The State of Educational Research in Ethiopia

Amare Asgedom[*]

Abstract: *It is assumed that the contents of the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** reflect the status of most scholarly educational research in Ethiopia as the contributors usually come from different institutions of higher learning. The **Ethiopian Journal of Education** which is published by the **Institute of Educational Research** (IER), is the oldest and the only refereed educational journal in the country. It has been publishing scholarly articles since 1967. By using Content Analysis technique, this study assesses the major characteristics of the educational research (123 articles) published in the Journal in terms of research issues, designs, types of data, researcher characteristics, and the like. Each article is used as Unit of Analysis and various pertinent categories are created into which the contents of each article are coded. An inter-decade pattern analysis was used to examine a change of characteristics over the defined period. The results suggest a characteristic of infancy though a changing pattern was observed in the selection of issues, type of data, in application of designs, in sampling procedures, in indignization of researchers, in conceptualization of research issues and in provision of recommended actions.*

Introduction

Educational research is yet at its early stage in Ethiopia although more than 40 years have elapsed since the process has started. According to Tekeste (1990:xi), the state of educational research in Ethiopia has suffered from *lack of imagination.* Tekeste has further argued that, with a few exceptions, most of the studies were limited to Ph.D. dissertations. Not more than a dozen of them were carried out in the early 1960's to the end of 1970's according to the same critic. Yet, most of these studies, according to Tekeste, were closely related only to the issue of educational planning.

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Introduction

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Tekeste (1990:xi) has also criticized the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** by saying that, *with its irregular numbers,* it has been *less informative than the* **Ethiopian Observer,** a bimonthly periodical that featured articles on the state of Ethiopian education in the period between1957 and 1975.

One could, however, argue that the amount and the nature of educational research in Ethiopia up to now has not yet been systematically studied. A cursory observation by experts from outside the field, such as, Tekeste (1990) about the quantity and quality of educational research can serve only as a vantage point to further studies.

The Research and Publication Office of the Addis Ababa University (RPO, 1993) has registered 53 educational research results conducted by three institutions - Institute of Educational Research, the Faculty of Education, and Bahir Dar Teachers' College, in a four-year period (1986-1989). Most of these materials were, however, either monographed research results or teaching materials. But, published research results were rarely observed in this report.

At present, The Institute of Educational Research is conducting a four-year (originally three-year) project to register all educational research documents in Ethiopia conducted over the last 25 years (1974-1998) by summarizing each document into a one-page information. For this purpose, the following sources were consulted: educational bureaus of national states, higher education institutions, ministerial offices, international organizations, Commission for Science and Technology, educational consulting firms, NGOs, etc. From all these sources, 1,249 research documents were registered. These documents are classified by type as shown in Table 1.

One can clearly observe from Table 1 that most of the educational research products are unpublished. A further analysis of their quality will be reported after the finalization of the project.

Table 1: Registered Educational Research Documents by Type (1974-1998)

Type of Document	Quantity
Dissertations (Ph. D)	40
Theses (MA/M.Sc)	262
Research monographs	365
Journal articles*	106
Conference papers	132
Symposium papers	10
Workshop papers	91
Books	19
Policy Related/ Official documents	155
Seminar papers/reports	35
Manuals/Teaching materials	15
School statistical abstracts	19
Total	1,249

*This figure includes educational articles published by different journals including EJE since 1974.

In addition to the quantity of research output, concerns were often expressed about dissemination and quality. It was clearly observable in Table 1 that the number of published products was low compared to the amount of total work, again demonstrating poor dissemination levels, presumably resulting in a failure of research output to reach the beneficiaries.

Although publication could be a necessary criterion of the quality of a research product, it is not a sufficient condition however. There are no studies that evaluate the quality of educational research in Ethiopia.

The Institute of Educational Research had organized nine conferences since 1986. However, only four of the nine conferences had *themes* directly related to educational research (1980, 1987, 1995 and 1988). Even then, these conferences were unable to evaluate the state of educational research. Almost all research results could be classified as advocacy articles. They stressed on the need for more capacity building and for more research in the various issues of education.

From all reports of educational research, only one article dealt with the quality aspect clearly dealing with the state of the art. The title of this article was *A Critical Appraisal of Classroom Research in ELT in the Institute of Language Studies* (Hailom, 1995: 132–148). The researcher used his own observation and assessments made by external examiners (professors) of MA theses and Ph.D. dissertations and concluded by saying that the overall research output in terms of quality and quantity is impressive despite the inappropriate use of statistics and uncritical adoption of opinions in the review of literature section. One would, however, conclude that this evaluative study has suffered from use of less systematic and very subjective method of observations to arrive at these conclusions.

