Academic Staff Commitment towards Implementing Curriculum from Multicultural Perspectives in Eastern Ethiopia Higher Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate academic staff commitment to implementing curriculum from multicultural perspectives in Eastern Ethiopian higher education. This problem is instigated by the long-term ignored area or multicultural issues in teaching and learning process in higher education in Ethiopia which, in turn, has become a basis of the increase of plentiful difficulties. To achieve the intended objective, a descriptive design was employed. The data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that the commitment of academic staff was low and there was no gender difference in implementing curriculum. Based on the findings, it is concluded that if academic staff had been committed and used culturally responsive pedagogy, the implementation of a multicultural curriculum would have been ensured. Therefore, based on these findings implications were made for future research and suggested addressing and alleviating salient problems.

Keywords: academic staffs, commitment, implementing, curriculum, multicultural perspectives, Ethiopia higher education

1. Introduction

Globalization and technology have given the globe a boost recently. This is because education has been used as a primary tool for growth in all spheres, resulting in positive and intricate social processes that have led to a variety of changes in a multicultural context in terms of culture, language, ethnicity, gender, religion, and political ideology of a particular country (Arnove, 2013; Banks and Banks, 2010). Education refers to the process of learning that results in the development of students in diverse aspects with different magnitudes, facilitated by the teacher and directed by the curriculum. Education refers to the process of learning that results in the development of students in diverse aspects of different magnitudes, facilitated by the teacher and directed by the curriculum (Hamid, 2016).

In addition to this, education is the most powerful force that determines the pace of development, creates the foundation for mutual existence and tolerance among people, and facilitates cultural, social, and political changes in society. Education and curriculum are inseparable. They are strongly related, and one is the reason for the existence of the other. In line with this, Ornstein and Hankins (2018) strongly noted that curriculum is the heart of education. This implies that without a curriculum, education is lifeless, like a fish out of water.

Therefore, the function of education is the same as the function of a curriculum, except for its scope and size (World Bank, 2008; Education Sector Development Programmed, 2015; Hollins, 2008). The concept of curriculum implementation is the translation of a written curriculum into classroom practices. It refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources specified in a curriculum. It is also the transformation of the intended curriculum into an operational curriculum (Debela and Gaddisa, 2021).

Moreover, multicultural education (MCE) has been transformed, refocused, and conceptualized and is in a continuous state of evolution both in theory and in practice (Nieto, 2017; Gays, 1992). MCE arose primarily in the

1960s and 1970s in American schools, colleges, and universities. Culture is also an important factor in curriculum planning and drives the content of every curriculum. Curriculum implementation from a multicultural perspective is the battleground of violent debates in many societies in light of its role in ensuring human rights and social justice in multicultural societies around the globe in general and in Africa in particular (Banks and Banks, 2010; Debela and Gaddisa, 2021).

The World Bank (2008) noted that sub-Saharan African countries embody multicultural societies. Therefore, in these countries, multicultural education curriculum implementation seems like the right approach within the context of a complex education system that largely embraces this issue. In implementing such a curriculum, it is important to acknowledge the constraints of the past and present and consider the prospects of the future.

Ethiopia is said to be the home of diversity in Africa, and many Ethiopian scholars also call Ethiopia a museum of people because of its cultural diversity. In other words, the nature of the Ethiopian education system is assumed to be guided by the theories and practices of multiculturalism. The country is also pronounced the home of diversity, especially when it comes to higher education institutions (HEIs), which reflect diversity in their nature. In Ethiopia, the number of higher education institutions is increasing, accommodating a large student population. In these institutions of higher learning, serious ethnic tension and political crises among students are very common and frequently occurring phenomena.

