experienced teachers do.

Another informant, I₅, also said

when I obtained my second degree from AAU, I thought that I would produce two or three articles in a year. But, due to the reason that I don't know clearly, I couldn't do any meaningful work in the last 13 years. Moreover, my strong interest has declined through time from the earlier to the later. Probable reasons for this are poor research culture, work load & absence of models and advisors in the faculty (22/01/2004, morning).

The remaining informants gave a similar exposition with I₁ and I₅. Then all the informants who participated in the detail interview assured that when teachers' years of

teaching experience increased, they tended to decrease in their involvement of research activities.

All the seven participants of the FGD also agreed that in the Faculty teachers' years of teaching experience and their involvement in research practices have inverse relationship.

Most of the informants who participated in the study explained that there are various reasons for the inverse relationship between teaching experience and research activity. First, when teachers stay for a long time, they are engaged in family affairs. So that they are going to give more time to think about their children, wife, house construction, house furniture and the like. Second, when they serve for many years, they may be involved in different social responsibilities inside and/ or outside the University. The third probable reason is that a large time gap of their training for a certain qualification may lead them to forget important skills in research.

As it has been discussed in this chapter, different personal factors have their own positive or negative contributions to the participation of BDUEF teachers in educational research activities. The knowledge of teachers in educational research has a major role to manipulate other factors such as perception, interest, commitment and competency of teachers in educational research. As a result, except few cases most teachers with better knowledge in their training about educational research participated in it in a better way. For instance, teachers with field of specialization more related to education such as in curriculum and instruction, in educational psychology, and in teaching Amharic and foreign language have better involvement in educational research activities than those in the other fields (see Table 4). But there are few teachers (by maximizing their interest, commitment, and then competency) who perform educational research in a better way without satisfactory knowledge in their training.

The other personal factors, level of qualifications and years of teaching experiences of teachers, do not have a unique positive or negative contribution for their engagement in educational research. Rather, they have the same positive or negative contributions for the participation of teachers in any kind of research. Of the various qualification levels teachers with master's degree qualification have better practice in

research. Moreover, teachers' years of teaching experiences have an inverse relationship with their engagement in research.

5

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

In this chapter, various institutional factors that have certain roles with teachers' involvement in educational research will be discussed. The institutional factors may be fully attributed to the research target university, BDU, or to other institutions out side it. In general, this chapter has attempted to treat the following subtopics. They are administration procedures, workload, work environment (the library, the staffs, internet and computer accesses, financial support and the office environments), incentives, access to information dissemination, and utilization of research outcomes. In connection with this idea, Fekadu (2000) found that workload, budget problem, lack of motivating incentives, inadequate libraries, and weak administration procedures are some of the obstacles which block teachers' involvement in educational research.

5.1. Administration Procedures

The view of different informants about the role of the administration processes of the University in teachers' participation in educational research will be presented as follows.

All of the informants who participated in the detail interview as well as in the FGD said that there are inefficient and ineffective administration processes in the University. They assured that problems in administration procedures increased when some one goes from the bottom (departmental level) to the top (senate committee). According to the informants, to get budget permission for the ongoing research activities and /or to get certain incentives for finalized articles, it takes a minimum of two years and above. One of the informants, I₆, further explained that "due to the university's slow administration procedures, I know some educational and/or non educational research problems that have outdated before the problems have been attempted by the researchers who identified them" (27/01/2004, morning).

Even to the extent, some of the officers of the University have a belief that the research activities of a certain instructor are more useful for him than for the nation in general and the University in particular. In relation to this idea, I₁ explained that

some instructors and most academic officers in the middle and above, I think, have an assumption that teachers do research for the sake of their advantages- to get academic promotions and financial incentives. Surprisingly, some people in the University believe that when a teacher is engaged in research activity, he becomes careless in his main work-teaching" (08/01/2004, morning).

Another informant who participated in the FGD, F₄, explained that their officers know the importance of research activity only for the sake of talking in a formal meeting. But they do not believe its importance from their internal. He further explained that for them it is a matter of formality rather than commitment to help and encourage the teacher to do research and then to develop research habits in the University.

Moreover, almost all of the informants who participated in the study agreed that the influence of administration procedures towards research activities a little bit determined by the field of specializations of officers in the University as well as in the Faculty. In other words, if the officer is from social science, he has a certain positive bias for social science researches, and/or if the officer is from pedagogical science, he has a certain positive bias for educational research, etc. Otherwise the informants assured that there are no unique administrative positive or negative influences for teachers' engagement in educational research. Its contribution is almost equal for all types of research engagements.

5.2. Workload

To accomplish research activity in a better manner, it needs sufficient time. Therefore, a teacher to be a researcher needs suitable arrangement of his/her teaching and/or other workload. In connection with this idea, Seyoum (1998) and Adane (2000) mentioned that heavy teaching (work) load is one of the persistent problems in the participation of teachers in educational research.

Information, from the detail interview, FGD, and participant observation of the present study, about how much teachers' involvement in educational research is affected by their workload, will be presented as follows.