Another study about the status of research is that of Taye (1993; 1-360). This study did not deal with the quality aspect of research. Moreover, it did not specifically deal with educational research. Its focus was disparity (in research activity) among faculties in the Addis Ababa University. The study, nevertheless, demonstrated the author's concern of how to promote research in AAU.

In a study of a segment of the actors of educational research, Seyoum (1998:1-18) has found several constraining factors to research activities by teachers in the Senior High Schools of Addis Ababa. The major ones were: lack of finance, insufficiency of material resources and lack of incentives. It is also clear that this

study was aimed at exploring the extent to which school teachers were active in educational research. Evaluating the quality of educational research was not its primary concern.

One can, therefore, conclude that research on educational research revolved around contextual factors rather than substantial factors (the state of the art). The purpose of this study is to bridge the gap of research on educational research by considering all research output published in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education,** in the period 1967-1999.

It is argued that the Journal represents all educational research in Ethiopia as it is the only reputable and refereed educational journals in the country, and as all educational researchers who come from different corners of the country aspire to publish their research products in it. All other educational journals in the country are either published as part of public relation activities of ministries, such as **Educational Journal,** which is published by the Ministry of Education; or **IER Flambeau,** which covers educational research which are not externally assessed. Similarly, the articles in the various proceedings produced by various institutions, such as the Faculty of Education, the Institute of Educational Research, Bahir Dar Teachers College, educational bureaus, etc., are not externally assessed for meeting the requirements of scholarly research.

This study is, therefore, based on all articles published in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** over a period of 33 years (1967-1999). During this time, the Journal was expected to produce at least 33 volumes and 66 issues. Since its establishment in 1967, however, the Journal has produced only 18 volumes and 31 issues, a figure only slightly greater than half of the expected number of volumes and slightly less than half the number of issues anticipated to be produced during this period. In all the volumes only 123 publications were classified as articles. The rest, which are half in number (63), are

classified as reviews, educational news, features and communications, etc.

The birth of the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** predates the Institute of Educational Research itself, the publishing institution. With the purpose of promoting educational research, the Addis Ababa University has given a full mandate to the Institute to conduct and disseminate educational research. Until very recently, the Institute was the only institution with the exclusive responsibility of researching and disseminating educational output in the country. For other institutions, such as, Ministry of Education (MOE), the Faculty of Education, non-governmental organizations, UN organizations, etc., educational research has remained a staff-function and not a line-function.

Very recently, however, consultancy firms with a line-function of educational research have mushroomed but only with commercial motives. The extent to which research endeavors should be commercialized and the extent to which profit motivated research results are dependable is an open political question to this writer.

Up to 1998, the Institute has produced about 472 research products (Amare, 1998: 1-8) in published or unpublished forms. This figure is nearly a third of all educational research output in the country. It could be argued that, IER is the largest and the most important organization of educational research, albeit capacity and budget constraints in its entire life.

The **Ethiopian Journal of Education,** which is the subject of this study is the oldest and one of the *reputable* journals in the Addis Ababa University. We have, however, observed elsewhere in this paper that there was some anomaly in actual and expected performance of the Journal. Since its establishment in 1967, the Journal has experienced several ups and downs. These ups and

downs take the form of interruption for as long as five years - for instance, it took five years for Volume 9 to appear in 1981 after Volume 8 which was published in 1976. Volume 10, the next issue, appeared after an interruption of five years (1986) again. The second issue of Volume 10 appeared after three years (1989). The decade, 1977-1987, therefore, marks the *dark ages* in the history of the Journal, as only two issues (Volume 9 No. 1 and Volume 10 No. 1) were published during the entire 11-year period. Explanations could be found in the negative effect of the Ethiopian Revolution (especially during the early stages) on educational research.

The year, 1989 marks the *re-birth* of the Journal in three ways. First, the Journal started to appear regularly. Second, the publication of the second issue of each volume became regular. Before 1989 the Journal used to publish only the first issue of each volume and ignored publication of the second issue. Thirdly, the Journal became reputable and has remained reputable since that time.

The reasons for such irregularity could be many, as for instance, lack of contributors. At present, the most serious threat to the regularity of the Journal could be attitude and shortage of article-assessors in the field. Finance and lack of contributors are no longer serious sources of disruption as the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission has been regularly covering printing expenses of the Journal for at least the last four years and as the number of contributors is growing unabated now.

