Proceedings of the National Symposium on

Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining
Quality Practices in Education

26&27th April, 2013
Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia.

Editors
Prof. Fekadu Beyene
Dr. Eba Mijena
Dr. Raghavendra H.L
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Preface

We welcome you to this volume of the proceedings of the National Symposium on “Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education (EESQPE)”. This proceeding brings together in a convenient form the opening and closing addresses together with the keynote addresses and key technical papers presented at the National Symposium on “Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education” held in Nekemte at Wollega University on 26th and 27th April, 2013. As a symposium EESQPE has traditionally taken a broad approach to thinking and cognition, in all their manifold aspects and manifestations, and this breadth is reflected in the content of the various papers submitted for publication in this Proceedings. Most of the papers are from educationalists and researchers working in formal education settings, from Early Childhood settings to Higher Education in universities and provide a richness of approach to the various symposium themes.

The aim of the publication is to share experiences on policy and practice for quality in higher education across the country and to make available to a wider audience key ideas, methodologies and strategies presented at the symposium. The symposium demonstrated wide interest in quality practices across the region. In many countries both governments and higher education institutions have been working actively to establish new mechanisms of quality assurance and quality improvement. Quality practices clearly are a major issue for higher education across the country and it seems that it will continue to be of key issue of concern for the next decade and beyond.

Higher education is the backbone of any society. It is the quality of higher education that decides the quality of human resources in a country. Higher education, as we see today, is a complex system facilitating teaching, research, extension and international cooperation and understanding. In developing countries, where resources are scarce, countries should not waste them on institutions that are not fulfilling desired purposes. For Ethiopia today, quality in higher education is a key priority. This must be achieved keeping in mind the issues of relevance, costs, equity and international standards.

Globalization in the 21st century presents universities and states with a number of challenges and opportunities. Currently, a major concern for both of them is how to assure quality in higher education and how to enhance global competitiveness through a variety of policies and actions. As a result, quality assurance mechanisms and rankings, which emphasize output monitoring and measurements and systems of accountability and auditing, have become popular worldwide.

Higher education quality assurance and global competitiveness are intertwined into the complicated issue of balancing of the teaching and research missions of an institution. The quality assurance movement has caused widespread discussions of the appropriate use of various assessment instruments on overall higher education quality and individual university’s performance. Recently, several types of tools for assessing quality in higher education have been developed based on purposes and processes, including quality assurance, auditing, accreditation, evaluation, ranking, benchmarking, institutional audit, peer reviewing and knowledge balancing.
What is Quality?
‘Fitness for purpose’ – Juran
‘Conformance to requirements’ – Crosby

An educational definition is that of an ongoing process ensuring the delivery of agreed standards. These agreed standards should ensure that every educational institution where quality is assured has the potential to achieve a high quality of content and results. Quality in higher education, according to Article 11 of the World Declaration on Higher Education published by the United Nations, is a multi-dimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, faculties, equipment, services the community and the academic environment. It should take the form of internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, which are vital for enhancing quality.

Quality Practices in Higher Education
All countries have some kind of quality practices mechanism in place, although they differ significantly in terms of purpose, focus and organization. It is critical that all higher education institutions maintain their own internal, rigorous quality assurance systems. These structures should permeate every area and every level of teaching and learning. Students are the ones for which education has been primarily designed. They are the ones dealing with it day in day out over several years. This makes them real experts on QA; students know best how their (ideal) education and study environment should look like.

Quality Assurance

“An examination of a knife would reveal that its distinctive quality is to cut, and from this we can conclude that a good knife would be a knife that cuts well”      ------ Aristotle

Quality assurance in higher education can be defined as “systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by higher education institutions and systems in order to monitor performance against objectives, and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and quality improvements”. The means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. Essentially, quality assurance systems aim to provide appropriate evidence to substantiate claims made about quality and so to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the level of outcomes achieved. Stakeholders are individuals and groups who have a major interest in higher education institutions and systems, and their work and achievements.

Quality assurance is the whole range of actions and mechanisms that support quality in higher education. Successful higher education institutions design and plan and set up a built-in self-assessment bodies systematically at all levels to assure quality education provision on offer. Quite a number of public and private higher education institutions set up quality assurance units and assess the provision of quality education they offer periodically. These quality assurance units also assist universities to design mechanism for controlling, guaranteeing and promoting quality. Quality assurance is being carried out at the institutional level internally and by external quality assurance agency like HERQA in Ethiopia.
The issue of quality cannot be disassociated from the quest for excellence, while the setting of academic standards and evaluation criteria should take into account the diversity of situations across the region. Each nation and higher education system should aim to put in place quality assurance systems and procedures that meet the needs and the culture of the local society. Importation of systems from one country to another need to handle with care so that any new set of arrangements and anchored firmly in cultural and social traditions. The developments of Quality Assurance like the process itself are continuous and thus a periodic review of development needs to be carried out by all those involved in the process.

**Symposium Aim, Purpose, Thematic (Main and Sub) Areas and Organization**

The main aim of the symposium was to “Review and Recommend Innovative practices in Ethiopian Education Systems”. Besides, the purpose of this symposium was to provide teachers, administrators, school boards, higher education faculty and staff, and other stakeholders opportunities to examine continuous improvement principles that have been successfully implemented and sustained at various levels of education. Sharing ideas for blending creative practices with established systems to generate high-achieving, creative, and collaborative learners.

The main and sub-thematic areas of the symposium were well stated in the symposium documentation. These were as follows:

**Main Thematic Areas of the Symposium**

- Quality in Science, Technology and Innovation
- Quality in Language and Social Sciences Education
- Cutting Edge Issues in Gender and Educational Research

**Sub-Thematic Areas of the Symposium**

- Teaching and Assessment (in Science, Technology, Language and Social Sciences at Primary and Secondary Level Education)
- Perception and Beliefs (in Teaching Science, Language and Social Sciences)
- The Role of Practical Training (in Science at Primary and Secondary Level Education)
- Role of ICT in Ensuring Quality Education
- Teacher's Attitude, Capacity and Quality Education
- Academic Achievements Vis-a-Vis Performance Appraisal
- Early Childhood Teaching
- Knowledge Vis-a-Vis Skill
- Balancing Two Languages with One Script
- Relationship Between Language Proficiency and Academic Performance
- Gender Support –Myth or Reality
- Gender and Affirmative Action in Education
- Research Findings on Quality Education in Ethiopia
Organization of this Publication

This publication is organized into five main sections. The first is made up of the opening addresses given at the formal commencement and ceremony. The symposium was honored to have had a formal welcome address from Prof. Fekadu Beyene, President of Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia and Ato Teferi Tiyaro, Head, East Wollega Zone Administration. The second section contains keynote addresses by Prof. Derebssa Dufera, Director, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dr. Tesfaye Teshome, Director General, HERQA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Prof. Firdissa Jebessa Aga, Director, Change Management and Transformation Office, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The third section comprises those plenary addresses for which presenters made detailed papers available. Unfortunately, because of space limitations, it was not possible to include all papers presented at the symposium. The fourth section presents a brief report on the symposium. The fifth section comprises the recommendations and resolutions drawn from the symposium.

The collection of papers published here were submitted as formal research papers by authors, and were subject to a peer review and editing process conducted by a panel of academics from Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia. These papers were also proof-read and edited for English style, grammar and syntax. The editors trust that the editing of certain English expressions, grammar, and so on, in these papers has not changed the central meaning and content of the papers, and that these remain true to the authors’ intent. Therefore, the views expressed and therein are entirely those of the authors. We would like to thank all those who sent their on time.

Editors

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Editor in Chief
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# Abbreviations

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<td>AAU</td>
<td>Addis Ababa University</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADLI</td>
<td>Agricultural Development Led Industrialization</td>
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<td>ANCOVA</td>
<td>ANalysis of CO-VAriance</td>
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<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>ANalysis Of VAriance</td>
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<td>ASCA</td>
<td>American School Counselor Association</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>CDF</td>
<td>Cumulative Density Function</td>
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<td>CEMAC</td>
<td>Central African Economic and Monetary Community</td>
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<td>CEPES</td>
<td>Centre Européen Pour l’Enseignement Supérieur</td>
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<td>CEPU</td>
<td>Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities</td>
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<td>CGPA</td>
<td>Cumulative Grade Point Average</td>
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<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>Ethiopian Calendar</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>EEPD</td>
<td>Explicit and Prompt Phonic Decoding</td>
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<td>EHEECE</td>
<td>Ethiopia Higher Education Entrance Certificate Exam</td>
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<td>ELIP</td>
<td>English Language Intensive Programme</td>
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<td>ENQA</td>
<td>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
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<td>EPLN</td>
<td>Explicit and Prompt Letter Naming</td>
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<td>EQUIP</td>
<td>Education Quality Improvement Program</td>
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<td>ETV</td>
<td>Ethiopian Television</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FDRE</td>
<td>Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia</td>
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<td>FQAU</td>
<td>Faculty Quality Assessment Unit</td>
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<td>GC</td>
<td>Gregorian calendar</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrollment Rate</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
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<td>GTP</td>
<td>Growth and Transformation Plan</td>
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<td>HDP</td>
<td>Higher Diploma Program</td>
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<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<td>HERQA</td>
<td>Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency</td>
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<td>HESC</td>
<td>Higher Education Strategy Center</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>HESC</td>
<td>Higher Education Strategy Centre</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-deficiency Virus</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
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<td>Jimma University</td>
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<td>LRPM</td>
<td>Letter Reading Per Minute</td>
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<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>ME</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MWU</td>
<td>Madawalabu University</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>NORAD</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>NWICO</td>
<td>New World Information and Communication Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OSSREA</td>
<td>Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern &amp; Southern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>PASDEP</td>
<td>Plan for Accelerated &amp; Sustained Development to End Poverty</td>
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<td>PDM</td>
<td>Public Development Manager</td>
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<td>PGDT</td>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>Quality Control</td>
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<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<td>SDPRP</td>
<td>Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program</td>
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<td>SER</td>
<td>Self Evaluation Report</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total quality Management</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>VOA</td>
<td>Voice of America</td>
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<td>WU</td>
<td>Wollega University</td>
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Section I: Welcome Address
Good Morning, Eminent Scholars, Honored Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a great pleasure indeed for me to welcome you to the National Symposium for "Establishing, Enhancing and sustaining Quality Practices in Education", organized by the College of Social Sciences & Education, Wollega University (to initiate genuine change in quality education in Ethiopia).