Almost all of the informants who participated in the study reported that in their faculty, workload has been a problem to carry out educational research for the last four years. Before five years workload was not a problem. To the extent, some teachers were under-loaded and free throughout the semester. Further, the informants explained that even today workload is not a real problem of their faculty teachers to be engaged in research. This is because overload teaching both in the regular and extension programs is based on the willingness of the staff. Moreover, various office responsibilities in the University are assigned to teachers almost in voluntary bases. Even, sometimes it is in competition base. There is no as such a strong imposition on the teachers to take certain office positions in the University. Therefore, the teacher can reject additional tasks such as overload teaching.

However, teachers in the BDUEF prefer to teach additional load in the regular session and in extension programs than to engage in research activities. The reason is that the incentives which are given for over load and extension program teaching is far better than the incentives which are given for certain research practices and outcomes. One of the informants, I₅, explained this idea as " teachers are more attracted in over load teaching both in the extension and regular programs. This is because the incentives for overload teaching are far better than the incentives for the research activities of teachers" (08/01/2004, morning).

From the participant observation and document analysis, the present study understood that the BDUEF teachers have a teaching load of 25-35 credit hours per week both in the regular and extension programs. Moreover, due to the establishment of the University many new offices have been created. Most of these offices are occupied by the teachers of the Education Faculty. This is because of at least the following three reasons. First, they have long services. Second, their training (specialization) is relatively more relevant to the office work than that of teachers in the Engineering Faculty. Third, the main offices of the University are in the faculty, Faculty of Education. For instance, 10 teachers out of the 18 pedagogical science department teachers, 4 teachers out of the 6 physics department teachers, 5 teachers out of the 9 Amharic department teachers, etc. are assigned in different office positions.

In general, the present study understood that eventhough it is on the preferences of the individual teachers, heavy workload put its own negative impact on their participation in research in general and in educational research in particular. One thing that should be noticed here is that heavy workload does not have unique influence for facilitating or hindering educational research. Its contribution (negative or positive) is the same for all types of research activities.

5.3. Work Environment

The present study has considered the library facilities, the nature of the colleagues, computer and internet facilities, financial support, and the office environments as the work environment for the research activities of teachers.

5.3.1. The Library Facilities

The University has attempted to establish a library for each faculty. It seems a benefit from its age; the Education Faculty has two libraries and one bookstore.

In the participant observation, the present researcher observed that every teacher in the Faculty has 15 pockets to borrow materials from the library. So, by using these pockets, teachers can borrow all the textbooks (except textbooks from the reference section) and all the journals at least for a semester. Moreover teachers can borrow any materials from the bookstore simply by signing in a certain form, which is prepared by the library.

Overall there are 81 (30 female and 51 male) workers who work in all the three libraries in the Faculty. The two libraries are open in all days including Sunday from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM. The library has a room reserved for teachers who want to read. But it is suffocated. Therefore, the room seems inconvenient to read in it. As a result, there are only very few (one or two) teachers who use this reading room throughout the day.

In relation to the library collection, all informants' reply was almost uniform. They said that the library has enough collections, particularly the textbooks. But, according to the informants, there is a serious shortage in updated journals, which are basic for research activities. Even though it was not possible to sort out pure educational materials from the library collection, the library, according to the informants and the librarians, has more collections relevant to education than other fields of the study.

Therefore, it is more convenient for educational research activities than other research activities.

5.3.2. The Nature of the Staff

The nature of the staffs who work together can have a certain influence on teachers' involvement in all research activities in general and in educational research activities in particular. In connection with this issue, the discussions by the informants of the study and observations in the participant observation will be presented as follows.

Most of the informants who participated in the detail interview and FGD, agreed that the main problems in their faculty are absence of well skilled and experienced teachers both in subject area and educational researches. Otherwise, every teacher is positive to share any thing from what he has. However, according to the informants, some teachers in the Faculty (particularly who have not attempted to involve in research) consider teachers engagement in research is for the sake of their benefit, for example, to get academic promotion. Furthermore, as it is explained by F₄ “these teachers are trying to discourage the teacher-educational researchers, by saying educational research is some how an easy, subjective, and less valuable task” (26/02/2004, 10AM-4PM).

The participant observation of the study has observed the following. In the staff lounge, five teachers (only one of them has prepared a single teaching material) were discussing together. Their discussion was on commenting teachers who run to do research. They said that every one in the Faculty is running to be an assistant professor. One of the participants of the discussion said that “I don't see the advantages of publishing an article in certain journals for the University. Rather preparing a teaching material is better for the institution than publishing an article, for instance, in the EJE” (24/02/ 2004, afternoon). All of the participants of the discussion showed their agreement with the above explanation through different expressions. Further, they concluded that those who were running to produce an article for a certain journal publication and then to get promotion to the next academic title seem to affect their regular job-teaching negatively.

In short, the study understood that some teachers who have not attempted any research activities are ready to criticize the teacher researchers in the Faculty. In line with this idea, one of the informants, I₄, explained with an appropriate Amharic phrase "

የተቀማጭ ስፋ ምሳሌ” which can be translated roughly as " any one who does not like work is keen on criticisms " (14/01/2004, morning). In general, it can be concluded that even though most of the staffs are cooperative, some, who are not engaged in research, are influencing their colleagues' research activities.

5.3.3. Internet, Computer and Other Stationary Facilities

All informants, who participated in the FGD as well as in the detail interview, uniformly explained that their university has better internet, computer and stationary facilities. Some of the informants, I₁ and I₄, further said that the internet and computer accesses of their university are even in a better position than other universities in the country. Concerning the supplying of stationary materials, there is no complaint from the staff. It is more than the satisfactory level.