As a refereed scholarly Journal, the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** is managed by an Editorial Board whose members are appointed by the Advisory Board of the Institute of Educational Research. An International Advisory Board involving prominent professors in the field oversees its overall quality.

The Editorial Board regularly decides whether or not an article is to be published in the Journal depending on feedback obtained from external and internal referees. Referees are provided with a ten-item evaluation guide (Annex I). In order for an article to be considered for publication both referees should recommend it for publication. Disagreement in feedback between referees leads to further assessment by a third referee. The process of assessment for publication is kept blind as referees and authors are kept anonymous. An article also undergoes a process of preliminary assessment before it is sent to referees.

In this study, the writer is interested in evaluating the content of 123 articles in terms of conceptualization of educational issues and operationalization of these issues (including type of methodological designs). It is assumed that the articles published in EJE could properly represent all publishable educational research in the country.

Research Questions

- Which areas and issues of education were given the most attention by educational researchers?
  - favored and neglected areas of education
  - the issues: quality, equity, access and efficiency
  - school levels: pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary

- What were the most common research designs used by educational researchers?
  - nature of conceptualization
  - design types
  - type of data
  - instruments of data collection

- What were the major attributes of educational researchers?
  - gender and research

- nationality of researchers
- type of authorship
- integration of researchers

Method of Data Collection

Source of Data

Almost all articles in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** (Volume 1 to Volume 18) are used as source of data. These are 123 articles. Later publications, such as Volume 18, No.2, etc., and other publications, such as book-reviews, research reports, communications, etc. which are 63, are excluded from the study. Only full-fledged articles, as designated in the Journal, are considered in this study.

Sampling

No sampling was used as the total population, 123 articles, was all included in the data collection process. Only Volume 18 No.2 was excluded because it was in print while the data were being collected.

Data Collection Procedure

A Content Analysis method (Berelson, 1952; Amare, 1998b) was used to collect and process the data. This method tries to answer the questions, *what is being said and how it is being said in a given medium of communication*. The two questions, what and how, were, therefore, the main themes of the study. This study can be considered exploratory and its weakness is that it fails to answer the question of why. It is not explanatory.

For collecting the data, a coding sheet (data collection items), was prepared. The coding sheet had 38 items, implying that the content of each article had to be coded into 38 code types which later were

summarized into 15 variables. Each variable had categories that range from a maximum of ten to a minimum of three.

Coding Procedure

One person, with a qualification of a B.A. degree and a long-time experience including in data collection, made all the coding. This coder is employed in the Institute of Educational Research on contractual basis for the exclusive activities of interviewing, enumerating and coding of data. The person has already developed all these skills.

The researcher had provided the coder with an operational definition of the 38 items in a separate manual. The coder was trained by the researcher using the manual. After full agreement was reached in the coding process, he was allowed to code all articles independently, but with occasional inspection by the researcher and with occasional revision of the coding process. Depending on the nature of the item to be coded, words, paragraphs, pages and entire articles were used as Unit of Analysis.

During the analysis, an inter-decade temporal perspective was utilized in order to examine the developmental trend of educational research for the last 33 years. The different categories of each variable were then analyzed against time categories, which formed 15 tables reflecting both dependent and independent variables.

Analysis of Data

The total contributions in EJE over the last 33 years (1967-1999) were found to be 186 in number. But only the editors classified 123 as research articles. The rest, 63 publications, were reviews, excerpts, news, proposals, thesis abstracts, communications, etc., and hence excluded from the analysis.

The analysis of this study is, therefore, based only on 123 articles as only these could be taken as full-fledged research output. The 63 publications were excluded in the study because they were not regarded as part of the population in this research.

It is interesting to note that the Journal had more articles during its first decade (62 articles in 13 issues) than the second (only 6 articles in only two issues) and the third decades (55 articles in 16 issues). As has been acknowledged in the Introduction Section, the year, 1978-1988, could be labeled as the *Dark Age* of the Journal in its entire life. Only six articles (in two issues) were produced during this age.

In order to answer the three basic questions in the study, quantitative data are presented in 15 tables and analysis is made using simple frequencies. Statistical methods are intentionally avoided in the analysis, because the author feels that communication and readability can be maximized without them in this case.