I am very happy and grateful that (so) many distinguished scholars and teachers have come from East, South, North, Central and Western Ethiopia to share their knowledge and experience concerned with quality practices in education and to explore better ways of educating our future leaders. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for Prof. Diribsa Dufera, the former President of MWU, and current Director of Educational Research Institute of Addis Ababa University, and Dr. Firdissa Jebessa, Director of Institutional Reform and Dr. Tesfaye Teshome, Director of HERQA for honoring us keynote speech for this symposium. I also wish to give special thanks to Dr. Mitiku Teso, President of Ambo University for taking the time to drive to Nekemte for this occasion.

Wollega University has seven colleges, and School of Education is established under College of Social Sciences and Education in the hope that such new institution would help young Ethiopians to overcome the problem of education professionals, required in the creation of an enabling environment for teaching and active learning, aimed at producing competent global citizens with the goal of bringing socio economic transformation. Unlike most of their peers, students in this school are admitted without having to choose their respective majors at the time of application for admissions. Once admitted, they are given up to three years to explore diverse academic fields and approaches to discover and cultivate their aptitude and potential. They benefit from newly developed curricula and courses, which focus on developing critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills as well as a strong background in the humanities and natural and social sciences. They are given an opportunity to develop their character and sensitivity through various activities and extracurricular programs. In addition, they are free either to choose their respective majors from existing departments and programs within the University.

Upon successful completion of their three years studies of their major fields, only outstanding students of interest compete for the future educator position, to be admitted to a one year equivalent professional or methodology courses (PGDT), during summer session combined with distance education. Then the candidate shall be certified as teacher upon successful completion of this program. The school also runs in-service programs, HDP, ELIP and other short term trainings.

However, we know very well that we have only made a beginning. Though we are very proud of what we have achieved during the last six years, we are aware, too, that we cannot
realize our vision simply by trying to provide the best teachers or by providing the best courses unless our students become active learners and pursue their studies independently. We know only too well that the realization of our vision depends on active learning. We therefore strongly hope that our students will become active learners, choosing their own themes and developing their own questions, and grow into global leaders with creative and independent minds who will be able to cross national as well as disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, we sincerely expect them to become men and women of character who are genuinely concerned with social justice and human rights. Our students are now very happy and proud to be members of the learning community in this new University, and I firmly believe that this small national symposium will be a big step into the future of education in Ethiopia.

Which practices are best practices in quality education? How can we best innovate these best practices and enhance quality education at different levels in the system? How can we best sustain best practices? How can we best sustain innovation in quality practices in education? What is the way forward? These are some of the issues upon which the symposium ponders during the coming two educating and exciting days?

Workshops or Conferences on issues of various aspects of education have been held several times in this town, and on WU campus, but this is the first conference specifically devoted to quality education. I would like to thank Dr. Eba Mijena and all staff members of the College of Social sciences and Education for their efforts to make this happen, and many others who have generously given help in the process. Dr. Raghavendra HL and Prof. Gopal Sharma also deserve thanks for their extraordinary contribution in this regard.

Dear Participants of the Symposium,

Is my pleasure to welcome you all to Nekemte, one of the western Ethiopian most attractive historic and dynamic cities? Nekemte’s situation on the crossroad between south western and North western of Ethiopia, along with its richness in natural resources, make it one of the famous networking corridor in the region. It also happens to be on the crossroad between Western Ethiopia and Southern Sudan, and the Sudan, most likely one of the important centers of tourist attraction in the near future as it is the main route that link the capital, Addis Ababa, to the renowned Ethiopian renaissance dam. At the moment, along with its enjoyable night life, there are several attractive historic sites & modern exciting scene to be visited by our guests, such as the Kumsa Moreda Palace, Wollega Museum, Wollega Stadium, Wollega University, Sorga Dam and several touristic attraction scenes.

I believe that this scientific forum will provide unique opportunity to exchange valuable information on the latest achievements and developments related to best practices in quality education with improvements in all its elements and methods of sustaining both the best practices and improvements.

I hope you will have two most productive days of interesting and stimulating discussions. I sincerely wish that this symposium will be a great success not only as a chance to share knowledge and experience in quality education but also as the beginning of a long and fruitful cooperation and friendship among fellow educators devoted to the most meaningful and worthwhile task of teaching and training our youths, who will shape our future.

Thank You Very Much.
Opening Remark

By

Ato Teferi Tiyaro

Head, East Wollega Zone Administration

His Excellency Professor Fekadu Beyene, President of Wollega University

His Excellency Dr. Tesfaye Teshome, Director General of HERQA

Dear Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Good Morning!

It is my pleasure and honor to deliver this opening speech. First I would like to appreciate the University for taking initiative to organize such not only nationally, but internationally significant issue, i.e Quality Education. Wollega University for the initiative they took to organize such a consultative symposium for the first time to discuss on “Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education”.

Previously, our government had been working on access and equity issues of higher education. That is why Wollega University was established in our zone in 2006. Since its inception, the university had been working on various issues of research and community service activities, touching, and addressing various issues that help our zone in particular and the country’s problem in general.

Dear Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!
Currently, the main aim of higher education in Ethiopia is not only addressing access and equity issues in the country. Consequently, the Ethiopian government education policy was formulated and implemented to address access, equity and quality issues since 1994. Hence, organizing such kinds of forum geared on quality of education and quality practices is mandatory not only for the education center but also for all sectors of our activities. Because only quality practices of all sectors that can contribute a part in successful realization of the five year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

Dear Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!
Education sector is complex in nature and intervention in this segment requires multidisciplinary and combined approaches of different stakeholders. Therefore, in order to establish, enhance and sustain quality practices in education all parties of the sector should work hand in hand. Once again I would like to convey my deepest appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to Wollega University for organizing such a colorful symposium.

Thank You Very Much.
Section II: Keynote Address
Keynote Address

By

Derebssa Dufera

Director, Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

It gives me a great pleasure to present this keynote speech at the Symposium on “Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education” organized by Wollega University at a time when all stakeholders in Ethiopia: the Government at all levels, schools, Universities and colleges, students, teachers as well as parents, are worried about the quality of education.

Education is the bedrock of all forms of development (social, economic, technological and political). Development means much more than just an improvement in the economic well-being or condition of community members. Development includes the fulfillment of each person’s material, spiritual and societal needs. It is defined as: process for enlarging people’s choices. These choices primarily reflect the desire to lead a long and healthy life; acquire basic knowledge; and have an access to resources essential for a decent standard of living.

We may notice from this simple definition that development is a dynamic process. Development empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. However, development cannot take place by itself. It requires educated, skilled and competent people. Seen from this angle, education becomes the most important factor for development as well as for empowering people. Education provides us with knowledge and information which in turn brings about desirable changes in the way we think, feel and act. Education also builds in us a strong sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. It contributes very effectively to the realization of our potential.

Therefore, education is considered as a social instrument for developing human resources and for human capital formation. Educated families tend to produce more, have limited number of children and enjoy a relatively better quality of life as compared with uneducated families. Educated people earn more and are respected by the society. It is because of its tangible contributions in changing the lives of the people that education becomes an important part of the development policy in every country.

The relationship between Education and Development is not as simple as it appears to be. In fact, the impact of education on development depends basically on what we teach and how much the learners learn. In simple words, it is the education contents and the teaching methods that make the difference. Equally important is the interaction of education with other social and economic factors. We may argue that education can only be useful and meaningful when it brings about positive changes in one’s life and empowers a person to face day-to-day challenges. On the same grounds, we may assert that education becomes meaningful when it provides knowledge and skills of problem solving and for improving the quality of life. Education, organized and oriented on these lines is certainly going to have a lasting impact on economic income, fertility rate, birth spacing, pre- and postnatal health, nutrition, knowledge, attitudes and values.
From this, it is clear that education is crucial to every aspect of social and economic development. We may also notice that education is also important for influencing social behavior. For example, education widens people’s choices. It expands their perceptions and capabilities for leading a better quality of life. Adequate and good quality food (nutrition), access to safe drinking water, better health care services, relevant and quality education for children and youth constitute the core elements of one’s life.

Education is increasingly recognized to be at the heart of the development process. Three dynamically interrelated factors are involved: the economic benefits of education; the impact of education on population growth, health, and social well-being; and the relationship between education and democratic society.

The direct impact of education on economic benefits has been noticed in many countries. For example, it is observed that each additional year of schooling for men and women increases wages by between 10 to 20 per cent, and farm output by up to 5 per cent. In contrast, a population with a low level of education has little or no capacity to increase productivity. An educated person can make effective use of new technology, engage in entrepreneurial activity, and be responsive to market demands and changes.

Apart from the powerful direct economic benefits of education, its indirect benefits in changing human attitude and improving human welfare are equally important. A common and universal system of education is necessary for democratic society to function properly. To participate with knowledge and understanding in policy issues and decision-making processes requires knowledge of the world, and the ability to think independently based on evidence. The full impact of education is found where sustained investments in people are accompanied by respect for individual human rights and participation in democratic institutions. Following these this arguments, we will certainly agree that education is very important for economic prosperity and a decent quality of life.