Therefore, all informants mentioned that internet, computer, and other stationary facilities as one of the strong sides of their university in relation to its attempt which made to improve research activities in general and educational research activities in particular. The participant observations of the present study also agreed with the informants' explanations. As it was observed by the investigator there are at least two computers in each office. Moreover, every staff office has an internet connection. But the present investigator observed that there are some problems related to how to use and how to operate the computers and internet both with the staff as well as with the technical managers of the machines.

5.3.4. Financial and Other Supports

In connection with this factor, all informants uniformly said that in the past (before the establishment of the University), the Faculty didn't have any budget to support the research activities of teachers financially. But, after the University has been established, even though it is not satisfactory, there is an attempt to make budgets for research. For example, when a teacher prepared a sounding educational research proposal, he would get 6,500-13,000 Eth. Birr to conduct his/her research.

However, when the present study attempted to observe the process how both the BDU and the Ministry of Finance allocate the budget, of the 1996 E.C BDU budget (45, 892, 600 Eth. Birr), only 320,000 Eth. Birr is allocated to research related activities. It is 0.70 percent of the total budget. From its 1996 E.C budget (6,094,100 Eth. Birr), the

Education Faculty has allocated 75,000 Eth. Birr for research related activities. It is 1.23 percent of the total budget (the Finance Office of the University). This indicates that still there is lack of attention for the research activities both in the University as well as in the nation.

The other point mentioned by the informants was that research funds outside the University (for Example, from Science and Technology Commission) are difficult to get and use because, according to I₄ and F₁, their selection procedure of proposals does not have transparency.

Other supports of the research activities are also poor. For instance, the senate legislation of the BDU (2001) stated that when a teacher is engaged in research activities his/her teaching load should be reduced by half of the normal teaching load. But, according to the informants, the statement of the legislation has not been realized even for a single teacher.

5.3.5. Teachers' Office Environment

As it is explained by all informants of the present study, office environment is inconvenient for teachers' participation in research. They said that these days it is usual to give one office for 3-5 teachers. This is, according to I₆ and I₈, the result of the establishment of the University which entailed high enrollment of students and then high rate of teachers' employment. Therefore, they said that even though office problems seem to get a solution in the near future, for the time being it is not convenient for teachers' engagement in research. The participant observation of the present study also assured this fact. As a result, students, guests, etc., who want to see the teachers in one office make the office disturbed and suffocated. Therefore, it is not convenient to do a research which needs attention and silence.

5.4. Incentives for the Researchers

According to the present study, advantages such as promotions, cash payment as honorarium, etc, which is given after the research is finalized, are considered as rewards (incentives) for the researchers. In relation to this idea, all the informants uniformly mentioned that generally incentives for the researchers are very weak and do not attract the teachers to involve in research. They said that, for instance, the University has established a regulation which says teachers who produced an article in reputable journal

have the right to promote to the next academic title, teachers who presented a paper for AMES are entitled to get 500 Eth.Birr, and teachers who contributed an article for the Bulletin of the Faculty are entitled to get 350 Eth. Birr.

Further, the informants assured that the reward in the form of promotion is somehow encouraging. But according to the informants, the reward given in cash is very insignificant and completely unbalanced with the effort of the researchers. From the above discussion, the present study understood that since incentives for the researchers are very poor (500/350 Eth. Birr per a research papers), teachers prefer to engage in overload teaching which is far better in its payment (2,400 Eth. Birr per a 3 cr. hr. course). Therefore, the poor incentives given to a researcher have a strong negative influence in teachers' participation in educational research.

5.5. Access to Information Dissemination

Basically, research is not an activity performed just to keep oneself busy or do some sort of mental exercise (Taye, 1993:11). It should be disseminated and then utilized by the appropriate individuals or organizations. According to King (1998), dissemination can be considered the process whereby research results reach to different audiences. He further explained that any researchers have to think about their research result dissemination accesses at least when they attempt to begin the research activities.

In line with this, the study evaluated the impact of access to information dissemination on the BDUEF teachers' participation in educational research. Except one informant, I₂, all the informants appreciate the problem as a problem in the Faculty. They said that the only significant way out (information dissemination access) for educational research results is the EJE. But some of the informants explained that it has many problems such as high competition, inefficient and ineffective procedures to publish, and unnecessary relationships between individual researchers and evaluators/facilitators of the EJE. In connection with this idea, the Editorial-in-Chief office of the EJE indicated that there are some authors who attempt to know the assessors of their article. But the office used coding system (with high secrete) to prevent unnecessary relations between the authors and the assessors. However, according to this office, there is one reality. That is, since Assistant Professors and above in education are very few in number, there is a problem related to speed.

The other information dissemination accesses are the BDUEF Bulletin and AMES. Eventhough these are good information dissemination accesses for educational research outcomes of their faculty teachers, the rewards for the participations are very weak, and then not attractive. As a result, most of the teachers do not attempt to disseminate their research results through these accesses. One of the informants, I₅, further explained that

the very intention of establishing the bulletin and the AMES in the faculty was to encourage and facilitate teachers' involvement in educational research. But these days, as I observed, the missions of these dissemination accesses is changing, and they have started entertaining any research papers." (22/01/2004).