Major Contents of Educational Research

Nine categories in the field of education were identified and the 123 articles tallied into these categories (Table 2). Clearly, educational research in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** was found to be denominated by the field of psychology and measurement followed by methods of teaching and learning, reflecting in part the educational profile of researchers in the country. Philosophy and history of education, though the third area of emphasis, were highly emphasized only in the early history of the Journal as 14 of the 17 articles in philosophy and history of education were produced in the period, 1967-1977. Only three articles were published during the subsequent 22 years.

The sub-fields, Subject Areas, Curriculum, Educational Technology, Educational Research and Developmental Education, etc., were neglected, again presumably resulting in the poor development level of curriculum and poor integration of education to other sectors of development in the country.

Table 2: Contents of EJE: 1967-1999

Research Content	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Curriculum	4	1	2	7
Method of Teaching–Learning	11	2	12	25
Media and Educational Technology	2	0	0	2
Psychology and Measurement	15	1	22	38
Philosophy and History of Education	14	0	3	17
Educational Research	4	1	0	5
Development Education	4	0	0	4
Org. and Administration	7	1	7	15
Subject Areas	1	0	3	4
Others	-	-	6	6
Total	62	6	55	123

The most important observation is the insignificant number of research output (only 4 out of 123 articles) in the various subject areas (social sciences, languages, natural sciences, etc.) despite the large potential of researchers in this field in the country. Many more professionals have been trained in this field than in other fields of education. One of the explanations for this could be that these researchers could utilize other journals more than the **Ethiopian Journal of Education**. Their area of emphasis could be on non-pedagogical aspects of these fields, again reflecting the training policy of teacher educators--who were more often subject specialists than pedagogues. This hypothesis needs, however, further probing.

A temporal analysis of three decades demonstrates that the 1978-1988 period was almost barren, producing only six research products as was shown elsewhere in this paper. This time also correlates with a period when **Admas** was active and the **Ethiopian Journal of**

Education inactive for some time, although it discontinued after publishing only two issues. Explanations for this irregularity of the Journal could be found mainly in the destabilizing effect of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. This period also correlates with the drastic decline of research output of African countries of south of the Sahara in the 70s and 80s (UNESCO, 1994).

Table 3: School Levels and Educational Research

School Level	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
General	28	5	10	43
Tertiary	12	0	28	40
Secondary	9	1	12	22
Primary	6	0	2	8
Pre-Primary	1	0	2	1
Adult/Non-formal	3	0	3	6
Others	3	0	0	3
Total	62	6	55	123

Coverage of School Levels by Educational Researchers

To explore the extent to which researchers covered the different school levels, all data was classified into six categories ranging from tertiary to pre-primary levels (Table 3). The results suggest that higher school levels (tertiary and secondary education) had a better chance of being studied. Primary and pre-primary education appear to be neglected. Only nine articles were observed in both school levels (from the total of 123) in the whole 33-year period. The same problem is also observed with adult or non-formal education. It is surprising to witness that educational researchers have neglected these school-levels that demand a greater attention, presumably due to the social as well as physical distance between researchers and these school levels. It is also important to note from the data in Table 3 that a large amount of research could be classified as general, that is, 43 articles could not be related to any of the specific school levels

or to non - formal education, implying the general nature of educational research in Ethiopia.

Educational Issues

We know that the major issues of education can be categorized into four classes: quality, equity, access and efficiency (Table 4). From 123 articles only 25 articles were difficult to classify into any of these categories. The distribution of the remaining articles demonstrates that quality and efficiency were more important agenda items to educational researchers than equity and access (Table 4). It can also be observed from Table 4 that the quality issue was felt more in the early decade (1967-1977) than in the later two decades.

Table 4: Educational Issues Addressed by Researchers

Issue	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Quality	35	1	13	49
Access	5	0	4	9
Equity	1	0	3	4
Efficiency	13	4	18	35
Unclassified	8	1	17	25
Total	62	6	55	123

The later two decades witnessed research priorities more in the area of efficiency than quality and others suggesting the development of more concern in proper resource utilization. The process of imbalanced growth pattern in enrollment and resources could justify this interpretation. It can, however, be clearly observed in Table 4 that the equity issues in educational research were neglected in all three decades. Only 4 articles dealt with either gender or regional inequalities and almost all of them (except one) were a recent phenomenon. Equity issues have now become major concerns of policy makers in education and it appears to be seen in the future the extent to which this will be reflected in educational research.

Research Methods

In order to evaluate the quality of the research methods in the Journal, all articles (123 articles) were coded into categories of design types, type of data, sampling procedures, conceptualization, data application, etc. The ensuing paragraphs provide data to answer the different questions.

