



THE STATUS OF ADDRESSING DIVERSITY IN THE CURRICULA OF ETHIOPIAN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THE GENERAL FEATURES OF DIVERSITY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

The study was targeted to examine the status of addressing diversity in the modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions. Accordingly, quantitative content analysis research method was employed and a total of 25 curricula were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques and included in the study. Data were collected from these curricular documents through observation checklist developed based on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum and through direct observation of these and other related documents. The checklist was pilot tested to enhance its validity and reliability. The collected data were analyzed using frequency counts, mean scores, standard deviations, ANOVA and textual descriptions/narrations. The findings revealed that the curricula under investigation did not address diversity in their constituents and rated at the status of exclusivity in most of the aspects considered except on few issues that are related to methodology and assessment mechanisms which were rated at average (inclusivity) level. In addition, there was no significant difference observed among the curricula from different program categories/bands found in the country. Hence, much is expected from policy makers, educational leaders and practitioners of higher education and other concerned stakeholders to work restlessly to improve these higher education curricula in addressing diversity and making higher education responsive to diversity which will enhance students learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, issues of diversity, globalization versus contextualization, technological advancements, availability of knowledge explosion and the rest others became the challenges faced the curriculum, its development, implementation and evaluation processes. As a result, recent studies in the areas of curriculum started giving due attention to these and other cross-cutting issues that are directly or indirectly affecting curriculum and students learning (O'Neill, 2010, 2015; Ornstein & Hunckins, 2009).

Accordingly, the present study focuses on the Ethiopian higher education curricula with particular references to the undergraduate programs and devoted to examine the constituents of the curricula for its responsiveness in addressing issues of diversity. However, curriculum issues are complex to discuss as various stakeholder experiences curriculum in different ways due to several reasons.

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Regarding this, Barnett & Coate (2005) as well as Fraser & Bosanquet (2006) mentioned that the term 'curriculum' used within the higher education context can mean different things to different groups. As a result, some authors view curriculum as a *characteristic of schools* (Tyler, 1949), all of the learning of students which is planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals (Kerr, 1968), and all the learning which is planned or guided by the school, carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the class (Doll, 1978).

On the other hand, some other authors also look curriculum in terms of the *elements it comprises* and describe it as aspects incorporating content, teaching methods and purpose (Tyler, 1978); contents or objectives for which schools hold students accountable (Posner, 1995). This implies that students are the focus of any curriculum in a school. Tanner & Tanner (1980 & 2007) on their parts summarize curriculum as a *multi-dimensional description* in that it is one or more between cumulative tradition of organized knowledge; race experiences; models of thought; planned learning environment; cognitive/ affective content and processes; instructional plans, ends and/or outcomes; and technology system of production. According to Marsh & Willis (1995 & 2007) curriculum is an

interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under the guidance of school and for Biggs & Tang (2011) it is a description of course and program. Undergraduate curricula are also defined as a formal academic plan for the learning experiences of students in pursuit of a college degree.

Therefore, the term *curriculum*, is broadly defined and includes goals for student learning (skills, knowledge and attitudes); content (the subject matter in which learning experiences are embedded); sequence (the order in which concepts are presented); learners; instructional methods and activities; instructional resources (materials and settings); evaluation (methods used to assess student learning as a result of these experiences); and adjustments to teaching and learning processes, based on experience and evaluation. As can be observed from the aforementioned definitions of curriculum, there are only a few definitions amongst others that portray contradictions on how curriculum can be viewed. You can find out that most of these definitions stress on objectives, contents, learning experiences and methodologies. Some have incorporated one or another element and ignored others. Hence, the present research considers the broad definitions described latter for this particular study. Next, devotes will be made to define diversity and discuss some of the major features of diversity responsive curriculum as the present study based on that.