Education therefore is critical to the development of human capital as this is seen as the most important key to rapid economic development and the strongest weapon against poverty. For most countries of the world, including the developed ones, Education is considered the number one development challenge.

Former President of the United States of American Bill Clinton was once asked to list the three most serious problems of his country, and he was reported to have replied “Education, Education and, Education”. That reply is an indication of the enormity of the challenge that Education poses for a country like Ethiopia that is still struggling with development challenges.

Over the last century, there has been a steady growth in the range and extent of public education in all countries of the world. A number of forces were at work in producing this trend. For example, the increasingly complex means of production and other economic activities leading to a growing demand for a more highly trained or trainable work force, in turn increased general expectations on the education system. Similarly, the increased level of sophistication in social and cultural interaction raised the level of expectation on the performance of graduates for a better involvement in a more open and democratic society.
Education is a critical sector whose performance directly affects and even determines the quality and magnitude of Ethiopia’s development. It is the most important means we have at our disposal to develop human resources, impart appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes. Education forms the basis for developing innovation, science and technology in order to harness our resources, industrialize, and participate in the global knowledge economy and for Ethiopia to take its rightful place in the global community. It is also the means by which Ethiopia will entrench a culture of peace, gender equality and positive Ethiopian values.

Benefiting from sustained growth in the decade, the Ethiopian government, in partnership with donors, has invested heavily in improving access to education. Key measures included were abolishing school fees, increasing expenditure on school construction and maintenance, hiring and training many thousands of new teachers, administrators and officials. This has been complemented by a shift to mother tongue instruction and by the gradual decentralization of the education system to progressively lower administrative levels. This has contributed to the improvement of access at all levels. Enrollment at all levels has increased from below 3 million in 1994/95 to more than 20 million in 2012/13.

The Ethiopian government has realized that increasing the coverage of education is only part of the battle. Most schools’ performance is still wanting. Low levels of education quality remain one of the most significant challenges in improving learning outcomes. Even so, compared with other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have experienced rapid increases in enrolment, Ethiopia has been more successful at rapidly taking appropriate measures to improve quality of Education at all levels. Considering the number of students entering the system, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, the decline in quality would likely have been significantly worse had it not been strongly supported by the government and partners.

The government has recently taken steps to improve quality of education. In 2007, the MoE developed a new package of interventions to remedy identified weaknesses of education quality at all levels. This reform package, the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP), encompasses four key areas of intervention – (i) the Teacher Development Program, (ii) curriculum improvement, (iii) leadership and management, and (iv) the School Improvement Program – and two complementary packages, ‘Civics and Ethical Education’ and ‘Information Communications Technology’.

The fact that all these efforts have not yet brought the required quality education at all levels requires us to correctly conceptualize quality in education, the factors that affect quality and how it can be measured so that all stakeholder (the government, schools/ universities/ institutions, learners, educators, researchers, parents and partners) make efforts to bring the required level of quality in our education system.

All of the well-documented benefits of education to development –poverty reduction, individual growth, economic growth, prevention of diseases and epidemics, good health, participatory democracy, sustainable use of the environment, diverse forms of equity and inclusiveness, peace, global citizenship, social cohesion, political stability etc. – are not feasible unless education is of good quality.
General education lays the foundation for quality, effective and relevant education and learning throughout life. Failure to provide quality general education at this level is tantamount to failure to realize the development impact of education and of learning. Poor education quality, therefore, stands in the way of sustainable development at the individual, national and global level, of attaining virtually all MDGs and of attaining the six EFA goals, each of which has education quality as a precondition.

The Ethiopian Government is well aware of the quality crisis and its development consequences. The recent General Education Quality Improvement program has the enhancement of quality education among key strategic objectives. Yet, the challenge persists, and the quality goals are dauntingly off track.

What seem to be lacking are systemic analysis and identification of critical constraints that prevent Ethiopia from attaining and sustaining intended levels of quality education. To analyze/diagnose and identify critical impediments that prevent the country to provide high quality education and effective learning experiences to all learners, we need to critically analyze the different dimensions of quality of education. Many of the studies so far conducted have very limited scope and longitudinal comparability, and lacks a strong system-wide tradition of diagnosing/analyzing, improving and assuring quality. Trying to address the issue of education quality by treating separate dimensions of education quality is like forgetting the forest when looking at individual trees. To address the education quality issue holistically, we need to critically review the concept of quality in the context of education.

The Concept of Quality

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. However, considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today which include quality learners, quality environment, quality content, quality process, and quality outcomes.

Understanding quality of education from these dimensions allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context. It is important to keep in mind that these dimensions are interdependent, influencing each other in ways that are sometimes unforeseeable.

In reviewing the research literature related to quality in education, UNICEF (2000) takes a broader perspective and demonstrates by this analysis that programs must encompass a broader definition involving quality learners, content, processes, environments and outcomes which is elaborated as follows.

Quality Learners

School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children’s lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support.

As educators, we want to nurture engaged learners who are motivated, enjoy learning, and go on to fulfill their potential. There are three key areas that we will work to make every
student an engaged learner: ignite the joy of learning, provide learning support where necessary, and design multiple pathways to suit different learning styles.

First, ignite the joy of learning. As the French philosopher Simone Weil said, “The joy of learning is as indispensable in study as breathing is to running”. It is easy to speak about the joy of learning. In practice, learning can be hard because it requires effort. Like a baby learning to walk must stumble, pick him up, and try again and again, children should also try again & again. Adults need to provide support, but not so much that we stop the baby from trying.

The joy comes from trying, from a sense of “I can do it!” It comes from having a sense of mastery; of having a pleasant moment that “I have done it!” It is a joy that comes from overcoming challenges, after trying once, twice, three times, or whatever it takes. Small successes can build on one another. They enhance a child’s natural curiosity and sense of wonder. I firmly believe that it is this sense of wonder, this perseverance, and this sense of mastery that will make each of us a lifelong learner. We must therefore help every child build confidence, as he/she progresses through more and more difficult tasks. Because each child progresses at different rates, we must have multiple pathways for them to make progress. At every stage, we must have the right amount of challenge relative to the ability of the child - not so much as to overwhelm, and not so little as to bore. Getting this balance right is very difficult.

Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999). Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development in the early years, and early detection and intervention for disabilities can give children the best chances for healthy development. Prevention of infection, disease and injury prior to school enrolment are also critical to the early development of a quality learner.

Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. Studies in different countries found out that effective and appropriate stimulation in a child’s early years influences the brain development necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioral management. A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psychosocial development later in life (McCain & Mustard, 1999). A high level of quality in early childhood development programmes can be achieved when health and nutrition components are combined with structured psychosocial development in the pre-school years.

When they reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child’s exposure to curriculum — his or her ‘opportunity to learn’ — significantly influences achievement, and exposure to curriculum comes from being in school (Fuller et al., 1999).

Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children’s cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents’ level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children’s ability to learn in school. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less, were more than three times as
likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000). Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents’ income and need for help in the home or field — help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron and Chau, 1996).

The effects of schools in poor areas can often outweigh the impact of family background and practices (Fuller, et al., 1999). Further, although many constraints exist, schools can play a role in helping parents to enhance the ‘home curriculum’ and improve the quality of parental involvement in their children’s education. Strategies include, for example, asking parents to participate in assessment of their child’s progress, offering clear, regular, non-threatening communication & including parents in decision-making groups at the school (Redding, 2000).

Quality Learning Environments
Another essential ingredient for a successful educational system is a quality learning environment. Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally require quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Physical Elements
Physical learning environments or the places in which formal learning occurs, range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that is hard to measure. Some authors argue that empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of school buildings is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student’s background” (Fuller, 1999). Other studies, however, found out that, the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with pupils’ achievement (Carron and Chau, 1996). Studies in Ethiopia also, concur with these latter findings.

The quality of school buildings may be related to other school quality issues, such as the presence of adequate instructional materials and textbooks, working conditions for students and teachers, and the ability of teachers to undertake certain instructional approaches. Such factors as on-site availability of lavatories and a clean water supply, classroom maintenance, space and furniture availability all have an impact on the critical learning factor of time on task. In the last two decades access to education was significantly expanded, but the building of many schools has not kept pace with the increase in the student population. In these cases, schools forced to expand class sizes, as well as the ratio of students to teachers, to accommodate large numbers of new students.

Psychosocial Elements
Within schools and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory climate is critical to creating a quality learning environment. In many areas, attitudes discouraging girls’ participation in education have been significant barriers to providing quality education to all students. Once girls gain access to schools, however, they may experience both direct physical threats and more subtle assaults on their confidence, self-esteem and identity (Pigozzi, 2000). The journey to school may be unsafe, since many girls experience harassment and physical attacks either on public transportation in cities or remote paths in rural areas. At home, parents often require girls to do work while boys study or play. In some
cases, extreme physical assault, including rape, may be perpetuated against girls at school. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, bullying and undervaluing girls, harm them in profound and long-lasting ways.

Relative to both girls and boys, parents, educators and researchers express important concerns about teachers who create an unsafe environment for students. In some schools, male teachers sexually harass girls. When parents were asked about reasons they might withdraw their children from schools, they most often cited a lack of discipline, violence of teachers towards pupils (corporal punishment), and the risk of pregnancy due to the male teachers' behavior. These teacher behaviors affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and self-protection are threatened.

Well-managed schools and classrooms contribute to educational quality. Students, teachers and administrators should agree upon school and classroom rules and policies, and these should be clear and understandable. Order, constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behavior communicate a seriousness of purpose to students. It is important not to mistakenly interpret learner-centered learning as disorder and chaos. Policies are also needed on harassment, drug and tobacco use, and anti-discrimination with regard to disabilities, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy.