2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia has a pressing need to implement a multicultural curriculum in higher education institutions for the following main reasons: These are, among others, the social reality of the country, the influence of cultural growth and development, and the suitability of MCE for effective teaching and learning activities (Yilfashewa and Yonas, 2016). In line with this demand, Ethiopia's Educational Road Map, the Minister of Sciences and Higher Education (2020), provides special emphasis and significance to multicultural issues such as unity and diversity in an educational setting. Along the same line, Ethiopia's new Higher Education Policy and Strategies emphasised the system's real problems and unresolved constraints in terms of access, equity (fairness), efficiency, relevance, and input-related difficulties. The document further indicates that higher education is a great level and the most powerful tool for achieving economic and social mobility. However, Ethiopia's Higher Education strategy (2018) has failed to address the country's social, economic, and political problems as there is a big disparity between the anticipated and actual learning outcomes. In order to reverse the current scenario in higher education institutions, the government and educators must make significant changes that address quality, relevance, access, and equity. Among other things, the mission of higher education should incorporate local and global needs with respect for and regard for the country's rich ethnic and cultural diversity. Instilling knowledge of the ethnic and cultural diversity in Ethiopia, along with its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, inimitable artistic, language, and knowledge traditions, and strong moral values in the youth, is crucial to national pride.

These imply that the main mission of higher education institutions in Ethiopia should be to integrate national and worldwide needs in line with diversity, such as culture, social status, interest, indigenous knowledge, language, and moral issues. Taking such a measure is essential for creating unity in diversity among the multicultural or diversified student population accommodated in Ethiopian public universities (EPUs). Against these felt needs, however, Ethiopia is still struggling at all levels with serious issues of equity, fairness, relevance, quality, tolerance, performance, importance, and access to education, which shape citizens in all aspects. This implies that in the Ethiopian education system in general and in the higher education institutions in particular, there is a gap between the rhetoric and the practices of curriculum implementation as reflected in the actual classrooms (Debela and Gaddisa, 2021).

At a broader level, the world is dynamic, and the contexts therein are remarkably changing. These changes are taking place almost everywhere, including in the classrooms, which in turn make 21st-century classrooms more complex than ever before in terms of student diversity, needs, and interests. Such change and complexity call for curriculum practices from multicultural perspectives that create equal opportunities for all students without any discrimination, regardless of their diversity. In relation to this, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009) suggests that teachers must be able to commit to teaching in increasingly multicultural classrooms, place a greater emphasis on addressing the needs of students with special learning needs, and make it more effective for promoting unity within diversity among students. This implies that the commitment of teachers plays a vital role in multicultural curriculum implementation. Similarly, Debela (2020) reported that a multicultural curriculum programme is capable of transforming its pedagogy and evaluation approach to respond to the transformation of

teachers to multicultural commitment and create possibilities and actions for social justice in multicultural setting reform.

Various studies have been conducted on the application of diversity issues in higher education institutions at the international level (Banks, J. 2007), for example, using a qualitative research approach to enact a diverse learning environment and improve the climate for ethnic diversity in higher education institutions. This study discovered that the number of students on campus is rising with people from all lifestyles, although they are being overlooked. The findings of the study revealed that as the student population on campus grows, so does the difficulty for students of diverse backgrounds to succeed. Moreover, the tremendous role of academic staff is emphasized in the multicultural curriculum implementation, thereby improving equity and quality, enhancing student performance, and establishing a conducive environment for the teaching and learning process in schools in general and particularly in the classroom setting. It also has a vital role in promoting cultural awareness among students, creating an equal learning opportunity for all students, promoting self-identity, and encouraging unity within diversity. The justification is to eradicate segregation in education and to educate and take into account the pressures of institutions of learning and teaching as a whole (Hamdi, 2016; Manning and Baruth, 1996).

From the personal observations of the researcher at the university, there is a gap in the implementation of the curriculum in higher education institutions. This in turn created practical gaps, especially in shaping and creating citizens who respect, appreciate, and accept diversity in the university. This ability to contribute to the social and economic development endeavors of the country and become competent in the world important, including for teachers in the university? The real problems that the researchers observed in the university indicated that there is a gap with academic staff in promoting and implementing the curricula from a multicultural perspective, which would provide equal chances for students without discriminating based on diversity.