This may be according to him. due to the following reasons.

- Educational research outcomes are not enough to satisfy the bulletin as well as the AMES of the Faculty.
- The coordinators who are assigned to run the Faculty RPO may have unsatisfactory knowledge, perception, interest, commitment and the like in educational research. So that they may put their own negative influence on the expansions and/or disseminations of educational research.

In relation to information dissemination accesses, the informants raised another issue. They said that there is a new attempt by the University to disseminate research results. That is, the University has on the way to establish reputable journal entitled as " The Ethiopian Journal of Technology, Education and Sustainable Development (EJTE and SD) Journal of Bahir Dar University." The Journal has started with Volume 1 Number 1 in November 2002, at Bahir Dar Ethiopia.

Even though attempting to establish a reputable journal in their university is their day and night wish, all of the informants of the present study have a strong disagreement on the procedure of establishing EJTE and SD. They said:

- it is not field specific
- it has not even a single practice of publishing an article before its reputability is announced. According to them, to be reputable, a certain journal needs at least to be assured its continuity and standard by practicing certain publications.

- it has not transparent and well established procedures to evaluate and select the articles which are published in it.

Therefore, the members of the FGD and most of the informants in the detail interview suggested that it was better upgrading the Education Faculty Bulletin to reputable journal than trying to make a new reputable journal with various issues together.

In sum, the present investigation understood that the intentions of many of the informants indicated that shortage of appropriate and fast information dissemination accesses are one of the problems that block teachers' involvement in research in general and in educational research in particular.

On the other hand, one informant, I₂ has a different idea. He said that " as far as my opinion is concerned, I don't take access of information dissemination is a problem for our faculty teachers' engagement in educational research, because the University allows for all teachers to present a paper any where including the abroad" (09/01/2004, afternoon). Therefore, he said, the problem is not shortage of information dissemination accesses but making the paper competent enough.

In this regard, the present researcher attempted to analyze and understand one thing. The teachers in the Faculty seem to be interested in getting better benefits from a certain information dissemination accesses. That is why they ignored less benefited information dissemination accesses. For example, they are not ready to present a paper in AMES and produce an article for the Bulletin of their faculty. Moreover, they have complained in the publication procedures of reputable journals, for example, they express their dissatisfaction with the publication procedures of the EJE. But, even though it is difficult, some of their friends in the Faculty have got chances to produce an article in various reputable journals including in the EJE. Therefore, it indicates that the BDUEF teachers', except few, activity in research is more of incentive oriented and less competent. Otherwise even though the information dissemination accesses both in and out side the University are not satisfactory, they are not bad.

In relation to information dissemination accesses, there is another point which is mentioned by the informants. It was the positive contribution of the AMES of the Faculty for the development of teachers' participation in educational research. They said that when the AMES took place, most of the teachers' discussion was in various research

issues. As a result, many of the teachers in the Faculty are motivated to do educational research.

Further, I₈ and F₁, explained that AMES may help the teachers at least in the following three ways. First, it helps to motivate them. Second, it helps to show problem areas. Third, it helps to orient teachers with certain knowledge, attitude, and skill in research during the discussion in the seminar.

Even though it has weakened from earlier to the later, AMES has a remarkable positive role for the BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research. Therefore, attempting to understand about it is somehow important and relevant for this paper. The document analysis of the present study also attempted to find some facts about AMES of the Faculty. The Seminar started in May 1983. Before 1987, there is no relevant document which shows the seminar's context. Moreover, in 1991 (due to the war between the previous government, Derg, and the present government, EPRDF) and 2003 (due to the shortage of articles and weak coordination activities of the Faculty RPO) the seminar was interrupted (Education Faculty RPO). The remaining 15 years context of the seminar has been presented in the following table, Table 5.

Table 5: The Nature of Presenters who Participated and Papers which Presented in the AMES of BDUEF

Years	Total Number of Staffs on Duty	Number of Papers Presented by the Faculty Staffs		Number of Papers Presented by Outsiders		Total
		Educational	Non Educational	Educational	Non Educational	
1987	42	6(14.29)*	1	7	2	16
1988	44	5(11.36)	5	5	2	17
1989	43	6(13.95)	3	3	2	14
1990	45	5(11.11)	2	3	3	13
1992	52	3(5.77)	4	3	5	15
1993	50	-	3	10	13	26
1994	56	5(8.93)	5	6	4	20
1995	57	5(8.77)	6	4	7	22
1996	65	4(6.15)	6	5	5	20
1997	76	4(5.26)	3	7	5	19
1998	91	4(4.39)	1	5	5	15
1999	90	-	5	8	6	19
2000	98	3(3.06)	1	10	10	24
2001	104	2(1.92)	1	6	4	13
2002	106	2(1.89)	-	5	2	9
Total	1019	54(5.30)	46	87	75	262

*Numbers in the parenthesis are percentages

As it is indicated in Table 5, the participation of teachers in educational research has decreased from the earlier to the later. Particularly, in the last 9 years, teachers' participation in presenting educational research papers in AMES has strictly declined. Moreover, throughout the last 15 years, only 5.30 percent of the total teachers presented educational research papers. Table 5 also indicated that of the 262 papers which were presented in AMES of the Faculty, 141 papers were educational and the remaining 121 were non educational. But the very intention of establishing the AMES in the Faculty was to motivate and encourage educational researchers and then to expand educational research in the then Teachers' College (now Faculty of Education) (I₅ and I₃). Even though some of the informants explained that the establishment of the AMES is planned

do not do even a small scale research satisfactorily” (13/01/2004, morning). So, he said that they didn't complain their research outcomes are under-utilized. Second, the utilization of educational research is out of the scope of the researchers.