Conceptualization

One of the methodological questions was an enquiry into the extent to which educational research in Ethiopia reflected clarity in conceptualization of research problems. In this study, the presence of clearly spelt-out research questions, hypotheses or objectives was used as an operational definition of clarity in conceptualization of research issues.

The results are shown in Table 5. Only 22 articles (out of 123) were observed to have neither the hypothesis format nor the question or objective format.

Table 5: Nature of Conceptualization

Type of format	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Research Questions	26	3	22	51
Hypothesis(es)	1	1	12	14
Objective(s)	13	2	21	36
None	22	0	0	22
Total	62	6	55	123

The overwhelming research, however, has reflected either the question format or the objective format. The use of hypothesis format in educational research has been found to be very rare, only 14 articles out of 123 used this format, again suggesting the general and open-ended nature of educational research. In hypothesis formats,

the researcher provides tentative answers before he/she collects data. Tests are then made whether or not the collected data support the hypothesis. In the question or objective formats, however, the researcher sets objectives or poses questions whose answers have to develop after collection of the data. In this case, the answers to such questions are open-ended and can be as many as more-than-anticipated answers by the researcher.

The temporal trend of clarity in conceptualization of educational research demonstrates a continuous improvement. All articles that lacked the appropriate format (hypothesis or questions or objectives) belonged to the early period (1967-1977) of the history of the Journal. Most hypothesis formats (12 out of 14) appeared in the last decade (1988-1999). Such results suggest a developmental trend of research methodology in education in Ethiopia.

Type of Recommendations

As shown in Table 6, about a quarter of the articles lacked clearly stated recommendations (22 out of 123 articles) and most of these articles belonged to the early period (1967-1977) of the history of the Journal.

Table 6: Presence of Clearly Stated Recommendations

Recommendation	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Yes	49	6	46	101
No	13	0	9	22
Total	62	6	55	123

An assessment of type of recommended actions has tentatively suggested that most articles (80 out of 123 articles) advocated government policy formulations or policy change (Table 7). About 21 articles directly addressed the classroom teacher, which in a way it could be interpreted as self critique possibly for self-improvement.

However, the direct use of 22 articles was not clearly identifiable. From this data, one can also suggest that most educational research published in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** can be classified as applied research. This hypothesis, however, requires further investigation. Development of models, theories, principles, etc, by educational researchers as observed in the Journal appears to be minimal in this case. Educational researchers in Ethiopia have appeared to be more concerned with solving educational problems more than advancing general knowledge itself.

Table 7: Type of Recommendations

Type	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
For policy formulations, changes, etc	45	5	30	80
For teaching-learning	4	1	16	21
Direct use not clear	13	0	9	22
Total	62	6	55	123

Research Designs

Research designs determine the depth, rigor, and amount of controls researchers require during their investigations. The data were coded into eight design-categories as shown in Table 8. These eight designs can also be further categorized into four major designs. These are experimental, descriptive, historical and developmental designs. The experimental design was further divided into field experimental and laboratory experimental designs, depending on how the data were collected. Descriptive design had the sub-categories of survey, case study, and content analysis. Longitudinal and cross-sectional designs were the two subcategories of developmental designs. Historical design had no further components in this study.

The results suggest that the descriptive design was used by the overwhelming number of educational researchers (114 out of 123) in all decades. The Survey method was observed to be the most

popular type of Descriptive design to educational researchers, as 98
out of the 114 descriptive design were Survey types.

Table 8: Research Designs used in Educational Research

Research Design	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Experimental (Field Study)	0	1	4	5
Experimental (Laboratory)	0	0	0	0
Descriptive (Content Analysis)	5	0	0	5
Descriptive (Survey)	46	4	48	98
Descriptive (Case Study)	9	0	2	11
Historical Method	1	1	0	2
Developmental (Longitudinal)	0	0	1	1
Developmental (Cross Sectional)	0	0	1	1
Total	62	6	55	123

Only five articles could be classified as experimental. Even these
could not be classified as True-Experimental as all of them were
studied in the field and not in the laboratory--under conditions where
the researcher controls other variables that account for the
dependent variables--making it difficult to establish true cause and
effect relationships. It can, therefore, be argued that educational
researchers have paid little attention to the Laboratory Experimental
type of design. This may be attributed partly to their philosophical
background or the nature of issues they value as important. The most
important reason could be that laboratory type of educational
research demands more facilities, equipment, and resources in
general. As most educational research published in EJE is self-
financed, it would be naïve to expect more expensive type of
research.