The term “diversity” has become one of the most frequently used words in social sciences and education nowadays. Moreover, human diversity is a salient and challenging issue in most countries. Furthermore, it is difficult and challenging to have a single agreed up on definition for the term diversity. As a result researchers in the field of education and social sciences tried to coin its meanings in various ways. For O’Reilly et al (1998) diversity is a subjective phenomenon, created by group members themselves who on the basis of their different social identities categorize others as similar or dissimilar. Other studies also define diversity as “differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self” (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004, p. 1008), or as a variation that exists within and across groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and social status (Banks *et al.*, 2005). Loden & Rosner (1991) also define diversity as that which differentiates one group of people from another along *primary* and *secondary dimensions*. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that diversity is part of the human experience; we are by our birth, inherently unique and diverse. It is because of the fact that we have different values, different IQs, different body structures, different genetic predispositions, and many other naturally-occurring elements that make us diverse (Krahenbuhl, 2013). Diversity in this research is understood as any form of differences that exist among individuals and groups and be manifested in terms of many of indicators which influences one’s own identity.

As clearly demonstrated on the research title/topic, attention was given to the general features of diversity responsive curriculum in examining the status of addressing diversity in the curricula. Hence, UNESCO (2009) mention that features of diversity responsive curriculum focuses on those manifestations that characterize a given curriculum to be diversity-oriented one. For Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007)

and Nelson Liard (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014), the general features of diversity responsive curriculum are those characteristics that must be taken in to considerations in examining a given curriculum to categorize it to the levels of *exclusive*, *inclusive* and *transformed* in addressing diversity in its constituents.

Hence, the followings are among the general features of diversity responsive curriculum briefed by UNESCO (2009) after reviewing the literatures existing at that time. These include:

- Fostering the principles of non-discrimination, appreciation of diversity, and tolerance
- Making human rights and learners rights part of its constituents
- Addressing the co-existences of rights with responsibilities
- Making its constituents inclusive of all the learners
- Making its contents relevant to the needs and futures of the learners
- Possessing programmes, learning materials and teaching-learning methods well adapted and relevant to the lives of the learners
- Allowing for variations in ways of doing things (flexibility in working methods)
- Incorporating crosscutting issues in its content
- Sensitivity to gender, cultural identity and language backgrounds of the learners
- Encouraging discussions about education for sustainable developments
- Reflecting the visions and goals of the wider developments in the country
- Having mechanisms through which feedbacks gathered and integrated by taking new visions and circumstances in to consideration (ibid).

Supporting these ideas, Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007) and Nelson Liard (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014) also listed several features of diversity responsive curriculum among which most of them are overlapping with what is already discussed by UNESCO (2009). Thus, a diversity responsive curriculum addresses the learner’s cognitive, emotional, social and creative development. UNESCO (2009) further stipulates that diversity responsive curriculum is based on the four pillars of education for the twenty-first century—*learning to know, to do, to be* and *to live together*. It has an instrumental role to play in fostering *tolerance and promoting human rights*, and is a powerful tool for *transcending cultural, religious, gender and other differences*. An inclusive curriculum takes *gender, cultural identity and language background into consideration*. It involves *breaking negative stereotypes* not only in textbooks but also, and more importantly, in teacher’s attitudes and expectations. *Multilingual approaches* in education, in which language is recognized as an *integral part of a student’s cultural identity*, can act as a source of inclusion. Furthermore, mother tongue instruction in the initial years of school has a positive impact on learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2009). Hence, the followings are among the general features of diversity responsive curriculum that the present researchers summarized by critically examining the features discussed by Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007), Nelson Laird (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014) and UNESCO (2009). Therefore, a diversity

responsive curriculum is known in suggesting: (a) differentiating instruction, (b) individualizing instruction, (c) maintaining high expectations, (d) using examples from a variety of diversified groups, (e) integrating contents from a variety of diversified groups, (f) using cooperative learning strategies, (g) using independent learning strategies, (h) considering students prior learning experiences, (i) availing well organized and developed courses with its detailed contents, (j) encouraging the engagements of all students in their works, (k) integrating diversified learning activities, (l) Promoting interdisciplinary connections, (m) inculcating mechanisms to monitor various learning needs, (n) suggesting mechanisms to adjust teaching during instruction based on students learning needs, (o) suggesting provisions of prompt and constructive feedbacks, (p) using research based practices, (q) suggesting how to make the instruction challenging, relevant and engaging, (r) encouraging diversity sensitivity discussions, (s) suggesting the importance of teaching about relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments, (t) suggesting mechanisms of role modelling those relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments in the respective discipline, (u) suggesting giving due considerations to students with marginalized backgrounds, (v) suggesting mechanisms for creating responsive and respectful classroom climate, (w) clearly showing the importance of teaching diverse students in enhancing one's own competencies, (x) encouraging the acknowledgment and utilization of students real-life experiences in teaching, (y) suggesting varying teaching and learning as well as assessment approaches, (z) encouraging the teachers to update themselves with diversity responsive contents, and encouraging the teachers to update themselves with diversity responsive pedagogies (Kitano, 1997; Mullennix, 2007; Nelson Laird, 2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014; UNESCO, 2009).