Therefore, all the informants agreed that the main task of the researcher is to reach in certain results (truths). The process of utilization is done by institutions (individuals) mostly outside the researchers. In short, the informants assured that the positive or negative role of the utilization of educational research for their faculty teachers' involvement in it is some how insignificant. In other words, it is not their faculty teacher-researchers' concern to worry about the utilization and/or under-utilization of their research outputs.

In the discussions of this chapter, the present study understood that all institutional factors (administration procedures, work load, work environment, incentives to the researcher, access to information dissemination, and utilization of research outcomes) have not a peculiar negative or positive contribution for teachers' participation in educational research. That is, their contribution is almost the same for all kinds of research. Even to the extent, some institutional factors, for example, the library collections, the financial supports, and accesses to information dissemination are more favorable to educational research activities than other research activities of teachers in the Faculty. The libraries have more educational material collections than other fields of study. In order to allow finances for research, and to disseminate research results in its bulletin and AMES, the Education Faculty RPO has given priority to educational researches.

6

TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

The present investigation attempted to assess what looks like the statuses of teachers' involvement in educational research from past to present. Moreover, it tried to collect different suggestions which help to improve the BDUEF teachers' participation in educational research in the future. Therefore, this chapter has attempted to discuss about the trend of teachers' involvement in educational research, and possible suggestions to improve future educational research activities of teachers in the Faculty.

6.1. From the past to the present

The trends of teachers' involvement in educational research from the past to the present were discussed by the informants of the present study. All of the informants who participated in the study uniformly said that in general terms the entire faculty teachers' involvement in educational research is low. They further said that we have not involved in educational research as expected. One of the informants (F₁) who participated in the FGD said that

we, as teachers of higher teacher training institution, should produce at least two research outputs per year (one in our subject area and one in our profession). But most of us couldn't contribute even a single research result for the last many years (26/02/2004, 10 AM-4PM).

The trend of teachers' involvement in educational research, according to most of the informants (except I₂ and F₆), has shown certain improvements. For instance, they said that working in educational research projects, producing an article for the EJE, participating in different national and regional educational workshops, and engaging in different level of educational trainings of teachers have shown great improvement from the past to the present.

In connection with this idea, the participant observation of the study observed that by now in the Faculty (1) 13 teachers have worked in various educational research projects with the financial support of the University, (2) 15 teachers have joined training

for masters in education through distance program, and (3) 20 teachers have joined training for higher diploma in education through face to face program.

In short, information collected through detail interview, FGD, and participant observation assured that over all awareness of the BDUEF teachers, in education in general and in educational research in particular have improved from the earlier to the later, particularly with in the last three years.

On the other hand, I₂ and F₆ claimed that their faculty teachers' involvement in educational research has decreased from past to present. Their argumentation is mainly based on the decline of teachers' involvement in presenting papers in AMES, and in producing articles in the Bulletin of the Faculty from past to the present. They said that this is an indicator of a negative trend of teachers' participation in educational research from the past to the present. But it is not an indicator for the negative trend. Rather teachers' low interest, in presenting and producing papers for the AMES and the Bulletin of the Faculty respectively, is highly related with the low incentives from these dissemination accesses.

In general, the present study understood that even though it is not satisfactory, these days there are better orientations, attentions and practices in education in general and in educational research in particular starting from the MOE to the department level officers. As a result, the arrangements of different levels and types of educational trainings and workshops, the allocation of budgets for educational researches, and the arrangements of the new curriculum for the would be teachers with appropriate dosage from education and practicum areas are some of the efforts done to improve awareness in education. Due to these efforts, the trend of teachers' orientation and involvement in educational research has shown improvement form time to time. This is because usually better orientation, interest and attitude in education lead to better orientation and engagement in educational research.

Therefore, teachers' involvement in educational research has indicated a positive trend from the past to the present. However, teachers' engagement in educational research is highly incentive oriented. In line with this idea, one of the informants in the detail interview, I₁, said that " even though people in our faculty have attempted to relate research activities to various incentives, these days there are good attempts in their

involvement to different educational practices including the educational research activities" (08/01/2004, morning).

The Faculty RPO office also agreed with this fact. For instance, according to this office, even though the capacity of the fund is limited, many teachers submitted educational research proposals to the BDUEF, RPO, to do their research with the help of the allocated fund by the University, which is greater than 10,000 Eth. Birr..

6.2. Future Trends

The present investigation attempted to gather suggestions for the future improvements of teachers' involvement in educational research from its informants.

All the informants who participated in the detail interview as well as in the FGD uniformly said that since teachers' knowledge (orientation) in educational research is basic for other factors which have a role in educational research such as perception, interest, commitment and competence in research, orienting them in education in general and in educational research in particular through different mechanisms such as in short term training, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., is a very important activity. Moreover, the informants recommended that the Faculty has to encourage a habit of group research among the teachers. They said that working the researches in a group helps to improve the quality and quantity of the research results, to encourage teachers who have no knowledge in educational research, and to save time, money, and labor.

