

Full Length Research Paper

Analysis of internal and external factors in establishing inter-and-trans-disciplinary training and research framework in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study examines the readiness of higher education and research institutions in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia, in establishing inter-and-trans-disciplinary (ITD) trainings/research. Specifically, the study looks at the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat variables that could promote or impede the establishment of responsive trainings and researches which are relevant to smallholder farmers. The study draws on the data gathered using structured questionnaire conducted in the higher education's (Bahir Dar and Gonder Universities) and research institutions (Amhara Region Agriculture Research Institute [ARARI] and Gonder Agriculture Research Center) in the Amhara Region. Sample sizes of 90 respondents were selected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences version 17 (SPSS-17). Results of the SWOT analysis indicates that concerned institutions should capitalize on their strength to exhaust opportunities and work on their weaknesses to convert threats to opportunities, so that their system will be responsive to the needs of smallholder farmers. Therefore, to respond to the complex needs of the society in the face of the rapidly changing environment the higher education and research institutions in the Amhara region should work on the development of ITD training/research. The study came up with many conclusions which includes: higher education institutions should work on creating environs that promote accountability, strong relationship with stakeholders and good research culture; better resource utilization or fund rising scheme should be employed to alleviate infrastructure/facility supply gap; local higher education institution instructors should be capacitated through the provision of on job training so as to alleviate quality problem; the government should play a great role in creating awareness on the side of students starting from primary school level by mainstreaming agricultural related contents in the curriculum so as to increase student's interest to join agricultural academic programs at the university level; and the government should work on promoting agricultural related private investments to absorb unemployed professionals.

Keywords: Ethiopia, inter-and-trans-disciplinary trainings/research, framework, factors

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia, with a population of over 80 million, is the second most populous, and one of the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa. About 85% of the total population is rural and practices subsistence agriculture (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development [MoFED], 2010). Although

the country has abundant resources and good potential for development, poverty is pandemic and often linked to unimproved agricultural practices and natural resource degradation amongst others (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2011). In order to increase agricultural production and productivity, enhance rural commercialization, minimize effects of the resource degradation and eradicate poverty, the govern-

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