Studying diversity responsiveness of a curriculum at all levels and specifically at higher education institutions are new phenomena across the globe. As a result of this, it is possible to say that the area is less researched and the efforts made so far in western and European countries could be taken as best examples though their prevalence is very less in African and other less developed countries including Ethiopia. Therefore, the present researchers used this fertile ground as golden opportunity to study the status of addressing diversity in the undergraduate program's curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions by taking in to considerations the general features of diversity responsive curriculum and use them as metaphors to make investigations and finally categorizing these curricula either to exclusive, inclusive or transformed level as stated by Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007) and Nelson Liard (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014). Diagrammatically, it was conceptualized as:

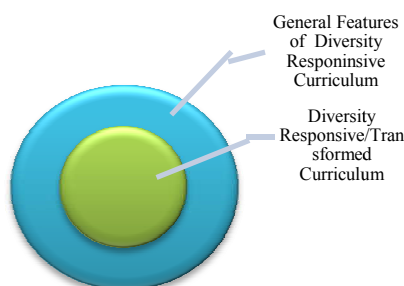


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for studying curricular diversity responsiveness

As can be seen from figure 1 above, the general features of diversity responsive curriculum are covering the outer circle which means that they include diversity responsive curriculum. Hence, it is possible to say that a given curriculum is said to be transformed (seen in the inner circle) in addressing diversity when it reflects all the features of diversity responsive curriculum at the best status otherwise could be grouped either to inclusive if it reflects these features to some extent or be exclusive if it does not reflect these features.

Therefore, the general objective of this particular study was to examine the status of addressing diversity in the undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions by focusing on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum and determine their categories as evaluated in terms of exclusivity, inclusivity and transformed levels. Specifically the study was planned to:

- Examine the status of addressing diversity in the undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions by focusing on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum and determine the categories (exclusive, inclusive and transformed) to which diversity responsiveness categories do these curricula belongs.
- Discover whether significant difference is observed or not among programs from different bands/program categories in addressing diversity in their respective undergraduate curricula.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is clear that selection of research methods needs considering several factors that are helpful in determining the nature and type of research methods to be employed (Best & Khan, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2012; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010). Based on these principles, the present researchers have employed a quantitative research approach/design with content analysis research method which was assumed relevant in studying the curricular documents under investigation.

As data sources, the modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate curricular documents found under implementation in Ethiopian public higher education institutions since 2013 were the major ones while other documents supporting its processes of development and implementation were also considered as additional sources.

Regarding the sample size and sampling techniques used, the researchers have selected and included a total of twenty five (25) out of 67 modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula found under implementations since 2013 in Ethiopian public higher education institutions from all the six bands/program categories. For further information in this regards, please see the table one presented below. Stratified sampling technique followed by simple random sampling technique was used to make the selections proportional and representatives to all.

Table 1 Undergraduate programs' curricula selected with their respective bands

S.N	Bands/Programs' Category	Name of the undergraduate programs from which the curricula taken
1	Band One: Engineering and Technology	Civil Engineering Electrical and Computer Engineering Mechanical Engineering Computer Sciences
2	Band Two: Natural and Computational Sciences	Chemistry Mathematics Physics Statistics
3	Band Three: Medicine and other Health Sciences	Anaesthesia Midwifery Nursing Pharmacy Medical Laboratory Technology
4	Band Four: Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	Agricultural Economics Animal Sciences Natural Resource Management Plant Sciences
5	Band Five: Business and Economics	Accounting and Finance Economics Management
6	Band Six: Social Sciences, Humanities, Law and others	English Language and Literature History and Heritage Management Law Psychology Sociology

Source: MoE (2012)

The above table 1 clearly stipulates the lists of the programs from which these curricula were taken.