Reducing other forms of discrimination is also critical to quality improvement in learning environments. Ethiopia is currently trying to implement effective inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities. Children of ethnic and language minorities, politically or geographically disfavored groups, and groups at low socio-economic levels may also suffer from discriminatory policies and practices that hinder the advancement of quality education for all children. In general, continued restructuring of most learning environments needs to occur to improve learning opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

**Quality Content**

High quality physical, psychosocial and service environments in schools set the stage for learning to occur. This learning begins with quality content. Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum (UNICEF, 2000).

Research on educational practices and projections about future needs in society contribute to current understanding of the structure of school curriculum. In general, curriculum should emphasize deep rather than broad coverage of important areas of knowledge, authentic and contextualized problems of study, and problem-solving that stresses skills development as well as knowledge acquisition. Curriculum should also provide for individual differences, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject matter, and focus on results or standards and targets for student learning (Glatthorn and Jailall, 2000).

Curriculum structure should be gender-sensitive and inclusive of children with diverse abilities and backgrounds, and responsive to emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution. In all content areas, curriculum should be based on clearly defined learning outcomes and these outcomes should be grade-level appropriate and properly sequenced.
The specific content of school curriculum depends on local and national values. Regional states tend to have a high degree of consistency in curriculum emphasis over time, but differ sharply from each other, reflecting unique historical patterns. Local level interests may also have an impact on and contribute to the quality of educational content. In all regions, however, quality content should include several pivotal areas.

Quality Processes

Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centered on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes —how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality school processes.

No education system can provide quality education without having quality teachers. The highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy. Perhaps as a consequence of too little preparation before entering the profession, a number of teachers were observed to master neither the subject matter they teach nor the pedagogical skills required for good presentation of the material. This affects educational quality since student achievement depends largely on teachers’ command of subject matter (Mullens, Murnance and Willett, 1996) and their ability to use that knowledge to help students learn. Whether a teacher uses traditional or more current methods of instruction, efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning.

A quality and caring teacher is one who believes that every child can learn, and acts on that belief. He/she should motivate the child - know the child, shape the child’s values and character, help the child grow as a person and bring out the best in the child. A caring teacher is also a skilful teacher - one who masters her/his content, and is able to engage students through thoughtful planning and skilful execution (the pedagogy). But to have teachers who care, they need some who must care for them. The government, school leaders, parents and the community at large must support and care for teachers.

Continuing Support for Student-Centered Learning

Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, should help teachers develop teaching methods and skills that take new understandings of how children learn into account. Just as curriculum should be child-centered and relevant, so should instructional methods. The limited view of teaching as presentation of knowledge no longer fits with current understandings of how and what students learn. Instead, instruction should help students build on prior knowledge to develop attitudes, beliefs and cognitive skills; as well as expand their knowledge base. Teaching styles in many places, however, remain traditional, teacher-centered and fairly rigid or even authoritarian. When Ethiopian teachers were interviewed about the degree to which their teaching practices were learner-centered and relevant to student's lives, about half said they link lessons to the daily life of pupils at least once a week. Almost two-thirds, however, said they never or rarely ask pupils what their interests are, or what they would like to learn.

Good teachers are skilled not only in instructional methods, but also in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individual student learning and adapt activities according to student needs. This process should include both performance
assessment and assessment of factual knowledge. Observations in many schools found that teachers are very poorly trained in evaluation techniques, and the reality is far from the continuous evaluation procedures recommended by official programs. Indeed, many teachers and educational systems continue to rely almost exclusively on traditional paper-and-pencil tests of factual knowledge that tend to promote rote memorization rather than higher order thinking skills.

Quality education puts students at the centre of the process; student achievement must be the school’s first priority. Since schools exist because of students, this would seem self-evident. Perhaps because of the complexity of educational systems, however, teachers may not always believe in the school’s ability to help all students. Many teachers had little awareness of the school’s role in pupil failure and dropout. Instead, they tended to blame the pupils and their family environment. Schools committed to student learning communicate expectations clearly, give frequent and challenging assignments, monitor performance regularly, and give students the chance to participate in and take responsibility for diverse school activities (Craig, Kraft and du Plessis, 1998).

Teachers’ working conditions affect their ability to provide quality education. Many aspects of school life and educational policy go into teachers’ perceptions of their employment. As mentioned above, the condition of infrastructure, availability of textbooks and learning materials and class sizes all influence the teacher’s experience as an educator.

Teachers’ remuneration also matters. Low remuneration may lead teachers to take on another job, which hurts student learning. Effective teachers are highly committed and care about their students; they need supportive working conditions to maintain these positive attitudes.

**Supervision and Support**

The quality of administrative support and leadership is another critical element in school processes, both for students and for teachers. At a more macro level, ensuring financial resources for education, especially for recurrent budgets is a necessity. Teachers need governments who are supportive of education systems. Organizational support for teaching and learning takes many forms, including such measures as advocating for better conditions and professional development, respecting teachers’ autonomy and professionalism and developing inclusive decision-making processes. Such support has been shown to have impact on student learning.

Unfortunately, however, few head teachers and administrators in our schools have had any formal training in the leadership functions of schools, and promotions may not be based on leadership or management skills. Further, many heads of schools continue to have extensive administrative and political responsibilities in addition to their academic leadership. This leaves little time for supervision and academic support of staff.

**Quality Outcomes**

The environment, content and processes that learners encounter in school lead to diverse results, some intended and others unintended. Quality learner outcomes are intentional, expected effects of the educational system. They include what children know and can do, as well as the attitudes and expectations they have for themselves and their societies.
Academic achievement is often used as an indicator of school quality because it is easily measurable using standardized tests, while other outcomes may be more complex and less tangible. These include education for citizenship (participating in and contributing to the community, learner confidence and self-esteem) and skills for behavioral development and change.

Academic achievement represents key educational outcomes. Teaching students to read, write and calculate is often considered the primary purpose of formal education, but students’ regular attendance and attention in school does not guarantee this outcome. Many studies underscore the critical relationship between outcomes and the quality of environments, contents and processes.

Assessment of academic achievement outcomes has most often been used in a summative rather than formative way. Testing information tends to be used primarily as a screening device to decide who can continue to the next grade of level rather than as a tool to help improve educational quality for individuals and systems. An assessment tool that centered on a curriculum-based rating scale should be developed and administered to students. This could allow teachers to determine students’ level of mastery of previous and current years’ curricula, which would help them, determine the extent to which alternative instructional strategies and remedial content are necessary for both individuals and groups.

Parents tend to see academic achievement as closely related to the opportunity for social promotion and employment. These anticipated outcomes tend to be highly valued by families: future employment possibilities that result from education seem to be a primary factor in the demand for education. Parents tend to attach more importance to educational outcomes as a measure of school quality than students, teachers or principals.

In conclusion, developed countries have attained their present economic status mainly because of the quality of their human resources, which are results of quality education systems. In order to join the middle income group countries in the near future, we will have to move very fast towards ensuring quality education at all levels and this is the responsibility of every one of us.

No nation has ever had significant economic development without achieving a broad-based education for its population. Investment in education has been found to be the most cost-effective means of achieving poverty-related objectives such as better health and nutrition and lower fertility rates. Education is also the necessary bedrock of social, economic and political development. Education is important for creating enabling conditions for sustaining change. A well-educated populace is necessary to bring about technological innovation and to adapt and modify it in the context of local conditions and realities. Similarly, a well-educated and competitive labor force is an important factor in attracting foreign investments.

While investing in education is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient to achieve sustained economic growth. The contribution of education to economic growth depends largely on the nature of the economic system which shapes the way skills are applied and made productive. In addition, economic growth is necessary to sustain education expansion in that such growth increases revenues available to education both from the public as well as from private sources. Programs to support education development, therefore, need to be situated within a
solid macroeconomic framework. While research findings from across the world show that education does contribute to aggregate output, this linkage is less robust for less developed countries like Ethiopia—reflecting factors such as a lack of complementary inputs into education, weak institutional capacity and other obstacles that prevent full utilization of skills. Much greater attention, therefore, needs to be given not just to the quantitative expansion of education but even more importantly to inputs that raise the qualitative outcomes of education programs.

Therefore, we should make quality of education our 1st, 2nd and 3rd priorities.

Thank you and God bless you.

References


Dear Invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

It is my distinct pleasure and honour to deliver these opening remarks. Firstly I would like to welcome the President, Prof. Fekadu Beyene and all members of the management of the University for the Initiative they took to organize such a National symposium to discuss on pertinent quality practices in Education. Wollega University is one of the universities established recently. It has a very short history as a university. But its development is so remarkable that it catches the attention of all interested scholars who would like to contribute towards meeting heart-felt needs of communities through research and community engagement.

Higher education in Ethiopia was not addressing access and equity issues in the country. Consequently the Ethiopian government education policy was formulated and implemented to address access, equity and quality issues since 1994. Since then substantial number of universities and TVET colleges, both public and private, were established in different parts of the country to offer educational programs and produce skilled manpower to the market. Wollega University diversified its training programs and currently has more than 54 undergraduate regular degree programs, 14 evening degree programs, 14 programs of summer services and five week end programs. Additionally, the University has more than 15 postgraduate programs which should be appreciated by any standard as it happened in five years time and as well as in the time of parallel engagement of concerned and dedicated bodies to establish the university from a remnant forest and farmers' holding afresh. The program mix is designed in such a way to meet the standards set by the government. Launching such engineering and technology focused area of specialization demands huge investment and thus capital intensive. As a result, Universities offering programs of such nature are urged to focus strictly on the triple mandates of higher education institutions: teaching and learning, research and community engagement as the three pillars in order to value and appreciate the huge investment.