As a result, the nation's ethnic texture is deepening today; interracial tensions and conflict, as well as an increasing percentage of students who speak a first language other than English as a second and have different backgrounds, make multicultural settings imperious in 21st-century educational settings such as universities. This implies that diversity is increasing among the nation's student population. Recent and timely debatable issues in EPUs and universities are becoming points of contention due to ethnic, religious, and political ideology rather than centers of excellence in developing good citizenship. This is a serious and critical problem in higher education for CPUs, and it is undeniable. These serious problems may be from internal and external environmental sources in a multicultural setting, and HE needs solutions through research. Therefore, with all these identified gaps in the previous studies, this study was intended to explore academic staff commitment, constraints, and prospects of multicultural curriculum implementation in Ethiopia's higher education institutions (EHEIs). Hence, this study aims to fill in the practical and methodological gaps using a mixed method at Ethiopian public universities (EPU).

Furthermore, Ethiopia is a multicultural and multilingual country. Higher education in Ethiopia has a history of about 70 years. It is only in the past two decades that its access has shown significant improvement. The number of public universities increased from 2 to 50 (Minister of Sciences and Higher Education, 2020). According to current evidence in general, Ethiopian higher education is becoming a small state of Ethiopia by its nature, and different students and instructors come from different backgrounds in terms of adversity. Learning to teach in a culturally diverse society with students from different cultural and experiential backgrounds remains a challenge, and it has constraints. This challenge and constraint encompass questions based on ideology, the purpose of schooling, and teaching competence (ibid.).

Moreover, at a global level, Karina K., Wiebke, Ulrich Kühnen, Özen, Frank, and Klaus (2015) have conducted "the evaluation of intercultural peer training for incoming undergraduate students at an international university in Germany" by using a quantitative method. Their funding was to improve the awareness of cultural diversity (own and others) in the social lives of students. In this case, areas of knowledge and methodological gaps are in line with the present study. In the same way, at the national level, different studies and government reports have been conducted on the issues of curriculum implementation in line with multicultural issues. For instance, the educational road map of Ethiopia (2030) and Hamdi (2015) noted that one of the major constraints in the Ethiopian education system is taking into account equity, gender gaps, promoting unity within diversity, the lack of the creation of citizens who love peace, tolerance, mutual understanding, and the practice of curriculum implementation in line with diversity successfully in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions (EHEIs).

Therefore, the effort by MoE and MoSHE is large and not specific, although the result has not yet been investigated. Therefore, with numerous ascending HEIs in Ethiopia, the value of curriculum implementation from multicultural perspectives in promoting unity within diversity among diversified students and university communities is an

unquestionable issue that is an unsolved and solemn problem in HEIs.

However, there are limited studies conducted in this area based on literature and previous studies on academic staff commitment towards multicultural curriculum implementation. In this regard, most previous studies indicate that the majority of the studies were conducted abroad. For example, we examine factors affecting curriculum implementation among students (Gautama, 2015). Similarly, another study has investigated how curriculum implementation has a limiting and promoting influence on students. Additionally, Robsan (2008) has also been cited based on curriculum implementation theories with reference to science education in developing countries. From this, we can also observe that there is a gap in terms of contents and area, and methodologically, it did not address multicultural curriculum implementation and academic staff commitment in HEIs.

Furthermore, local studies were also conducted by Habtmu Lamma (2011), which focused on "Ethiopian curriculum development and implementation vis-à-vis Schwab's signs of crisis in the field of the curriculum" by using qualitative methods. This study focused on analyzing the Ethiopian practical experiences of curriculum development and implementation in relation to curriculum theory, with a focus on the crisis and renaissance of the curriculum field.