The boundary between Historical and Case study is difficult to draw in
educational research. However, even these two designs seem to be
less popular among Ethiopian educational researchers as only a few
cases appeared in the study (13 out of 123 cases). Nine of the 11
Case studies observed over three decades belong to the 1967-1977

period. Only two Historical studies were observed over a period of 33 years.

Longitudinal or cross-sectional designs are intended to show development trends especially in behavioral or physical development of children. Even these have been found to be hardly visible in educational research. One could, therefore, safely conclude that educational researchers have always resorted to the type of designs that require less time and resources in general.

Table 9: Data collection Instruments

Instruments	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Questionnaire—opinion	9	0	19	28
Questionnaire—factual	1	0	3	4
Tests	0	1	9	10
Direct observation	2	0	2	4
Interview	1	0	4	5
Check list	2	0	1	3
Secondary data	47	5	17	69
Total	62	6	55	123

Data Collection Instruments

As shown in Table 9, the type of data collection instruments utilized by educational researchers was assessed and found to reflect the following; (1) The majority of the researchers (69 out of 123 articles) used secondary source of data; (2) About 32 researchers used the questionnaire and of these, 28 of them used the oppinionnaire - asking questions that require answers in the form of opinions. Only four used questionnaires that asked for factual information.

About 10 tests were used as instruments of data collection. The figures for direct observations, check lists and interviews were very low as shown in Table 9, suggesting the insufficient number of studies in classroom observation and curriculum evaluation.

Quantitative-Qualitative Type of Educational Research

Elsewhere in this paper, it is shown that the use of secondary sources of data predominates in educational research. A quantitative-qualitative analysis of the data shows that only 37 articles can be classified as quantitative. About 64 of the articles could be coded as qualitative, the rest of the articles, about 26, combined both qualitative and quantitative data (Table 10).

Table 10: Quantitative-Qualitative Type of Data

Type of Data	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Qualitative	44	2	18	64
Quantitative	12	2	23	37
Both	6	2	14	26
Total	62	6	55	123

It can be argued that the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** can be characterized by qualitative research type although caution is needed here to understand the limited nature of the context in which the word is used in this study. Qualitativeness in educational research designates type of design, procedures of data collection, analysis and sometimes the depth of inquiry, etc. Qualitativeness in this study simply refers to whether or not the data have been collected from a few cases or from sampled cases or from populations. In this study the data was coded as qualitative if the source of data was a case or a few cases but quantitative if data was collected from sampled cases or entire populations.

Qualitative research dominated in the initial stage, 1969-1977, of the history of the Journal. After 1988, however, quantitative methods started to dominate. The reasons for this shift could be found in the changing editorial policies of the Boards, or in the orientation of researchers themselves. A further probe along this direction could illuminate the effect of editorial policies on the nature of research.

It is, however, yet to be probed into in later studies about the extent to which those qualitative or quantitative studies meet all the criteria of quantitativeness or qualitativeness. It must, however, be clear that the author is not advocating any of the two debates. Advocates of quantitative data argue that *if a thing exists, it must exist in some quantity and if it has quantity, it must be measurable*. In addition, they insist on represenativeness of the sample.

Advocates of qualitativeness, however, base their generalization on a deeper analysis of a single case or a few cases instead of resorting to represantativeness of sampling. They argue strongly against adopting research methods that are more appropriate for natural sciences and inappropriate for studying human characteristics. They assert that human behaviors can not be studied by quantitative and objective methods. They insist on reflection instead of replication, implying a greater role of the researcher than the data. The researcher becomes part of the evidence in this case.

Sampling Procedures

It is also found in this study that 42 of the 123 papers do not clearly show whether or not the source of their data was the whole population, a sample or a case. In this case, the researchers have failed to be explicit of the sources of their data. But 35 of these 42 articles that have failed to show clearly the source of their data, belonged to the 1967-1977-period. From 123 articles, only 52 utilized some kind of sampling (Table 11 and Table 12) but half of these never used the principle of randomness in sampling, thus making the issue of representatives in their sampling procedures questionable. They used what can be called non-probability or convenient sampling procedures, instead. Where randomization is utilized in the sampling procedure (in 26 cases), simple random sampling techniques predominated (22 cases out of 26) all other forms of random sampling techniques, such as the systematic random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques. It has also been observed that no

application was made of cluster sampling, a technique that is often recommended for sampling infinitely large populations.