The other point strongly explained and forwarded by all of the informants was that since incentives (rewards) for the researcher are extremely weak, they are not attractive for the staffs of the Faculty. On the other hand, incentives for the researcher have a strong role to govern other variables such as workload, information dissemination accesses, interest, commitment, etc. Therefore, according to the informants, the concerned bodies, from the university to the national government level, have to allocate appropriate incentives/rewards for the researchers.

Some other informants suggested that introducing the culture of action research, making an awareness about the advantages of research activities to the academic officers as well as to the administrative workers, and attempting to improve the financial and related supports to do educational research are some of the important actions that have to be taken by all the Faculty members and officers. I₂ further explained that the Faculty

should work to improve experience-sharing among various local and abroad universities by inviting well experienced researchers. Other informants also mentioned that the University has to establish more information dissemination accesses by following the correct and standardized procedures.

Another informant, I₃, suggested that " the University has to attempt to start graduate school programs in different fields of study. This helps to encourage /push teachers in the Faculty to involve in different research activities" (13/01/2004, morning). He also mentioned that all the available materials (journals, text books, etc) throughout all the universities and organizations in the nation should be displayed in the internet. Therefore, according to him, one university can have an access to use materials which are found in the other universities or organizations without any physical movement. I₅ forwarded other suggestions. The suggestions were one, the management of the University has to try for adjusting a teaching load, and arrange facilities including cars particularly for group field research practices. Second, both the Faculty and the University have to make an attempt in maintaining teachers with better research practices and qualifications by arranging appropriate privileges for them.

7

CONCLUSION

Policies and legislations indicated that higher institution teachers' involvement in research is crucially important to develop their profession. The gap between the statements in policies and legislations about the importance of research and the actual practice in higher institutions served as a rationale to conduct this study. Moreover, different authors from abroad and local (Hummadi, 1989; Rossister, 1993; Adane, 2000) believed that higher institution teacher trainers have to recognize educational research as one of their basic assignments in their academic career in the institution. On the other hand, different writers (Adane, 2000, Derebssa, 2000; Teklehaimanot, 2000) found that teachers' involvement in educational research to be very weak. This incompatibility served as a second vantage point to investigate the problem.

This study will help to indicate various factors which play a role in teachers' involvement in educational research. It can create awareness for teachers, university officers and other concerned bodies about the past, present, and future contexts of educational research in BDUEF. The study assessed various factors which have negative or positive contributions in educational research. Moreover, it evaluated the past, present, and future contexts of BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research. The works of different educators which have relations with the problem under study were discussed.

The study employed a qualitative method of educational research. Particularly a case study design was used. The present investigation was carried out in four stages. The first phase included review of literature and preparation of a proposal. In the second phase, a general preliminary assessment through interviewing, talking and observing had conducted. By incorporating the feedbacks from the second phase, in the third phase, the main data collection processes were accomplished. In the fourth phase the collected data were studied, categorized, organized, interpreted and reported.

Interviews, FGD, observations, and documentary sources were utilized to collect the relevant data for the investigation. Due to its relevance, the BDUEF was taken as a

research setting of this study. Based on their years of teaching experience in the Faculty, level of qualification, academic title, involvement in research, willingness to participate, present office posts, and field of specialization, 18 teachers (3 for the preliminary interview, 8 for the detail interview, and 7 for the FGD) were selected as the informants of the present study through snowball strategy.

After conducting the detail interview, an FGD was conducted. In both the detail interview and the FGD tape-recorder was used. The FGD was administered with the help of one assistant researcher. The present researcher conducted participant observation in the staff lounge, in the library, and in and around the offices. The document analysis was done in archives such as list of presenters in different years of AMES, list of authors who produced articles for the BDUEF Bulletin, list of authors who produced articles for AAU, the IER Flambeau and the EJE, and list of teaching material writers.

The data analysis of the present study treated into three sections, namely, personal factors, institutional factors, and teachers' involvement in educational research from the past to the future.

In the analysis, the study understood that of the various personal factors, teachers' knowledge in educational research seems basic and very important to guide other personal factors (teachers' perception, interest, commitment, etc. in educational research) either to their positive or negative roles in their participations in educational research.

But in rare cases, teachers' interest in educational research has a power to break their illiteracy/ literacy in educational research. As a result, some teachers, who have no training (orientation) in educational research, show good participation in it. On the other hand, some others, who have good training (orientation) in educational research, show poor participation in educational research activities. This is because strong interest, even without satisfactory training in it, serves as a pushing factor to read more (commitment) and then to do educational research in a better manner (competence); but weak interest, even with satisfactory training in it, leads to the opposite chain of activities that are less reading (less commitment) and then practicing in educational research weakly (weak competence).

Since teachers' knowledge (orientation) in the training is a determining factor to act in accordance, their field of specialization has played a great role in their participation in educational research. Therefore, those teachers who have specialization in education and/or related areas such as in language teaching have more participation in educational research than the other fields of specialization teachers (see Table 4). The other personal factors, teachers' level of qualification and years of teaching experience, have no special positive or negative influence for the practices of educational research. Their influence is the same for all types of research. This implies that the improvements of their qualifications as well as their teaching experiences have no effect on changing their mind in educational research either positively or negatively. This is because unless otherwise they are exposed to certain orientations in educational research, they can not develop a certain concept in it, since they are further qualified and experienced in their own subject areas.