Moreover, regarding curriculum implementation, many studies have been conducted in international and national areas, and their results indicate that educators' students, resources, equipment, school environments, history, philosophy, instructional control, and assessment were the factors that affected the implementation of the curriculum, according to their findings. Similarly, in the Ethiopian context, many studies have been conducted on the development process of HE and primary school curriculum practices. In this case, none of the researchers' studies addressed curriculum implementation related to multicultural education. What is more, a study has been conducted on education and diversity: pupils' perceptions of others and curricular responses at selected sites in Ethiopian elementary schools by using a qualitative method, and the findings indicated that the children were not well aware of the findings in their social environment. Similarly, Ambissa Kenea (2010) also conducted an appraisal of teachers' attitudes and practices towards mixed design. The findings indicated that the perceptions of teachers and the inclusion of the curriculum were low (Robsan, 2008).

On the other hand, a study conducted on multicultural society in the secondary teacher education curriculum using a mixed design discovered that there are missing multicultural issues in secondary schools. From this, we can understand that within curriculum curricula there are also content and area gaps.

Therefore, none of the above studies addressed academic staff commitment in line with multicultural curriculum implementation both at the global and local levels. From previous studies and personal observations by researchers, there is also a gap between theory, policy, and real-world practices in HE.

Moreover, academic staff commitment to curriculum implementation was not discussed here in previous studies. All studies also sought to explore curriculum in practice, and nothing has been said about multicultural curriculum implementation in EHEIs. Therefore, the present study tries to fill those gaps by using mixed research, design, and Higher education is selected for three main reasons:

First, the first researcher had experience at Wollega University, served as student services director for three years, and closely observed the problem on the ground, the gap in the area, and the contentions surrounding the issue. Therefore, those rationales are grounded in the researcher's life experiences and the reality of the problems. Regardless of the equity and existing strong criticism from educators, teachers, and stakeholders on the implementation of the multicultural curriculum in HE education in general and the curriculum in particular in EHEIs, it has become a grave concern for society, the government, educators, teachers, and stakeholders.

Second, it was a question in the researcher's mind as to why educators, teachers, students, and the government continue to raise serious questions about the implementation of the curriculum in line with diversity. Thirdly, why Ethiopia's curriculum is always criticized for equity in higher education in its implementation, especially now in a multicultural educational setting, is a question at the back of the minds of the researchers. Among others, the researchers have found that the issue of multiculturalism is a practical problem in society in general and in higher education settings in particular.

This current study aims to investigate the practical, theoretical, methodological, and knowledge gaps in addressing academic staff commitment to multicultural curriculum implementation in Ethiopian higher education. The researcher felt that the problem was solemn and tried to fill these gaps. To this end, the researcher formulated the following three research questions:

- What is the status of multicultural curriculum implementation in EPUs?

- To what extent are academic staff members committed to the implementation of a multicultural curriculum in EPUs?

- Do biographical variables influence the implementation of the multicultural curriculum in EPUs?

3. Literature Review

In a global setting, people may have different understandings of what a commitment is or what they are committing to, which then causes things to not be done according to expectations. Studies also indicate that there are many factors related to commitment. For instance, according to the findings of the study conducted by Ambissa Kenea (2010) a number of factors related to curriculum .In addition, instructors may commit themselves through their identification and involvement with subjects and students and through their strong identification with subject-oriented or student-oriented practices, but not both.

Likewise, Altun (2017) reported that commitment to teaching would directly and positively contribute to the teaching methodology, comprehension, personality characteristics, and attitudes of educators. From this notion, it can be concluded that academic staff equipped with commitment, passion, and enthusiasm may be role models for not only the learners but also for their colleagues So, it can be said that some education implementers seek more shaped learning environments. Commitment has a key function in terms of success in education and in enhancing opportunities for employment (Debela and Gaddisa, 2021).

Besides, the concept of commitment is widely used everywhere, but it has received little formal investigation. It comprises an implicit explanation of one mechanism producing constant human behavior. Commitments come into being when a person expects or thinks of linking extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity (Mustefa, 2017).