The data from these curricular documents were collected using content/document analysis technique. The data involves both quantitative and qualitative aspects in which the quantitative aspects were collected through checklist having a total of 27 items developed based on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum with three major rating levels/scales represented as: 1=not at all (*exclusive*), 2=to some extent (*inclusive*) and 3=to a full extent (*transformed*). The checklist was used after piloting and standardizing them in that all the 27 items included were tested for their validity and reliability by employing the necessary validity enhancement and reliability testing mechanisms. Accordingly, the items included in the checklist were tested after the pilot study and the results showed that all have the Cronbach's Alpha values greater than or equal to 0.937 which can be considered as excellent result. The qualitative data were collected through direct quotes and paraphrasing of the ideas considered relevant from the curricula under investigation to support the data collected quantitatively. Accordingly, some of the texts (sentences/statements, paragraphs, etc) considered relevant and found in the curricula were paraphrased or taken as direct quotes in its qualitative sense to further elaborate the status of these curricula in addressing diversity.

As far as the methods of data analysis concerned, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in that from descriptive one: frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviations were computed to investigate the status of addressing issues of diversity in the higher education curricula, while from inferential statistics: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed in order to scrutinize whether significant difference is observed among the bands/program categories in addressing issues of diversity in their respective curricula. Cronbach's Alpha was also used to calculate the test of reliabilities of the instrument (checklist)

used to collect the data. In addition, the qualitative data collected were also analysed using textual descriptions/narrations of ideas theme by theme to supplement the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this part, the data obtained from the curricular documents included in the study through the instruments discussed under methodology were presented and discussed to reveal the status of addressing diversity in the curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions with particular emphasis on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum. Hence, the first section is focusing on the data presentation while the second section deals with discussion part.

Presentation of the Results

As already mentioned under methodology part, a total of 25 modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula were included in this study as a sample and taken from all the six bands discussed above. In examining these selected curricular documents, checklist developed based on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum was used. Accordingly, a curriculum could be *exclusive*, *inclusive* and *transformed* as examined for its responsiveness in addressing diversity and that is represented as: 1=not at all (*exclusive*), 2=to some extent (*inclusive*) and 3=to a full extent (*transformed*). In addition, some qualitative descriptions were also made to demonstrate the extent to which these curricula are addressing issues of diversity (as manifested through the general features of diversity responsive curriculum). In addition, efforts were made to check whether significant difference is observed among the different bands/program categories in addressing diversity in their respective curricula.

As can be seen from table 2 below, the status of addressing issues of diversity in the curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions were examined by focusing on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum. Hence, the mean scores calculated for each of the 27 items were found within the ranges of 1.08 and 2.00. As discussed above, mean scores found around '1' represents the exclusivity of the curriculum while mean scores found around 2 represents inclusivity. Therefore, the mean scores of 22 items out of 27 items presented above have mean values ranging from 1.08 to 1.12 which is nearest to 1 that represents exclusivity of the curriculum in addressing issues discussed under each item.

However, the rest five items (items number 6, 7, 8, 11 and 25) have the mean values ranging from 1.96 to 2.00 and representing the inclusivity level. On the other hand, the qualitative assessments made at this level also witnessed the less responsiveness of these curricula for diversity in that it was so difficult to get even some insights that can be taken as an example except in the cases of methodologies and assessment mechanisms. The 1994 education and training policy, the strategic documents and other guidelines (proclamation and academic rules and regulation) governing the higher education institutions are suggesting that active learning methods including cooperative learning and continuous assessments are among the issues to be addressed well in the curriculum at all levels. Hence, it is based on these

principles that methods of teaching and learning as well as assessment mechanisms got due attention in all the curricula examined as compared to the other components of the curriculum though still the way the methods and assessments were treated have also some limitations. The objectives stated, the contents included, the learning activities presented and the rest others are not diversity responsive and rather they are presented in an exclusive manner.

difference was observed among these programs across the different bands/program categories in addressing issues of diversity in their respective curricular constituents and the result obtained was 0.522 which was not significant at 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis that stated as “There is significant difference observed among program categories/bands in addressing issues of diversity in the modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate curricula of the Ethiopian higher education institutions as examined in terms of

Table 2 The status of addressing issues of diversity in higher education curricula as examined in terms of the general features of diversity responsive curriculum