This study revealed that teachers' years of experience and their participation in research activities have an inverse relation. This is because, as it was explained by most of the informants, when teachers stay for a long time in the Faculty, they may engage in family and extra societal affairs. Of the various teachers' qualification level in the Faculty, teachers with MA/MSc degrees participated in research activities in a better position. The reasons are, according to the informants who participated in the study, developing of a hard working behavior and equipping with appropriate research skills in the training for their MA/MSc degrees. It was not possible to examine teachers with PhD qualification because their number and working behavior are insignificant and unstable respectively. This is because PhD qualified teachers usually look another job and place.

The institutional factors which have certain roles in educational research were analyzed. The administration procedures, in the lower administration hierarchies, are fast and effective. Questions related to research relatively get immediate answers. But the top administration hierarchies are very weak to give fast responses for various questions. This may have certain reasons. (1) The university's higher officers have more varied tasks (assignments) with various departments and faculties than the lower officers have. (2) The teacher- researchers, the owners of the issues, are somehow nearer to the lower

(department and faculty level) officers than the higher officers. (3) Most of the lower officers get their office position through election by the staffs of the University. Therefore, they are somehow better in facilitating (answering) teachers' questions than the higher officers who get their office position from the higher body outside the knowledge of the staffs of the University.

Even though there are minor problems, the library facilities, financial supports, internet accesses, computer and other stationary facilities of the University are in a good position to do any research in general and educational research in particular. On the other hand, the present researcher's participant observations and the data collected through interview and FGD assured that the office environments of the teachers are not conducive to do research, because in each office there are three to five teachers. This creates suffocation and disturbance in the room (the office).

Many of the staffs in the Faculty are cooperative and positive on the research activities of their friends. However some staffs, who are not interested in involving in research activities, are ready to comment and discourage their friends who attempt to do researches. One of the informants, I₄, explained this by saying "የተቀማላቱ ስፍ ምሳሌ ". It is roughly translated as "any one who does not like work is keen on criticisms " (14/01/2004; morning). The critiques from teachers who are not engaged in research may be expected due to the following reasons.

- They want to justify why they are not involved in research.
- They develop certain negative feelings with the research activities of their colleagues, because teachers who are engaged in research may advance them in material as well as moral benefits.

The other point under the institutional factors is that under-utilization of research outcomes. Almost all of the informants uniformly said that they don't worry whether their research outcomes are utilized or not by the concerned body. Most of the informants further said that firstly, they do not do strong researches that can be utilized by the policy makers and practitioners. Secondly, our policy makers and practitioners have not a culture to use past research outcomes. Rather they want to establish a forcing group for their immediate problems. Thirdly, the processes of utilizing research outcomes are out of the

scope of the individual researchers. Therefore, they are not discouraged on their participation in research due to the under-utilization of their research outcomes.

From this discussion, the present study understood that the teachers in the Faculty have missed a prominent target of doing a research. That is, one of the main targets of research activity is to indicate an appropriate alternative for a solution to a problem. But if the outcomes of the researches are not utilized, it is almost useless to engage in research. Therefore, the teachers in the Faculty seem to be short-cited about the purpose and significance of research. As a result, they mainly focus on their own immediate personal advantages rather than looking for solving societal problems. As far as the present study is concerned, when we compare the benefits from the utilization of research outcomes, other benefits such as material and psychological incentives for the researcher are minimal. This is because even though the material and psychological satisfaction of the researchers are somehow important, the appropriate utilizations of the research outcomes can be more important.

Another misunderstanding, by the BDUEF teachers, is that they excluded themselves from the utilization process of educational research results. In connection to this, some informants said that the utilization process of educational research outcomes is out of the teacher-researchers scope. But teachers, the actual practitioners of the curriculum, have to look various educational research outputs and attempt to incorporate in their day-to-day activities (Keeves, 1988).

From the various institutional factors which have their own role to facilitate or hinder teachers' participation in educational research, incentives for the educational researchers have big influence on the participation of teachers in educational research. The present study understood that other institutional factors such as work load and information dissemination accesses are highly interrelated with the nature of the incentives (rewards) given to the researcher. In other words, since incentives in over load teaching, which is a source of heavy workload, are better than the incentives in research engagement, teachers prefer to involve in overload teaching than doing researches.

Moreover, teachers are more attracted in information dissemination accesses which have better incentives. For instance, they are more attracted and attempt to produce

educational articles for the EJE. On the other hand, they are not interested to participate in AMES and in the Bulletin of their Faculty. This is because the incentives (academic promotions) for the article production in the EJE is more attractive than the incentives (500/350 Eth. Birr) for the participation in AMES/Bulletin of the Faculty.

In general, it was found that personal factors have more power to facilitate/hinder teachers' participation in educational research than institutional factors do. This is because teachers' orientation, perception, interest, commitment, etc. in educational research have a great role in their engagement in educational research. On the other hand, institutional factors do not have any unique negative or positive contribution for educational research activities. Their impact is almost equal for all research activities. Even to some extent, some institutional factors (the library facilities and information dissemination accesses) are more favorable for educational research activities. This may be due to the fact that the Faculty is an education faculty which serves to train the would-be teachers in the near future. As a result, although it is not as expected, the institution has attempted to give priorities for educational research practices.