Thus, it can be considered that instructors' commitment is the key factor that influences the teaching-learning process. It is the psychological identification of the individual teacher with the learner, the subject matter, and the objectives of teaching. Some instructors see their commitment as part of their professional identity; it defines them and their work, and they get a lot of enjoyment from it. Moreover, Mustefa, (2017) added that commitment is a psychological attachment to an organization in which people give their loyalty to its values and goals. They also noted that instructors' commitment is the emotional bond they demonstrate with their work. Instructors' commitment has been recognized as one of the most critical factors in effective teaching. Therefore, instructors with a high level of commitment can make a difference in the learning and achievement of their students. They also argued that committed instructors are affiliated with the school they work for and invest their time and energy in promoting it. Hence, it can be deduced that instructors' commitment is associated with creating an effective learning environment in which students enhance their abilities for greater achievement.

4. Methods

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design, and the data were analyzed quantitatively. The main sources of data were the academic staff of Eastern Ethiopian public universities in 2021. Various sampling techniques were used to select representative samples from the total population. It is very difficult to include the entire population in a study at the same time. So, Eastern Ethiopian public universities were selected randomly based on the universities. In the study area, there are five public universities. Two of them were selected by using a simple random sampling technique, particularly the lottery method, in order to offer an equal chance to all the respondents.

A stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of 151 respondents out of 237. The data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaires for this study, which consist of five Likert scales, were developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face to 151 academic staff members at the three universities. Prior to conducting the actual study, a pilot study was conducted with 30 students selected using a simple random sampling technique to confirm the reliability of the instruments. The reliability of the instrument was checked by computing Cronbach's alpha. Based on the research questions, the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and correlation (Croswell, 2001).

5. Results and Discussion

The researcher used this section to analyze and present academic staff commitment to multicultural curriculum implementation in Eastern Ethiopian public universities. Hence, this section deals with the results and discussion of the quantitative data from the questionnaire. The results on demographic variables, the status of multicultural

curriculum implementation, staff commitment towards multicultural curriculum implementation, and significant gender differences were analyzed.

5.1 Status of Multicultural Curriculum Implementation

Table 1. Status of Multicultural Curriculum Implementation

No	Items	N	M	SD
1	Handle the challenges of a multicultural classroom	151	2.94	1.034
2	Adapt my teaching to the cultural diversity of students	151	3.11	1.006
3	Create tolerance for cultural differences	151	2.92	0.97
4	Decrease ethnic stereotyping among students	151	3.2	1.02
5	Creating activities that encourage students' expression of diverse	151	3.92	1.03
6	Using play role techniques that used for reflects of diversity	151	3.06	1.02
7	Adopting teaching that integrates global issues in the curriculum	151	2.22	1.091
8	Organizing multicultural events on cultural diversity day, HE	151	3.03	0.99
9	Applying culturally responsive pedagogy	151	2.12	1.06
10	Create teamwork the importance of tolerance	151	3.18	1.02
	Total	151	2.097	1.09

The mean score (*M*) was used to determine the level of agreement of respondents or instructors on the implementation of the multicultural curriculum in universities. The results were interpreted based on the following cut-off points: M = 1.00–2.00 signifies a low level of practice. M = 3.00–4.00 signifies the level of practice; M = 4.5–5 signifies a high level of implementation.

Table 1: Status of Multicultural Curriculum Implementation Status of Multicultural Curriculum Implementation (n = 151, p< 0.05) As depicted in Table 2, the computed mean scores for each item were almost the same in the teaching practices of teaching instructors' universities in general and the classroom in practice. Accordingly, items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9 show that, as a handle on the challenges of a multicultural classroom (M = 1.034), creating tolerance for cultural differences (M = 2, 92, SD, 0.97), teaching that integrates global issues in the curriculum (M = 2.22, SD, 1.091), and applying culturally responsive pedagogy (M = 2.12, SD, 1.06) in universities are found at low levels of multicultural curriculum implementation, respectively. This implies issues of multiculturalism in the curriculum and a lack of attention from university leaders and academic staff in the teaching and learning process. This implies these results are consistent with the recommendations made in the study by Enyew and Melesse (2018), educators should also have access to professional development opportunities in order to better understand other cultures. Teachers should be trained in culturally sensitive pedagogy. Additionally, Ethnic conflicts and political interference are multifaceted difficulties encountered while implementing MCE in universities (Motuma, 2015; Debela, 2020; Dereje, 2016; Abeya and Ferew, 2019).