Table 11: Subjects of Research

Subject	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Population	15	1	13	29
Sample	12	5	35	52
Unidentified	35	0	7	42
Total	62	6	55	123

Table 12: Type of sampling

Sampling	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Simple random	2	2	19	23
Systematic random	0	0	2	2
Stratified Random	0	0	2	2
Area or cluster	0	0	0	0
Non-probability	10	3	12	25
Total	12	5	35	52

Looked from the vantage-point of research designs, instruments of data collection, type of data used, sampling procedures, etc., educational researchers still have to traverse a long way. But looked from the point of view of trends over the three-decade time, the arrow of development is positive. Opportunities for capacity building in this field are rare in Ethiopia. It is, however, mandatory to have capacity building efforts along this line. It can also be argued that there have never been any fora up to the present time that addressed methodological issues of research in the field. It is, however, essential that researchers examine not only the subjects of research but also the methods of research as well.

Researcher Characteristics

In this analysis, some characteristics of all authors were assessed. The factors - sex, nationality, type of authorship and author-references - were used to demonstrate some characteristics of educational researchers. The results are presented in Tables 13, 14, and 15.

Table 13: Sex of Researchers

Sex	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Male	53	6	53	112
Female	3	0	1	4
Male and Female	4	0	1	5
Unidentified	2	0	0	2
Total	62	6	55	123

Sex of Researchers

Out of the 123 articles, only four were written exclusively by female researchers and 112 exclusively by male researchers. There were female participants of co-authorship in five articles. It could, therefore, be tentatively argued that female participation in educational research manifests one of the worst discriminatory areas in Ethiopia. Although the data may be insufficient to make a generalization, the trend suggests a worsening situation.   More female-participation was observed during the early history of the Journal which was also characterized by the presence of more expatriate researchers than its later stage (Table 13) which was dominated by Ethiopian researchers.

Nationality of Researchers

An analysis of nationality of researchers demonstrates an overall dominance of Ethiopians; Ethiopians exclusively produced 84 of the

123 articles while foreigners wrote only 34 articles. It is not, however, clear whether or not these foreigners were expatriate staff working in the country or contributors from other countries. A trend analysis, however, suggests that most of these foreigners published most of their articles during the first decade (1967-1977), a period characterized by presence of many expatriate staff in educational institutions of Ethiopia.   Co-authorship between foreigners and Ethiopians was also observed to be very low. There were only three cases where there was international co-authorship, a figure significantly lower than the total figure of observed co-authorship in the study (Table 14 and Table 15).

Table 14: Nationality of Researcher(s)

Nationality	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Ethiopian(s)	26	6	52	84
Foreigner (s)	31	0	3	34
Both	3	0	0	3
Unidentified	2	-	-	2
Total	62	6	55	123

Table 15: Type of Authorship

Authorship	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Solo	52	5	48	105
Co-authorship	9	1	7	17
No. of people institution	1	-	-	1
Total	62	6	55	123

Type of Authorship

From Table 15, we can observe that 17 of the 132 articles were co-authored, a figure suggesting a low level of partnership among educational researchers. Explanations to this low level of integration as demonstrated by a very high magnitude of solo-authorship could be found in the individually initiated small-scale nature of research

projects; or in the sociological and socio- psychological factors of educational researchers in the country. Collaboration and Partnership among researchers would make it possible to conduct large and interdisciplinary type of research.

References used by Educational Researchers

In order to show the magnitude of integration of educational researchers, all references of the 123 articles were counted and then coded into two categories: Ethiopian references and foreign references. The results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: References Utilized by Educational Researchers

Sources	1967-77	1978-88	1989-99	Total
Ethiopians	152	18	272	442
Foreigners	498	208	950	1647
Total	737	226	1222	2089

From the total of 2089 sources used in the 123 articles, 439 references were found to be Ethiopian sources. In general, one could argue that an Ethiopian researcher has used about 20 percent of indigenous sources, a figure, which is fair enough to show a good level of integration given the limited nature of indigenous literature. Many of these quoted Ethiopian sources were, however, observed to be institutions, such as MOE, CSA, etc., instead of individual authors. It was also important to note that 10 articles had no references at all. But again all of these unreferenced articles belonged to the 1967-1977 period. In the same period, 14 authors used exclusively foreign sources while three authors utilized exclusively indigenous sources.