Dear Invited Guests,

The Growth and Development Plan of the Ethiopian Government clearly indicated and gave high attention to quality education provision. Thus higher education programs providing universities are highly expected to thoroughly study the GTP and gear their training programs to provide competent workforce that positively respond to the development agenda of the nation. Such efforts undoubtedly lead to demand and market oriented educational programs.

I appreciate that Wollega University organized this very important national symposium under the theme stated above. Such symposia enable professionals to networking & exchange of
information on policies, processes and practices with a view to help improving the quality assurance strategies and practices of the higher education institutions in the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ethiopia is currently on move to meet Millennium Development Goals. For such goals to be met quality and competent professionals are required. Quality professionals need quality education and training. Competent professionals are better qualified and suited to grow the economy. Hence, the need for quality assurance in education and training is mandatory.

The HERQA has the mandate of ensuring all education and training programs offered in Ethiopia is quality assured. It must also ensure that no unnecessary barriers to access are placed on the learning continuum across the sector. All nations, big or small, want to be competitive in the global village. We all want our citizens to be educated to the highest standards. To this end, we expect our education system to be relevant and quality responsive and of world class.

The contributions of Wollega University in particularly and all higher education institutions in general are immense and need to be appreciated provided that they live and exceed the expectations of their stakeholders and the local community particularly the government and the industry at large.

Finally I would like to express my appreciation to all participants and policy makers at regional, zonal and Woreda levels and University management and staff who spared their valuable time to share their research findings to all of us so that we learn better. They gave us opportunities to plough back the research findings to boost quality education provision and train competent workforce. I wish you all fruitful, open and intellectually stimulating discussions. With these few remarks, ladies and gentlemen, once again I welcome you and I now declare this symposium organized by Wollega University officially opened.

I Thank You for Your Attention.
Keynote Address
By
Firdissa Jebessa Aga
Director, Change Management and Transformation Office, Addis Ababa University,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Excellency Ato Teferi Tiyaro, Head, East Wollega Zone Administration

Your Excellency Prof. Fekadu Beyene, President of the Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities (CEPU), and President of Wollega University

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Allow me to sincerely make a keynote address related to this National Symposium. The Theme of the Symposium: Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education is a timely agenda, to be responsive to the demands of the day.

Quality assurance demands doing the right things right, knowledge sharing and empowerment, learning new ways of doing our business, changing our world and managing it, being alive, and seeing the head of the future.

Our universities are entrusted with the duty to support Ethiopia’s determined aspirations to:
• be a middle income country in the near future;
• achieve the MDG targets by 2015;
• achieve UNESCO’s standard teacher-student ratio of 1:20; and
• improve and ensure the quality, relevance and efficiency of education at all levels with the purpose to produce knowledgeable, skillful, enlightened, inspired and innovative workforce who can contribute to national development and transformation.

It is my observation as quality Auditor, and as a Consultant of the Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities (CEPU) that our universities are in the change trajectory to meet the dynamisms of the day by offering degrees contributing towards:
• faster absorption of new information,
• application of unfamiliar inputs and new processes more effectively, and
• removal of individual, social and institutional barriers to sustainable national development and transformation.

National development is the ability of a country to improve the social and overall welfare of its citizens, not the land. It is a result of many conditions one of which is qualified labor force with appropriate competence, discipline, and commitment. This calls for assuring quality of education, which has become a survival strategy in this globalized world.

Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Quality, nonetheless, demands quality! This deals with inputs, processes and outputs. Above all, quality happens by quality people. It is really innocence to expect quality to happen by people of low quality and from uninformed, not empowered, uncommitted, and poorly
motivated staff. Quality does not happen simply by talking about it; rather by working resolutely. Equally, we cannot purchase it from somewhere else and install as computer wares. It is an embedded process that is owned by the university community; particularly by empowered, motivated, committed and enlightened staff. This is because universities are ideal places and university educators are the right people working at the frontiers of knowledge. They are forerunners in the effort to materialize the urging forces for quality: internationalization, moral, professional, competitive, and accountability forces. It is, therefore, imperative to enhance the frontline implementers’ empowerment, commitment, sense of shared values, trust and ownership for the reason that the way to quality improvement is through the staff's heart, mind and action in and outside classrooms. That is why I usually say QUALITY DEMANDS QUALITY!

Quality Education and Economic Development have direct, bidirectional, and strong bond. One may ask: "Which comes first: Qualified (quality) people or quality education?" The answer is both. But more importantly, the Catalytic role of quality education is decisive for the purpose.

- It is the major driver for development,
- It becomes a necessity in today’s changes in technology, globalization, and demographics, to muddle through, to survive and thrive within this unpredictable world,
- It is an engine for the means to the end;
- It creates a strong and versatile economy.

To remain competitive and/or to be winners in the competition in light of the dynamisms, economy at the same time expands educational opportunities. The bond demands that all the programs at all schooling perform well and are in line with the requirements of the economy, national development and transformation. Although growth does not necessarily eliminate poverty, economic growth is a powerful weapon against poverty, as an old proverb says: “a rising tide lifts all boats”.

Studies support the bond between education quality and economic growth. For instance, between 30% and 50% of that part of American output growth for decades were due to the increase in the quality of labor through quality education.

The contribution of quality education to output growth can be seen in three ways:
1) Through the more varied and better generic skills it bestows on workers,
2) Through the greater research productivity it generates, and
3) By contributing to the rate of technical progress or a rise in ’total’ productivity by increasing labor and capital productivity.

It is a means to the end by creating a dynamic workforce and well-informed citizens able to compete and cooperate globally – opening doors to economic and social prosperity.

It is, therefore, a high time to deliberate on our common value ends: establishing, enhancing and sustaining education quality so as to guarantee academic excellence in higher learning institutions as it has direct and indirect repercussions for the envisaged national development and transformation.
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

The issues under the major theme of the symposium prompt deliberations on our shared value ends as part of nation building by enhancing academic excellence so also to:

a) generate new knowledge;
b) further our understanding, learning, improvement, and changing;
c) connect theory to practice;
d) empower practitioners; and
e) enhance professional growth.

Hopefully, the research papers and the issues that may come out of them address factors contributing to the observed state of the facts/development, the development itself, and the effects. It should, however, be noted that it is not enough to understand the state of the issues and/or facts and figures, but to change them for the better. The catalytic validity of the issues, nonetheless, can be achieved through our active participation here and at our respective workplaces.

It is my belief that the efforts being made by Wollega University, as observed from sight see and from the theme of this symposium, testifies its readiness and revitalized commitment to be open, transparent, customer-centered, and responsive with the purpose to share and receive knowledge following the design principle that form follows function. By implication both the observed normal operations and the Theme are part of the learning process not ends by themselves. Whereas the former is responsiveness to accountability, the latter is part of knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing, which is part of organizational learning, involves the processes through which knowledge is channeled between a source and a recipient. The degree to which the recipient university obtains ownership of, commitment to, and satisfaction with the transferred knowledge can be affected positively or negatively in as much as knowledge itself is often meaning and value laden. Meaning and value, nonetheless, are constructed inter-subjectively (i.e. in mutual understanding and consensus about what and how we should do), rather than by the subject in isolation.

Equally, the transferred knowledge can support sustainable national development and transformation in as much as it is owed, recreated, and adopted/adapted to our context as recipients. This in turn demands openness, a spirit of shared/common value ends, liberated mind, transparency, responsiveness, and above all honesty on both sides.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

With our joint actions (regardless of where and who we are) we can ascertain the Establishment, Enhancement and Sustainability of Education Quality for National Development and Transformation. By so doing we can change our world and it can, in turn, change us.

I thank you!
Section III:
Papers Presented
Higher Education: Quality, Quality Assurance, the Concept and its Elements and HERQA's Focus Areas

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Introduction

The economic and social development of any given nation is dependent on the development level of the higher education sector. The importance and contribution of the higher education sector is obvious as it provides the human resources required for leadership, management, business and professional positions (Teshome, 2003). Consequently, since 1991 Ethiopia has expanded its higher education sector. To date Ethiopia has made a considerable progress in the area expansion. Currently there are 31 public and more than 66 private degree-offering higher education institutions in the country.

Since expansion alone would not lead to quality educations provision the Ethiopian government established Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) in 2003 through the proclamation number 350 which is later amended through the proclamation number 650/2009. HERQA is mandated to assure quality education provision in public universities and private higher education institutions. These HEIs are entrusted with public responsibilities to discharge their duties in effective and efficient way so that the industry is provided with competent work force.

Since its establishment HERQA has developed quality assurance systems and introduce the systems for achieving quality education provision and meet set objectives by the higher education institutions. Currently through the institutional quality audit reports and accreditations undertaken institutions and the public at large know their strengths and weaknesses and can make informed decision with regard to the programs they want to attend and the private higher education institutions they would like to join. This paper thus discusses quality concepts, standards and protocols developed by HERQA and major issues worth considering for further actions by higher education institutions for best results.

What is Quality?

It is very difficult to reach at a single and well agreed definition on the concept of quality. This is mainly because different segments of the society define the concept of quality in their own terms and perspectives. For instance, Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA, 2005) defined quality as ‘fitness for purpose’ as a regulatory body established in 2003 to assure relevance and quality education provision in all higher education institutions in Ethiopia. For HERQA quality education provision is assured provided every program launched in a department has defined purpose that meets specific needs of the industry in particular and the nation's development agenda in general. Similarly for a university academic staff quality means ‘academic excellence’. Most academic staff believe that their university is the best if there is a strong pride in the successful comparison between the level of academic achievement in terms of high-level teaching and frontline research of the own department and other well respected departments in various parts of the world.
Quality can also be defined as ‘compliance with set standards or zero error’. This definition holds true for both manufacturing and service giving industries as well as higher education institutions; but with slight difference. Products can be produced with zero error in an industry as the production system is very well controllable starting from the raw material supply and the labor as input parameters, to the process it passes through and the end product as an output. The situation in higher education is however unique as students are humans who join universities with reasonable prior knowledge, skill and attitude. Hence, quality in higher education should be understood in different ways as the quality model they pass through in the university system is more process oriented. This is mainly because students undergo change and become more informed, mature and develop as persons, intellectually, socially and psychologically.

