

EDITORIAL NOTE**A Glimpse at the Long Journey of College of Education****Reda Darge Negasi (Professor)**

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Welcome!

Many of you are beginning to read what we hope will be a fascinating story of the College of Education (here after, CoE): Fascinating because you will be seeing yourself in many of the experiences described in the long journey of the CoE. Presently, Bahir Dar University (BDU) is celebrating its 60th and College of Education's 50th anniversaries. Considering this, Bahir Dar Journal of Education (BJE) published its first special issue in the area of Educational Research on CoE/BDU. The objectives of BJE's special issue are to: (1) add its own flavor to the 50th and 60th anniversaries of CoE and BDU, respectively; (2) contribute its part in our efforts for indexing and abstracting BJE, (3) transform BJE from a bi-annual journal to a tri-annual journal, and (4) fill in at least one identified educational problem (BJE Editorial Office, 2022). To attain these objectives, six research articles focusing on CEBS/BDU are published in this special issue.

Now, we feel significantly great joy when we describe the mesmerizing fifty years journey of the CoE as follows.

The College of Education (CoE) is one of the well-established colleges at Bahir Dar University. It evolved from the former Pedagogical Sciences Department. The Academy of Pedagogy, later Pedagogical Science Department and Faculty/College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, was established in 1972 by the tripartite agreement of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with UNESCO and UNDP (Bahir Dar University, 2023).

When the Academy of Pedagogy was inaugurated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in 1973, the department started to train learners in the field of Pedagogical Sciences which was a major study area. The general purpose was to train multipurpose primary education professionals capable of adopting primary education to rural life and rural development. The major impetus to the inception of the then Academy of Pedagogy was shortage of teacher educators and the need for quality of education and Ethiopianization of the staff of the Teachers Training Institutes (TTIs).

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After that, the department of Pedagogical Sciences has expanded its programs in the course of 50 years, including the training of primary and secondary school teachers, educational leaders, curriculum experts, adult and community development workers, special needs education experts, measurement and evaluation experts, social psychologists, educational psychologists and school psychologists at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to satisfy the massive demand for qualified human resources in the Ethiopian education sector. Consequently, the Pedagogical Science department was upgraded into faculty level and named as Faculty of Education and Behavioral Sciences and later into a college and named College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. Considering the vision of becoming a center of excellence, BDU, has restructured the CEBS in 2022/23. Currently, CEBS is renamed as College of Education (CoE).

Parallel to teaching and training, the college has maintained the culture of conducting various problem-solving educational research and hosting series institutional, national as well as international conferences, thereby disseminating the results to the public for the last 40 years. The popular May Annual International Educational Conference (MAIEC) organized by the college of Education has been playing important roles in disseminating educational research outputs. Currently, the college is upgraded into a Center of Excellence in Teacher Education and Educational Leadership.

Based on the great attention paid by the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the strengthening of higher education, Bahir Dar University was inaugurated in 2000 by merging two sister institutions: Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute (which later transformed itself into Bahir Dar Institute of Technology), founded in 1962, and Bahir Dar Teachers' College launched in 1972. Polytechnic Institute was set about under the auspices of the then Soviet Union; while Bahir Dar Teachers' College, which was the outgrowth of the Academy of Pedagogy, was affiliated with Addis Ababa University (BDU, 2021). Since its inauguration, Bahir Dar University has immensely expanded; and, thus, currently it is among the largest public universities in Ethiopia with the large number of academic units, administrative and support staffs as well as students.

BDU has various commitments in teaching, community service, and research which are the pillars of its mission. The university has maintained the culture of conducting various researches and disseminating the results to the public for many years. Bahir Dar University, according to the 2019 Cambridge University Report, has been ranked in the top 20 Sub-Saharan African Universities in Educational research. BDU has also been ranked first in the higher education differentiation scrutiny (to become a research university) by the Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Higher Education (BDU, 2023). The fact that BDU was one of the top 20 Sub-Saharan Universities in Educational Research in 2019, according to Cambridge University report, is evidence of the CoE's and IPER'S (Institute of Pedagogical and Educational Research) visible contribution (Firew, 2023). As the university is aspiring to become one of the ten leading research-intensive universities in Africa and the first choice in Ethiopia by 2030, the university has taken research seriously and been aggressively involved in rigorous and demand-driven research.

On internalization and partnership front, Bahir Dar University has maintained over 190 partnerships with different higher learning institutions (HEIs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and

Governmental Organizations (GOs). Of these, over 100 are international partnerships with different universities in different parts of the world (BDU, 2023). Seen from these angles, Bahir Dar University is not simply a place; it is a resource institution.