Besides, the computed standard deviations of all items displayed above were 1.034, 0.97, 1.091, and 1.06, which were almost the same. This indicates that instructors at the universities agreed on items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8 in the same way. On the other hand, items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 10 indicate that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation is at a medium level. This, along with adapting teaching to the cultural diversity of students (M = 3.11, SD, 1.006), decreasing ethnic stereotyping among students (M = 3.2, SD, 1.02), using play role techniques that are used for reflecting diversity (M = 3.06, SD, 1.02), organising multicultural events, Cultural Diversity Day HE (M = 3.03, SD, 0.99), and creating teamwork on the importance of tolerance (M = 3.18, SD, 1.02), depicts that curriculum implementation from multicultural perspectives is found at a medium level.

The general measurements of the results are summarized in Table 1. It shows that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation in EPUs is low (M = 2.097, SD = 1.09). This result is supported by a study conducted by Robson (2008) entitled "Retrospect and Prospects of Multicultural Teacher Education in the Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia". The results revealed that higher learning institutions' instructors' lack of awareness about multicultural education, the absence of guidelines, and problems related to the curricula in use are some of the key factors that hinder the practice of multicultural education in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

5.2 Academic Staff Members' Commitment toward the Implementation of MCE

Table 2. Academic Staff Members Committed to the IMC (N=151, < 0.05) *P < 0.05 Expected Mean (M): the Expected Average Middle Value in the Scale for Each

No	Items	N	M	SD	EM	T	Df	Sig
1	I promote unity within diversity	151	3.01	1.03	3	45.3	150	.000
2	I committed to dealing with social justice	151	3.1	1.03	3	43.6	150	.000
3	I adhere to an appreciation for diversity	151	2.9	1.79	3	61.1	150	.000
4	I am committed to reducing prejudice among students	151	3.0	1.89	3	53.9	150	.000
5	I demand to create equal opportunities for students	151	3.0	1.09	3	47.9	150	.000
6	I formulated instructional materials within MCE	151	3.0	1.06	3	42.6	150	.000
7	I am committed to creating love, peace, and tolerance	151	3.7	1.13	3	39.5	150	.000
8	I recognized the individual difference	151	3.1	3.4	3	14.2	150	.000
	Overall	151	*23.81*	*13.1*	*24*	*346*	150	.000

On the whole, the instructor member's commitment to the implementation of a multicultural curriculum in EPUs indicates that the observed mean is higher than the expected mean (overall observed mean score: M = 23.81, SD = 13.26). The overall expected mean value (M = 24) Moreover, it is statistically significant (t (150) =3.46, p 0.05). The quantitative results show that an academic staff member has a low commitment to implementing a multicultural curriculum in EPUs (t = 346, df = 150, p = 0.5). This is teachers are typically have positive opinions of MCE, they frequently lack the abilities, knowledge, commitment, and skills needed to successfully integrate multicultural education into their teaching methods (Degega and Mekuria, 2023).

Gender influences instructors toward the implementation of a multicultural curriculum.

Table 3. Gender Influence on Multicultural Curriculum Implementation

	Sex of respondents				
	S S	Df	MS	F	Sig
Between Groups	2 Sig	22	.099	0.874	0.621
Within Groups	14.429	128	0.113		
Total	16.609	150			

In Table 3, a one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the instructor's multicultural curriculum implementation across gender categories. As a result, there was no statistically significant mean difference between male and female attitudes toward multicultural curriculum implementation (F(22,128) =0.879, P =.621). This means that the data did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that there was no significant difference between males and females regarding the implementation of a multicultural curriculum. These findings contradict those of Robson 2014, who discovered a significant difference in points for multicultural curriculum implementation based on gender subcategories (male and female). Therefore, it needs further investigation to close the gap.