The other definition of quality is satisfaction of customers. Every higher education institution has students as most important customers and caters for their wishes and interests. Universities which offer better teaching and learning, research and community based service opportunities are always preferred by many students. Such facilities undoubtedly enable students to acquire the necessary knowledge, skill and attitude which eventually make them competent in the market. Employers are also customers of universities among many and they have to meet their expectations and make them satisfied. For an employer, ‘quality’ of the graduate is seen as a measure of the ‘quality’ of the university. For him, it means that the graduate is apt for the job the employer has to offer, and is of a sufficiently high professional level to function well at that level.

Quality is also defined as meeting threshold or minimum standard, as a process of enhancement and as ‘fitness of purpose’. The definition of quality as ‘fitness of purpose’ holds true when an element of comparison is embedded with some kind of benchmark. In fact, all of these definitions are valid, and it is very possible to add more to the list. Many factors play a role in assessing the quality, and these may differ in focus. This is an important observation that needs to be taken into account when higher education institutions embark on quality assessment.

The Quality Model

Having examined various definitions of quality as perceived by many, HERQA agreed with all higher education institutions, professional bodies and other concerned bodies on ‘fitness for purpose’ as a working definition of quality in Ethiopia (HERQA, 2005). The quality model HERQA currently uses has three elements; input, process and output (HERQA, 2005). One of the inputs is the design of a curriculum which eventually leads to the development of an educational program in a given department. It should emanate from the needs of stakeholders namely the students, parents, employers, government and the society at large. Any department that fails to overlook such approach will be unsuccessful to meet requirements of the industry and community and would be unable to respond to ever increasing demands of the stakeholder. Consulting government strategic and policy documents, feasibility study on the skills demanded by the industry help institutions to prepare a road map for the preparation of sound curriculum and launching of a program responsive to the industry (Figure 1).

Higher education institutions that transform the needs and demands of the stakeholders into goals and aims and finally to educational activities, research undertakings and community outreach activities achieve set goals, standards and maintain quality.
What is Quality Assurance?

Quality assurance is the whole range of actions and mechanisms that support quality in higher education. Successful higher education institutions design and plan and set up a built-in self-assessment bodies systematically at all levels to assure quality education provision on offer. Quite a number of public and private higher education institutions set up quality assurance units and assess the provision of quality education they offer periodically. These quality assurance units also assist universities to design mechanism for controlling, guaranteeing and promoting quality. Quality assurance is being carried out at the institutional level internally and by external quality assurance agency like HERQA. HERQA so far has undertaken more than 29 external quality audits, produced reports and distributed to all concerned bodies for further action. In the current budget year 12 institutions are being audited. As a support mechanism and improvement quality assurance include a range of activities to be undertaken that repeat themselves in cyclic fashion (Figure 2).

How does a HEIs Assure Quality?

Higher education institutions assure educational programs they offer through three mechanisms: internal self study or assessment, an external review based on the self assessment and monitoring and follow up.

Internal Quality Assurance

Higher education institutions can assure educational programs they offer internally and externally. Internally, each higher education institution is obliged to make sure that its program’s policies and mechanisms fulfill its own purposes and objectives, as well as they meet set standards in general, or to the profession or discipline in particular. Such quality assurance self-assessment approaches could be applied at departmental or institutional levels and help institutions whether they produce competent workforce that is demanded by the labor market or not (Figure 2).
External Quality Assurance
Conversely, external government or non-government bodies, possibly a quality assurance agency such HERQA, assesses the operation of the institution or its programs, to determine whether it is meeting the agreed standards or assure quality through accreditation, assessment or audit (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2009). One form of quality assurance would be, according to IIEP (2006), the procedure through which government policies call on HEIs both public and private to go through some form of external scrutiny in order to provide public assurances that they offer worthwhile services to society. Studying the self evaluation document, a team of experts gather evidences, collect, analyze and interpret empirical data from the institution and finally highlight elements of good practices and suggests cluster of recommendations on all set standards. The institutional or program level external quality audit reports also check whether the set standards are met or not. HERQA disseminates such reports to all concerned bodies and expect HEIs to look into the recommendations made critically and come up with quality enhancement plan as monitoring and follow up which should be executed to address some quality concerns and challenges. Unfortunately very few HEIs, both public and private, give due attentions to the institutional quality audit reports and the recommendations made.

The Process of Quality Assurance
The quality assurance process comprises three distinct stages: assessment, preparation of report and follow-up action. During the assessment stage a group of trained auditors study the self assessment document of the institution and gather relevant data and information, process and analysis. They also assess inputs, processes and outcomes against predetermined objectives, standards or criteria and undertake external review and validation of assessment. They produce an institutional or program level audit report and HERQA submits to the institution to factual errors and under or over representations of various components of the audit process. The outcome would be the production of a public audit report at institutional level and if it is program level it would be accreditation decision. The third stage is the follow up stage which deals with the immediate changes and improvement actions institutions possibly take.
Focus Areas of HERQA during external QA Processes at Institutional Level

HERQA has identified the following ten key aspects of operations which will form the focus areas for quality audits in Ethiopian HEIs.

1. Vision, Mission and Educational Goals
2. Governance and Management System
3. Infrastructure and Learning Resources
4. Academic and Support Staff
5. Student Admission and Support Services
6. Program Relevance and Curriculum
7. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
8. Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes
9. Research and Outreach Activities
10. Internal Quality Assurance

What is Program Evaluation?

Program evaluation is a systematic approach to address questions that provide information about the quality of a program in order to assist decision making aimed at program (HERQA, 2013):

- improvement,
- development or
- accountability and to contribute to a recognized level of value

Questions asked During Program Evaluation:

1. What is working well in the Program?

A program evaluation involves the assessment of all the elements of a program. As indicated in Figure 3, the assessment ranges from the program specification to the content of the program and assessment of students. The quality of the staff( both academic and support), the infrastructure and services such as guidance and counseling academic advisory services are also assessed in order to know what is working well and what is not. In other words, to have a good knowledge of the program, it is important to have a mechanism that can effectively be used to describe and analyze how these elements are functioning. How might we improve it?

2. What difference does the program make, for whom and under what circumstances?

It is important for a program assessment to answer the question whether or not the program offered by an HEI makes a difference on the economy of the country in general and employability of graduates in particular. One of the mandates of HERQA given to it by Higher Education Proclamation 650/2009 Article 79:5 is to make sure that the programs offered by higher education institutions contribute to the current needs of the country. It stipulates that the Agency is established “to ensure that higher education and training offered at any institution are in line with economic, social and other relevant policies of the country”. Hence the following questions need to be asked and addressed.

1. What is working well in the program?
2. How might we improve it?
3. What difference does the program make, for whom and under what circumstances?
4. Does the program contribute to achieving the core mission of the institution?
5. What is being developed in the program, and what are its merits?

A program is basically assessed on the basis of the question whether or not it is geared towards achieving the institution's core mission and goals.

The Contents of Program Self-evaluation Document
1. The purpose of the Evaluation
2. The purpose of the Program
3. The Program Context
4. The evaluation of quality and relevance
5. Findings
6. Limitations
7. Strengths
8. Good Practices

The Purposes of the Evaluation
- **Program improvement** – making better the quality and operation of a program;
- **Accountability**- determining whether program expectations have been met
- **Program Impact** - determining whether the program made a difference and is worthwhile
- **Knowledge Generation** - exploring the nature and effects of a program as a way to contribute to the existing knowledge base or to develop a new program.

The Purpose of Program Self-Evaluation
In the process of preparing the self evaluation, the first task of the self evaluation committee established by a higher education institution will be to clarify the purpose of the program. This will be of an enormous importance for the external auditors who will certainly be using the self evaluation document during external program audit. Once the purposes are clearly stated the Committee should move to stating who the program is intended to serve, what the
program intends to do in order to bring about the expected behavioral, competency and other changes on the graduates, and what kinds of resources are needed to operate and manage the program.

In order to do this, in addition to having a series of discussions with those individuals who have played and are still playing in the design and implementation of the program, the Committee can consult written program proposal materials, guidelines of the QA agency, program materials, management documents, and past evaluation reports.

The Program Context
Knowledge of the program context is one of the preconditions of a self or external program evaluation because our judgment of a program is dependent on the context under which it is operating. By program context we mean the organizational, political and social context of a program, why the program is thought to be necessary and what needs are being addressed, the nature and purpose of the institution.

The Evaluation of Quality and Relevance
This is the most important stage in the process of self evaluation. It requires the self evaluation committee to assess the institution on the basis of the following ten focus areas:
1. Program Aims, Goals, and Learning Outcomes
2. Governance, Leadership, and Administration
3. Educational Resources
4. Academic and Support Staff
5. Student Admission and Support Services
6. Program Relevance and Curriculum
7. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
8. Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes
9. Continual Quality Assurance
10. Research and Development and Educational Exchanges

Each focus area should be described and analyzed based on the standards set by the higher education institution and the detailed reference points presented in HERQA (2013) Program Level Evaluation Guideline and appropriate conclusions should be drawn accordingly.