Currently, Bahir Dar University is celebrating its 60th and College of Education's 50th Anniversary. To add its own flavor to these anniversaries, BJE (a reputable journal of BDU) published its first special issue in the area of educational research focusing on CoE/BDU. A summary of the findings of the research articles are presented as follows.

The first article of the special issue deals with a topic on "Research Productivity of Bahir Dar University: A Bibliometric Overview". The study employs a 22-year dataset of publications from Scopus to analyze research output affiliated with Bahir Dar University as represented in the international domain. The analysis encompasses several dimensions, including overall productivity, collaboration patterns, dominant research areas, primary publication outlets, and languages of publication. The findings reveal a notable increase in research productivity at the university since 2010 in the areas of Medicine, Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Social Sciences, and Engineering. The authors suggested that by working hard to fulfill international journal requirements, the university's journals, which the Ministry of Education has accredited, be indexed in reputable international journal databases to enhance their visibility.

The second manuscript of the special issue emphasizes on "The Pedagogy of Teacher Education in Ethiopia: Reconstructing Understandings and Practices on Teaching about Teaching and Learning to Teach". This study sufficiently provides data on the existing empirical findings on the pedagogy of Teacher education in Ethiopia signifying that the quality of teacher education depends heavily on the practice of teacher educators and the learning experiences of student teachers. The empirical findings further revealed that the pedagogy of teacher education is conceptualized as teaching about teaching and learning to teach. Based on primary data obtained from teacher educators and student teachers, and secondary data sources and the researcher's professional experiences, the paper examined and reflected on Ethiopian teacher education pedagogy. The findings revealed deep-rooted assumptions that student teachers learn to teach by learning theories and facts of different courses through lectures, discussions, and group work. Teacher educators in the study characterize their typical classroom as a combination of 'reviewing of the previous lesson, explanation, discussion, and lesson summary'. Based on the findings of the study, the author suggested that efforts to improve the quality of education in general and teacher education, in particular, should prioritize the critical examination and reform of teacher educators' preparation, professional development of teacher educators, and pedagogical practices at teacher education colleges and universities.

The third article of the special issue focuses on examining the perceptions of Bahir Dar University teacher educators about the major functions of education in Ethiopia. The study employed the four major philosophies of education as a theoretical framework to examine the perception of teacher educators on the functions of education and their positions concerning the functions of education in Ethiopia. The findings obtained from a qualitative research approach focusing on the case study design revealed the existence of multifarious perceptions among teacher

educators. Specifically, the teacher educators were found to be proponents of the Perennialist, Essentialist, and Progressivist educational purposes. Educational purposes advocated by the Progressive educational philosophy were also found to be important. The Social Reconstructionist function of education, however, was not given an adequate place. Based on the findings, implications are forwarded for the country's teacher education programs and policymaking initiatives.

The fourth article of the special issue, with the title "Becoming a Research University as a Strategic Choice in Bahir Dar University: A Resource Dependency Perspective", explores how the need for research university in Ethiopia is justified, practiced, and could be improved using the strategic tactics of the resource dependency perspective. Bahir Dar University was taken as a case to understand the need for research university and its practices. Document analysis was used as a source of data. Analysis of various institutional and national secondary sources revealed that the existing uncertainties related to the critical resources provoked Bahir Dar University to devise a strategic choice of becoming a research university. The uncertainties are justified in terms of economic, political, and institutional conditions. The authors further argue that although the university envisioned to become a research university by 2025, the existing institutional and national conditions seem to be immature to sustain the necessary resources and conditions that a research university requires. Based on the resource dependency theory, the authors suggested measures that need to be taken so as to realize BDU's strategic choice of becoming a Research University.

Then, in the fifth article of the present issue we find action research report with the title focusing on "Using a Cooperative Learning Strategy to Increase Undergraduate Students' Engagement and Performance: Bahir Dar University Psychology Graduating Students in Focus". Third year psychology students were participated in the study. The outcomes of the preliminary and actual action implementation were compared. The findings revealed that as a result of the intervention, students brought change in their attitudes towards group assignment and they became more engaged in the second assignment as compared to the first. Students' performance in the second test and group project has also increased. Hence, based on the findings, implications for future research and action are suggested.

The last manuscript of this special issue is historical research on the institutional history of Bahir Dar University focusing the then Academy of Pedagogy. Based primarily on archival documents gathered from BDU record office and the UNESCO Head Office in Paris, this study examines the history of the Academy of Pedagogy from its inception to the time it transformed itself into Bahir Dar University. In this study, the author chronicles and analyzes the major historical events of the academy and the ups and downs it travelled in its long journey.

In sum, it is believed that the lessons learned from these research articles may have significant contributions in inspiring policy-makers, researchers and teacher educators to give due attention to various issues of the Ethiopian education system.

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