The temporal analysis shows that the trend to use indigenous sources tends to decrease. The percentage figure has fallen from 24 percent to 22 percent over three decades. A further probe should,

however, be made to show the extent to which an Ethiopian author is willing to quote local sources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

It was found that educational research in Ethiopia had more coverage of tertiary and secondary school levels than primary and pre-primary school levels. More research was also done to address the issues of quality and efficiency of education than issues of equity and access. Whereas the former two relate more to pedagogy of education, the latter two relate more to politics of education, probably suggesting that educational researchers are not so much interested in the political aspect of education. However, in addition to creating a literate society, developing countries are now thriving to address issues of gender and regional inequalities to bring about justice in education, an area that seemed to have been neglected by educational researchers in Ethiopia.

An assessment of methodological rigor in educational research has also revealed results that suggest Ethiopian researchers' tendency to resort to techniques that imply less cost, time and effort. This generalization could be true because of the chronic shortage of funding in the field of educational research. Insufficient number of research laboratories and equipment can lead to the overuse of less expensive type of designs. Descriptive designs govern most educational research. Experimental designs, which lend themselves to more rigor, depth and controls of other influencing factors than the factors under test, seem to be unpopular among educational researchers in Ethiopia.

Even the descriptive designs have been used in simplified ways, characterized by surveys and a predominance of secondary source of

data. When primary data were used, most of them do not meet the requirements of randomness--making the data in most cases unrepresentative of the population. There is, however, some optimism as the trend analysis suggests a direction of improvement. Analysis of some characteristics of the researchers also shows that the sector is almost exclusively men's domain. Participation of women in research (as actors) was found to be very low. Only one Ethiopian woman featured in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** over a period of 33 years.

Although foreigners dominated educational research in the 60s and early 70s, the trend has drastically changed since then. The number of foreign researchers in the 80s and 90s is almost insignificant suggesting a continued enhancement of Ethiopianization of researchers.

An examination of type of authorship and type of referencing has also yielded results that suggest poor cooperative efforts among educational researchers. Team work in educational research has been found to be very low, presumably suggesting the small scale nature of accomplished educational research up to the present time as observed in the contributions of the Journal.

One of my contentions is also that the resort to simplistic-individualistic research style might have been imposed upon the Ethiopian researchers by the awkward dilemma of the *need-to-publish--not-to perish*--and the unavailability of adequate research funding for conducting large-scale and multidisciplinary type of research that demand methodological rigor and cooperative authorship. Most educational research published in the **Ethiopian Journal of Education** can be labeled as more or less academic but again failing to meet the criteria of basic research.

Recommendations

- An opportunity where educational researchers develop their skills continuously possibly through the Association of Educational Researchers should be created.
- The capacity of educational researchers in the fields of experimental research, sampling techniques and statistical designs should be developed.

- An opportunity of research funding that encourages teamwork of researchers and the type of research that demands continuous observation and of intervention nature should be created.

- An attitude of peer-review and appreciation of Ethiopian research products should be promoted among educational researchers.

- Opportunities for female participation in educational research should be created.

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ANNEX

A contributor to our journal, *Ethiopian Journal of Education*, has submitted the enclosed article for publication. The *Editorial Committee* has selected you as our anonymous reader of this article. We are, therefore, asking your co-operation to spare your time for assessing the article in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Does the Title of the study fully reflect the content thereof?
2. Is the content of the study significant and worthy of investigation? Is it of any theoretical and/or practical value? and have these been clearly and accurately stated?
3. Does the work start with a sufficient literature review? and has the author attempted to make an exhaustive use of the most relevant and available sources on the themes he/she discusses in the paper?
4. Are the techniques, procedures and instruments used to collect the data sufficiently reliable? and have they been adequately described?
5. Does the author provide the necessary operational definitions in the paper?
6. Have the samples used been adequately described, if applicable; and are the selection criteria valid?
   Are proper sampling procedures followed?
7. Have all the data been analyzed objectively, clearly and accurately?
8. Has the author formulated his/her hypotheses (if any) very clearly; and has he/she been able to establish them convincingly?
9. Are the data presented adequate to justify the conclusion(s) reached by the author?
10. Finally, do you believe that the paper is publishable in the *Ethiopian Journal of Education*.
    a) as it is?
    b) with changes, (please suggest)
    c) Not publishable at all

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for agreeing to do this for us within two to four weeks and we would like to assure you that whatever comments you make will be kept strictly confidential. I am also glad to inform you that the *Institute of Educational Research* will pay you a token amount of honorarium in recognition for your contribution to the development of our Journal.

With best wishes.