Findings
Having analyzed each focus areas and drawn conclusions from the analysis, the self evaluation committee is expected to weave the findings on the ten focus areas together to create cohesive answers to the questions stated above. This weaving of findings is known as "triangulation" and is standard professional practice in both the field of applied social sciences and the field of evaluation. Triangulation is using different types of data from different sources to get different perspectives on the answer to the same question. The basic idea underpinning the concept of triangulation, according to Given (2008), is that the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a variety or a combination of research methods. Triangulation is most commonly used in data collection and analysis techniques, but it also applies to sources of data. Weaving the data together in the analysis, the results should be a cohesive answer to an evaluation question. This is the ultimate aim in reporting program evaluation findings.
Limitations and Strengths
In this section, the evaluators are expected to put the summary of the limitations and strengths of each focus area. The idea here is the whole evaluation process addresses all the elements under the three dimensions of quality assurance-input, process and output.

Good Practices
The HEI should:
• Highlight what it considers to be its good practices and the evidence for the claims made in all areas.
• Indicate how the good practices arose and how the HEI disseminated these (or plans` to do so) and the results. Evidence of impact should be cited.

Plans for Enhancement of Processes and Practices
Once a higher education institution is audited and an audit report produced and distributed, higher education institutions are expected to submit quality enhancement plan to HERQA where HERQA undertake assessment of the realizations of the plan and pin point issues that deserve high attention before the next audit cycle comes into effect. Consequently, HEIs should:
• reflect on its strengths and weaknesses and
• make clear how it is taking steps (or has concrete plans) to build on its strengths and remedy weaknesses.

Ethiopian HEIs: Major Strengths, Limitations & Ways Forward
There is evidence of good and exemplary practice in all focus areas in most HEIs. Management and governance are the two focus areas with the greatest number of commendations. Good practices are observed in both government and private higher education institutions.

There are also some system weaknesses among which these two are the major ones. Most audited HEIs operate without effective ways of monitoring and reviewing implementation and progress and educational outcomes. The appointment of academic staff with the government recommended ratio of bachelors, masters and PhD degrees for both government and private institutions is a challenge.

It is high time for HEIs to establish university-industry linkage and focus on joint research undertakings if they have to prove their survival and respond to the industry and community needs. Develop a mechanism to assess the market need and focus on to produce competent workforce and professionals employers’ needs and even go beyond to equip graduates with entrepreneurial skill to be self employing.

Issues worth considering by Regional, Zone & Woreda BOE & BOH: Accreditation of Private Providers
This symposium on quality of education has involved the participation of all stakeholders including policy makers and regulatory bodies from regional, zonal and woreda BOE and BOH. Regulatory bodies and policy makers are thus hereby notified to
• Make sure that all programs offered by private HEIs have accreditation from HERQA
- Make sure that such accreditations are valid
- Make sure that all relevant facilities are in place
- Make sure that all programs are being carried out as scheduled
- Make sure that all practical sessions for health programs are being carried out as stated in the curriculum
- Collaboration with relevant bodies

**Conclusion**

The efforts and achievements of Ethiopian higher education are remarkable and the higher education institutions are trying to do the best they can under the challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, the shortcomings, some quite worrying must also be recognized if the sector as a whole is to continue to improve and Ethiopia’s graduates to compete with their global counterparts.

**References**


Quality Assurance and Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) of Ethiopia: Implications for National Development

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Introduction

The current changing landscape of professional, economic, political, social and cultural environments demands responsiveness from governments, institutions, and individuals. Many countries are, therefore, revitalizing their higher education functions to meet the demand. Both the changing environments and the responsiveness prompt us (workers in universities) to:

a) look for the alignments between what we would like to do and what we actually do;
b) have clear conceptions of the values and assumptions of our practices; and
c) consider our universities as places where free mind for knowledge creation, preservation, dissemination, extension and application exists- all implying universities to appear as places where conscience of the society exists and is exercised (Firdissa, 2009).

Virtually, universities are there to support national development by way of producing knowledgeable, skillful, and competent workforce; fostering global competence among students; inculcating value system; promoting the use of technology; and advancing a quest for excellence. These in turn call for assuring the quality of the university functions. Quality assurance has become a rapidly growing concern in our country as elsewhere. It is a planned, systematic, and an ongoing and continuous process of guaranteeing the system and providing adequate confidence about the inputs, processes and outputs of the dimensions within the functions. Quality assurance in Ethiopian context is a means to the end- national development for which the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) is formulated. Whereas the eminence of investing in education as a valuable return for the overall development of the nation has made its way to our country, the quality of the sector to effectively backup the aspired development, nonetheless, remains the main concern of the time (Firdissa, 2009).

This paper, therefore, briefly addresses quality conceptions, trends, rationales, movements, processes, and dimensions; the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP); relationship between quality education and economic development; and conclusions and implications.

Defining Quality

Defining quality in higher education actually remains a challenging task. Whereas quality has become an everyday word today. It has no clear-cut conception and there is no consensus view on 'What is meant by quality? Arguably, many people often talk of quality, but they hardly explicate what it really signifies. Particularly in our country, everybody talks of quality, but with little clear understanding of what it is all about. This could be due to different reasons some of which are briefed here.

1) Priority Differences: Different stakeholders prioritize the importance of different dimensions of quality according to their perspectives, purposes, cultures, and level of
understanding. Different constituencies, thus, judge the quality of higher education in various ways. Equally, quality with its indicators is determined by a wider set of criteria which reflects the broadening social composition of its review system; it becomes a composite, multidimensional concept (Furlong & Oacea, 2005, cited in Firdissa, 2006a).

2) **Perceptual Shift:** Our notion of quality assurance has been changing following the recently witnessed considerable HE expansion and globalization, which is at crossroad. Consequently, massive enrolment and diversity of students, instructors, and institutions add many layers of complexity to the existing practices of quality assurance efforts in our country. Compounding the situation is globalization, calling for internationalization, regional integration, and the ever-increasing mobility of students and scholars expanding the need for internationally recognized standards or benchmarks to help guide the comparison and evaluation of academic and professional qualifications (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). As a response to these demands, Ethiopia has embarked on clustering its universities, harmonizing curricula, putting in place peer review mechanisms, and many more.

3) **Changes Overtime:** A Quality element change and evolve overtime with each passing decade and continues to adapt to changing contexts and exigencies. As Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009: taken from van Ginkel and Rodrigues Dias, 2007) indicate, at the 1998 UNESCO world conference, quality in higher education was viewed as:

... a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities; teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipments, services to the community, and academic environment.

The same authors (citing in Vlasceanu, et al., 2007) further indicate that a decade later the definition provided in a UNESCO-CEPES report reflects quality in higher education as:

... a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to the specific standards within a given system, institution, program, or discipline.

4) **Antecedents within the Origin of Quality:** The concept and the concern for assuring and enhancing quality were developed in the business sector in the West for commercial purposes. As things started to change in the western societies as of the late 1980s, however, stakeholders demanded relevant and quality academic programs at Higher Education Institutions (HEIS). Following the demand, quality has become part and parcel of management system of HEIs- worldwide and also a recent concern in our country. Equally, whereas higher education was introduced to our country in 1950, its expansion is a recent phenomenon. Higher education quality, therefore, is not yet well established as value of all concerned stakeholders and consequently less well conceptualized as it ought to be.

Due to these reasons and other features, the concept of quality remains fluid, illusive, complex, and slippery. It is, nonetheless, possible to synthesize some quality conceptions (Figure 1) from Harvey and Green (1993); Firdissa (2006a, b, & 2007a); Harvey and Knight (1996); and Owlia and Aspinwall (1996, cited in Mishra, 2006).
1) **Quality as Exceptional (High Standards):** performance that is exceptional; attainable only in limited circumstances. This can happen only when very able and brightest students are admitted to the system, mainly in world class universities.

2) **Quality as Consistency (Zero Defects/Errorless):** this deals with producing perfection through continuous improvement, among others, by adopting Total Quality Management (TQM) to create a philosophy about work, people and human relationships built around shared values. This definition implies fulfilling ideal standards so entails ideal environment in which all achievements can be measured and verified. This aligns with positivist paradigm which espouses for the belief that the world is definable, fixable, discoverable, and describable.

3) **Quality as Value for money (Return on Investment, Accountability/Efficiency):** this is to see quality as the ability to provide value for resources invested and to be publicly accountable for the ‘bucks’ and for the ‘bangs’. It goes with the types of learners joining our universities and the concerns of cab payers, funding agencies and governments. This conception may be popular with today’s changing landscape of higher education and the competitive climates for scarce resources, particularly in countries like ours.

4) **Quality as Transformative (as Enhancement or Improvement, an Ongoing Process that Includes Empowerment and Enhancement of Satisfaction):** today the world demands adaptive knowledge, skills and attitudes. This calls for enhancing the readiness and capability of HEIs to transform students on an on-going basis and add value to their knowledge and personal development. This aligns with current concerns for higher education for the masses, where emphasis is more on value adding per se rather than value adding from an already high level.

5) **Quality as Fitness for purpose (Fitting Customer Specifications, Needs, and Priorities):** this sees quality as fulfilling the purposes or missions of all parties involved in and affected by the program and /or the services we render.
6) **Quality as Fitness of Purpose**: this deals with doing the right things (instrumental) setting and implementing appropriate purpose to bring change and betterment in the practices and for transforming the learners for the world of life, work, and competition.

7) **Quality as Culture**: These deals with a supportive set of shared, accepted, and integrated systems (embedded), patterns of quality, an attitude and set of group values, taken-for-granted practices, and a specific aspect of organizational culture that guide how improvements are made to everyday working practices and consequent outputs. It serves as social glue to hold an organization together being made up of many variables—modes of interaction, assumptions, rituals, membership, structures, control mechanisms, training, educational sessions and so on. In the spirit of quality culture, it is the responsibility of each unit to ensure the quality of their own work. The emphasis is on ensuring that things are ‘done right first time’. (Vlăsceanu, Grünberg and Pârlea, 2004; Harvey and Green, 1993).