S.N	Items used to examine the status of addressing issues of diversity in the curricula based on the general features of diversity responsive curriculum	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Differentiating instruction	25	27	1.08	0.277
2	Individualizing instruction	25	28	1.12	0.332
3	Maintaining high expectations	25	28	1.12	0.332
4	Using examples from a variety of diversified groups	25	27	1.08	0.277
5	Integrating contents from a variety of diversified groups	25	28	1.12	0.332
6	Using cooperative learning strategies	25	50	2.00	0.000
7	Using independent learning strategies	25	49	1.96	0.200
8	Considering students prior learning experiences	25	50	2.00	0.000
9	Availing well organized and developed courses in its detailed constituents	25	28	1.12	0.332
10	Encouraging the engagements of all students in their works	25	27	1.08	0.277
11	Integrating diversified learning activities	25	49	1.96	0.200
12	Promoting interdisciplinary connections	25	27	1.08	0.277
13	Inculcating mechanisms to monitor various learning needs	25	28	1.12	0.332
14	Suggesting mechanisms to adjust teaching during instruction based on students learning needs	25	28	1.12	0.332
15	Suggesting provisions of prompt and constructive feedbacks	25	27	1.08	0.277
16	Using research based practices	25	28	1.12	0.332
17	Suggesting how to make the instruction challenging, relevant and engaging	25	27	1.08	0.277
18	Encouraging diversity sensitivity discussions	25	28	1.12	0.332
19	Suggesting the importance of teaching about relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments	25	27	1.08	0.277
20	Suggesting mechanisms of role modelling those relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments in the respective discipline	25	27	1.08	0.277
21	Suggesting giving due considerations to students with marginalized backgrounds	25	27	1.08	0.277
22	Suggesting mechanisms for creating responsive and respectful classroom climate	25	28	1.12	0.332
23	Clearly showing the importance of teaching diverse students in enhancing one's own competencies	25	27	1.08	0.277
24	Encouraging the acknowledgment and utilization of students real-life experiences in teaching	25	28	1.12	0.332
25	Suggesting varying teaching and learning as well as assessment approaches	25	50	2.00	0.000
26	Encouraging the teachers to update themselves with diversity responsive contents	25	27	1.08	0.277
27	Encouraging the teachers to update themselves with diversity responsive pedagogies	25	28	1.12	0.332
	Valid N (list wise)	25			
	Sources of Information = Undergraduate Modularized & Nationally Harmonized Curricular Documents				

In addition to this, the researchers have tried to check whether significant difference was observed among the six bands (program categories) discussed above in addressing diversity in their respective modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions and the results are presented as follows.

Table 3 Test of significance on the difference observed among the curricula from different program categories (bands) in addressing issues of diversity as examined in terms of the general features of diversity responsive curriculum

ANOVA					
General features of diversity responsive curriculum					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.690	5	.138	.866	.522
Within Groups	3.030	19	.159		
Total	3.720	24			
Sources of Information = Modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate curricular documents					

As can be seen from table 3 above, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated for the 25 curricula from the six program categories /bands to check whether significant

the general features of diversity responsive curriculum” was rejected.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE RESULTS

Under this section, efforts have made by the researchers to discuss the results presented above to further interpreted meanings out of it and to reach at conclusions. Hence, the first point addressed under the result was examining the status of addressing issues of diversity in the modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions as explored in terms of the general features of diversity responsive curriculum. Hence, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 27 items presented in table 2 and the result revealed that 22 out of the 27 items were with mean scores ranging from 1.08 to 1.12 which is categorized under the scale represented by ‘1’ that implies *exclusivity* of the curricula in addressing the issues discussed under these items. Therefore, it is possible to say that the curricula did not suggest differentiating instructions, individualizing instructions, maintaining high expectations for students, using examples from a variety of diversified groups and integrating contents from a variety of diversified groups. Moreover, it did