6. Conclusion

The results of quantitative data were analyses using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistics like the independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA. Based on the results of this analysis, summaries of the major findings were presented as follows: The study revealed that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation was low. This is coined with Mohammed (2020) findings, who asserted that both professors and students demonstrate little awareness of MCE principles, this study highlights a worrying weakness in the application of MCE inside higher education. Similar to this, Zegeye (2019) noted that although multiculturalism is a key component of modern educational programmes, its actual implementation frequently falls short of expectations.

Moreover, in the study, this low practice of multicultural curriculum is indicated by a lack of attention, misconceptions, and awareness about the importance of multicultural curriculum in HE. So, the result was found to be at a low level in the sample universities. To sum up, quantitative methods of data analysis show that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation in EPUs is low (M = 2.097, SD = 1.09).

This study indicates that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation in HE is low. Therefore, it can be

concluded that there is a lack of attention to the importance and awareness of the MCP from the academic lead and academic staff, respectively. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the commitment of academic staff to multicultural curriculum implementation is low. This implies that there is no awareness creation, a lack of pedagogical skills, knowledge about multicultural education and political influence in the country. In conclusion, this study has shown that there is no significant mean difference between males and females in the implementation of a multicultural curriculum. This means that the data did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that there are significant differences between males and females. The study has some implications for policymakers, curriculum experts, designers, developers, implementers, and teacher educators.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded in line with the findings and conclusions: The study indicated that the status of multicultural curriculum implementation in HE is low. Therefore, it is better if university leaders give attention to diversity and issues, unity, quality of education, and set an agenda for multicultural issues in order to plan, design, implement, and evaluate the practices of the multicultural curriculum by academic staff through their teaching and learning processes. The study realized that the HE academic staff's commitment to the implementation of a multicultural curriculum is also low. Therefore, it is better if university leaders arrange training workshops and regular consultations in which academic staffs are motivated, devoted, and committed to solving the low commitment of academic staff. Finally, strategies on how to mitigate the lack of commitment to multicultural curriculum implementation in EPUs include creating awareness among students and staff about multicultural issues, training on intercultural communication and culturally responsive pedagogy, providing guidance, counseling, and mentoring, and treating students equally. In short, to overcome blockers, it is necessary to adopt multicultural pedagogical skills and improve content integration in the higher education curriculum. A successful multicultural curriculum implementation means that the educational programmes implemented in the Ethiopian higher education system must be able to take into account the different cultures and cultural needs. Educators must also use professional development in order to increase their understanding of different cultures. If the government utilizes these approaches and strategies, Ethiopian higher education might indeed become a model for other diversified countries.

8. Limitations and suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers conduct the same research by using classroom observation and FGD, it will add new input and further validate the present research. Individuals such as students, education experts at different levels, and private universities were not included in this study. If so, this study might be validated in related issues and be able to be the target group in the future. Further research can also be conducted on the perceptions, awareness, and attitudes of staff and university students towards multicultural cultural education for cultural unity and tolerance and to investigate the effect of demographic factors on staff perceptions, awareness, attitudes, and practice towards cultural diversity in education. Specifically, further studies will be needed in the areas of:

• Tolerance's role in fostering national integration in Ethiopian higher education

• Designing a Multicultural Curriculum in Higher Education

• Higher education and managing diversity

• The role of higher education instructors in promoting unity, diversity, and tolerance among students' in

• Awareness, attitude, and knowledge of academic staff towards implementing a multicultural curriculum in HE

• Trends in multicultural education in Ethiopian higher education: policy vs. practice

• Managing diversity in Ethiopian higher education in the 21st century: challenges and opportunities

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Competing interests

We confirm or declare that there is no competing interest on this study.

Informed consent

Obtained.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.