In conclusion, teachers' knowledge in research (among the different personal factors) and incentives for the researchers (among the different institutional factors) are the most influential variables to determine the act of the teacher in research in general and in educational research in particular. These variables have a strong power to manipulate and direct the teacher-researchers towards/ away from research activities. This is because they can initiate and direct the other personal and institutional factors towards the positive or the negative direction. In line with this idea, one of the informants, I₄, said that "better knowledge in educational research and better incentives for it, have a power to develop interest, commitment and competence; and then able to break other hindering factors to participate in it" (14/01/2004, morning).

To identify the main obstacles for the involvement of teachers in educational research, almost all the informants forwarded that lack of knowledge in educational research, lack of incentives for the researchers, and inefficient and ineffective administration procedures are the main problems in the University in general and in the Education Faculty in particular.

The institution, on the other hand, has some facilities that may help to do and improve research activities in general and educational research activities in particular. In line with this idea, the study understood that internet and computer facilities, library collections, stationary facilities, financial support for the research processes, and making awareness in education through different mechanisms are some of the good attempts taken by the University.

Eventhough it is not as expected, teachers' participation in educational researches has now shown certain improvements from the past. This may be due to different reasons. First, there is an increasing tendency of orienting teachers in education through different mechanisms such as training in distance/face to-face programs, workshops and seminars. Second, in relation to the establishment of BDU, certain budgets have been allocated to support the research activities. Third, to be a good teacher and then a good educational teacher-researcher, professional knowledge such as why to teach and how to teach is very important. Relatively speaking, this principle has improved in its acceptance from past to present.

To improve future participation of teachers in educational research, almost all of the informants uniformly suggested the following points. The first point was that, even though it has started, more awareness in education in general and in educational research in particular through different alternatives such as training, workshops, seminars and the like has to be made. Second, the faculty has to encourage a habit of group research among the teachers. Third, the concerned bodies starting from the university to the national government level have to allocate appropriate incentives/rewards for the researchers.

In one-way or another, informants of the present study also recommended the following points to improve future involvements of the BDUEF teachers in educational research. The suggestions were:

- introducing the culture of action research in education.
- making awareness about the advantages of educational research for the academic officers as well as for administrative workers.
- attempting to improve the financial and related supports to engage in educational research.

- exercising experience sharing among various local/abroad universities by inviting well experienced researchers.
- establishing more information dissemination accesses.
- starting graduate school programs.
- displaying all the available materials in different universities or organizations in the nation through internet. So that any one can utilize them without any physical movement.
- attempting to maintain well experienced and qualified teachers.

Lastly, the study suggested that the nation in general and the University in particular have to recognize truly the advantages of research activities for the better mental and material development of the society. With this assumption, every concerned body has to improve its support for research activities materially as well as financially. Otherwise, simply putting attractive statements in various policies and related documents does not improve different research activities by the teachers as well as by other researchers.

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APPENDIX

Below are questions which focus to the BDUEF teachers' involvement in educational research. Therefore, please give your explanations in relation to the BDUEF teachers' practice in educational research.

Thank You!

Questions for the Informants who Participated in the Detail Interview as well as in the FGD

1. How do you evaluate the role of teachers' knowledge (orientation) in educational research to involve in it? Why?
2. How do you evaluate the role of teachers' perception in educational research to participate in it? Why?
3. How do you see the contribution of teachers' interest in educational research to involve in it? Why?
4. How do you evaluate the role of teachers' commitment in Educational research to participate in it? Why?
5. How do you see the contribution of teachers' competence in educational research to involve in it? Why?
6. How do you evaluate teachers' field of specialization and their participation in Educational research? Why?
7. How do you see teachers' level of qualification and their participation in educational research? Why?
8. How do you evaluate teachers' years of teaching experience and their involvement in educational research? Why?
9. How do you evaluate the administration procedures of the university in facilitating /hindering teachers' involvement in educational research? Why?
10. How do you see the contribution of workload for teachers' involvement in educational research? Why?
11. How do you evaluate the role of the library facilities for teachers' practice in educational research? Why?

12. How do you see the nature of the staffs in facilitating / hindering teachers' activity in educational research? Why?
13. How do you see the role of internet, computer, and other stationary facilities for teachers' practice in educational research? Why?
14. How do you evaluate the role of financial and other supports for teachers' engagement in educational research? Why?
15. How do you evaluate the role of teachers' office environment in their involvement in educational research? Why?
16. How do you see the role of incentives for the researchers to facilitate or hinder teachers' participation in educational research? Why?
17. How do you evaluate the natures and types of information dissemination accesses for teachers' involvement in educational research? Why?
18. How do you see the nature of utilization of research outcomes in facilitating /hindering teachers' engagement in educational research? Why?
19. What are the main hindering factors for teachers' involvement in educational research? Why?
20. Which factors are considered as good facilitating agents for teachers' participation in educational research? Why?
21. How do you evaluate the trends of teachers' practice in educational research from the past to the present? Why?
22. How do you see the present (contemporary) statuses of teachers' participation in educational research? Why?
23. Do you have any suggestion (s) which help to improve teachers' involvement in educational research to the future? Why?