not suggest availing well organized and developed courses in its detailed constituents and encouraging the engagements of all students in their works. In the same vein, the curricula under discussion still did not suggest promoting interdisciplinary connections, inculcating mechanisms to monitor various learning needs, mechanisms to adjust teaching during instruction based on students learning needs, provisions of prompt and constructive feedbacks and using research based practices. Correspondingly, it did not suggest the mechanisms of making the instruction challenging, relevant and engaging; encouraging diversity sensitivity discussions, the importance of teaching about relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments; mechanisms of role modelling those relevant behaviour, values, respects and treatments in the respective discipline. It did not suggest giving due considerations to students with marginalized backgrounds, mechanisms for creating responsive and respectful classroom climate, clearly showing the importance of teaching diverse students in enhancing one's own competencies, encouraging the acknowledgment and utilization of students real-life experiences in teaching. Finally, the curricula did not encourage the teachers to update themselves with diversity responsive contents and pedagogies. As revealed by researches conducted by Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007), Nelson Laird (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014) and UNESCO (2009) a given can be categorized as *exclusive or not considered as diversity responsive* if it could not address the issues addressed under the general features of diversity responsive curriculum and other related issues. Therefore, the curricula under discussions can be considered as non-diversity responsive or found at the status of exclusivity as far as the 22 items discussed above are concerned.

However, the results from the rest five items (items number 6, 7, 8, 11 and 25) included in the study showed that the curricula could be rated at inclusivity stage in addressing the issues listed under these items with mean values ranging from 1.96 to 2.00. Hence, it was found out that relatively the ideas (using cooperative learning strategies, using independent learning strategies, considering students prior learning experiences, integrating diversified learning activities, and varying teaching and learning as well as assessment approaches) were suggested in the curricula to some extent and considered represented in a fair ways in the curricula as compared to the rest others. In addition, the teaching and learning methods (mostly some active learning methods including cooperative learning and individual activities), and the assessment mechanisms (both continuous and summative mechanisms) were presented in the diversified manner at the different levels of the curricula (curriculum, module and course levels). In this regards, therefore, the curricula were judged at an average level (*inclusive level*) in entertaining these issues of diversity. Supporting this, Kitano (1997), Mullennix (2007), Nelson Laird (2005, 2010, 2011 & 2014) and UNESCO (2009) specify that if the curricula are investigated for its diversity responsiveness through the general features of diversity responsive curriculum shows an average result/s, then, it would be categorized as *inclusive curriculum* that is better than the exclusive but need further improvements to become *transformed and fully diversity responsive* one. Therefore, if the issues mainly focusing on methodology and assessment described above with these five items are taken in to consideration, one can say that the curricula under discussions

are inclusive but not for the rest of the 22 items discussed above.

The qualitative data from these curricular documents and the other policy and strategic related documents referred by the researchers also revealed that attention has been given to the methodology and assessment components of the curricula at all levels of education in Ethiopia in that it suggests student-centred methods and continuous assessment mechanisms at all levels. Strengthening this, the 1994 Ethiopian Education and Training Policy, the 2009 Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation, the 2012 Nationally Harmonized Academic Rules and Regulations/ Legislations of the Ethiopian higher education institutions and the rest other strategic documents were among the official documents that suggest student-focused teaching and learning methods and assessment mechanisms.

Furthermore, efforts were made to check whether significant difference was observed among the different curricula from various academic programs' categories/ bands in addressing diversity in their constituents and the result indicated that there was no significant difference observed as the result obtained was 0.522 which was not significant at 0.05. Hence, it is possible to deduce that this result can be generalized to the whole modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions.

As a cumulative effect, the status of addressing diversity in the curricula of the Ethiopian public higher education institutions were evaluated at the level of *exclusive* that is representing the *non-responsiveness* of these curricula as examined in terms of the general features of diversity responsive curriculum. Moreover, there was no significant difference observed among curricula from different bands/program categories in addressing diversity in their constituents as scrutinized through ANOVA test.

CONCLUSIONS

As already stated under introduction, the main purpose of this research was to investigate the status of addressing diversity in the modularized and nationally harmonized undergraduate programs' curricula of the Ethiopian higher education institutions. Hence, the analysis and discussions made on the results revealed that the curricula under investigations did not address diversity in their constituents and rated at the status of *exclusivity* in most of the aspects considered except on few issues that are related to methodology and assessment mechanisms which were rated at average (*inclusivity*) level. In addition, there was no significant difference observed among the curricula from different program categories/bands found in the country. Therefore, the undergraduate curricula of the Ethiopian higher education institutions were identified as *non-responsive to diversity* that needs due attention to make the higher education relevant and need based to the learners. Hence, much is expected from policy makers, educational leaders and practitioners of higher education and other concerned stakeholders to work restlessly to improve these higher education curricula in addressing diversity and making higher education responsive to diversity which will enhance students learning.

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