In the context of primary education, quality for UNICEF (2000) includes:

1) Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;

2) Environments that are healthy, safe, protective, gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;

3) Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life;

4) Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;

5) Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

UNICEF has also synthesized the conceptions of quality in the form of framework as shown in the Figure 2 (next page).

For our purpose, we shall view quality assurance as a process where key elements of higher education are measured; and performance, standards, norms, accreditation, benchmarks, outcomes, and accountability overlap to form the foundation of the quality culture emerging in higher education everywhere (Adelman, 2009). Inherently, therefore, the conceptions of quality as ‘fitness for purpose’ and ‘fitness of purpose’ could be acceptable. The former conception is more of utilitarian and conformance to the requirements, priorities and needs of our customers. In this sense, we need to strive to fulfill the utmost needs of the different level stakeholders of our services. Implied within the latter conception is ‘what the purpose itself needs to be’ for transforming the learners for the world of life, work, and competition.

Whatever conceptions for quality we espouse, academic standards (the level of achievement that a learner has to reach to gain academic award) need to be maintained if we want to sustain our credibility as learning institutions. If not, we may mislay the game for the clients consider us vendors not producers of the required knowledge, skills and competence (Firdissa, 2009).
LEARNERS & TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

Health and Psychosocial Development: Good health and nutrition status; Learner confidence and self-esteem; Regular attendance for learning; Early assessment of disabilities

- Home: Home/school/community partnerships; Family support for learning; Positive early childhood experiences

ENVIROMENTS

Physical Elements: Access to quality school facilities including water and sanitation; Class size

Psychosocial Elements: Peaceful, safe environments – especially for girls; Effective school discipline, health and nutrition policies; Inclusive environments

Service Delivery: Provision of health services

QUALITY OUTCOMES

- Learning what they need to learn, for learning throughout life
- Healthy, well-nourished, and free from exploitation, violence and labor
- Aware of their rights and have opportunities to realize them
- Able to participate in decisions that affect their lives in accordance with their evolving capacities
- Able to respect diversity, practice equality, and resolve differences without violence

CONTENT

Materials: Comprehensible, gender-sensitive, relevant to schooling

Curriculum: Based on defined learning outcomes; non-discriminatory and student centered; unique local and national content; includes Literacy, Numeracy, Life skills; includes relevant knowledge on gender equity, HIV/AIDS, health, nutrition and peace;

Standards: Standards and targets for student learning

TEACHERS

- Competence and school efficiency
- Ongoing professional learning for teachers
- Positive and gender-sensitive teacher/student relationships
- Belief that all students can learn and commitment to student learning
- Feedback mechanisms that target learning needs
- Frequent monitoring and assessment by teachers that leads to further learning
- Positive living/working conditions

Students

- Intervention and special assistance where needed
- Time on task
- Access to language used at school
- Relevant, student-centered methods
- Leading to active participation

Supervision & Support

- Adjustment in school hours and calendars to support student learning
- Administrative support and leadership
- Using technology to decrease rather than increase disparities
- Governments that are supportive of education systems
- Financial resources for education systems, esp. for recurrent budgets

Figure 2: Conceptions of quality in the form of framework (UNICEF, 2000)
Current Trends, the Why, Movements, and Processes of Quality

Quality Trends
In Ethiopian context, the quality of HEIs is now evaluated against the ten Focus areas set out by the Higher Education and Relevance Agency (HERQA). There is also a gradual move to gauge the achievements of public universities against a set of performance elements/criteria developed by the Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities (CEPU). Whereas the former is an external auditor, the latter is a peer review mechanism for the purpose of learning and growth. The latter purpose has become increasingly necessary and important with the growing diversity of institutions and delivery systems. Quality from the practice is viewed as internal and within the peers as a continuous process of assessment and improvement. This calls for shifting (in the long run) the role of HERQA to a validating agent focusing on whether institutions have adequate mechanisms in place and in operation to support the dynamic process.

Equally, the current landscape of HE demands maintaining standard (national as well as international). Though not the same, there is significant overlap between the concepts of ‘quality’ and ‘standards’. Standards are specified and usually measurable outcome indicators or expected level of requirements and conditions against which quality is assessed or that must be attained by higher education institutions and their programs in order for them to be accredited or certified. Normally, academic quality is translated into standards and indicators embedded within the functions of HEIs.

There is also a growing trend for developmental approach to quality. Quality can no longer be thought merely in terms of maintaining standards. Instead, higher education institutions, like other organizations, are being encouraged to take a developmental approach to quality (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003, cited in Mishra, 2006). This implies that organizations as well as individuals within those organizations are continually changing and learning as they cope with new situations and expectations. This calls for making quality assurance the culture of all the university community and the functions of the university. The culture implies collegial discussions and consensus-building to reduce inefficiencies or waste from the very start; develop an environment of trust, honesty and respect; embedding lines of accountability, transparency into a process of continuous quality improvement, at the institutional level, and at the level of the academic disciplines as well.

Why Worry about Quality Assurance?
Quality assurance has become a rapidly growing concern of the day. This is due to internal developments and external pressures. Internally the emerging economy and industries demand knowledgeable, skillful, competent and enlightened workforce. Externally, the need for some basis for the comparison of the quality of programs and of qualifications at the international level has become more urgent as a result of the increasing number of internationally mobile students, now projected to reach 7.5 million by 2025 (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). By implication, local systems for quality assurance are simply no longer adequate (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009).

This shows that the landscape of higher education in general and the expectations of individual institutions have become more complex. In addition to educating, tertiary-level institutions have assumed (and been assigned) a broader social role—including advancing society, engaging in constructive criticism, resolving social inequities, providing appropriately
trained labor, contributing to regional and national economic growth, and producing marketable research. Consequently, fee-paying students, professional bodies, employers, politicians, and funding agencies are all voicing their particular expectations of what a degree or diploma should represent adding complexity to the concerns (OECD, 2004; ENQA, 2007, cited in Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009).

The concerns and complexities are born out of some forces and reasons, such as: competitiveness; internationalization; moral; professional; accountability (Firdissa, 2008); customer satisfaction; maintaining standards; improving employee morale and motivation; credibility, prestige and status; and image and visibility (Mishra, 2006).

1) The Competitiveness Force: As the trends of employment and work are changing locally and globally, the demands for learning different skills and knowledge are high. Consequently, a variety of learner types come to our universities to learn. Equally, quality is becoming a survival strategy in a situation where competition among HEIs for students and funds is heading its ways to our country. It demands us improving the quality of our contents; delivery mechanisms, assessment and feedback systems, and aligning our programs with that of the world development and trend. We need to: a) adopt a system of quality management, mainly TQM, which is customer-driven, focusing on the needs of our clients and be responsive to their needs and priorities; b) set strategies that clearly differentiate ourselves and our institutions from our competitors-externally and externally; and c) ensure that quality service delivery is the only differentiating factor for us. This calls for taking proactive stance to meet the needs of our customers, which is at the heart of quality services.

2) Internationalization Force: Basically universities have international nature. At the same time we are living in a competitive and knowledge-dependent world of economic, social and political panorama. Today education itself is globalized in many of its forms and knowledge has become a commodity. The process of knowledge production, therefore, has to be customized to the world trend if we want to thrive in the complex and pluralistic world. This is because the world is becoming a village of competition whereby universities are affected by the external as well as internal environments. Whether we like or not, every aspect of our life is affected by the world development and trends.

By implication, we need to take proactive stance to prepare our students for the world of work, life and to be effective and efficient in the global competition. This can be achieved by internationalizing our academic programs, maintaining their national responsiveness. Internationalization is a strategy to respond to the many demands placed upon us by globalization and as a way for our universities to prepare individuals for engagement in the globalized world. It has exciting opportunities for us. Among others, internationalization enables us to: a) walk with the world trend and the changing landscape of higher education locally and globally; b) inject our programs with new knowledge, skills and world outlooks; and c) mobilize resources from different corners of the world. The effort of internationalizing our programs within the effort of managing quality demands:

- Recapitulation and clear conception of the quality of the functions we render;
- Revitalizing and formulating quality visions and/or directions;
- Enhancing empowerment and commitment of the frontline implementers;
• Making in place appropriate structure for continual improvement process; and
• Enhancing institutional commitment and overall communication for the vision.

We are, therefore, duty bound to redefine, redirect, redesign, and renew our vision, mission, and on long traditions in line with the demands of the modern world. Handling this new direction involves a shift of mind or attitude regarding learning as lifelong process that is as natural as breathing whenever and wherever we live and work.

3) **The Moral Force:** It is our (collective and individual) moral obligation to fulfill the minimum needs of our customers and clients (students, parents, employers, the community, and the society). They deserve the best possible quality of teaching, research and services provisions. This for Sallis (2002) “is the moral high ground in education and one of the few areas of educational discussion where there is little dissent”.

In such moral obligations, we are liable to justify the quality and relevance of our services from the point of view of content, methodology, assessment, research and services. We need to value the life and time of the primary beneficiaries of our services- learners and also consider the institutional and societal demands and requirements with regard to the services we render.

4) **The Professional Force:** Professionalism today is not only to be responsible to others but also to truth. On top of this, one may ask: “Is teaching a profession?” It should be clear from the outset that teaching is a profession and teachers are professionals fulfilling seven characteristics: service, theory, practice, judgment, learning from experience, community, and uniqueness. These characteristics call for: a) employing the most appropriate pedagogical practices; b) ensuring that both classroom practices & the management of the institution are operating to produce the utmost possible quality, standard, & relevant teaching, research and services; & c) demonstrating a professional duty to improve the quality of education in general (Firdissa, 2006.b & 2007.b).

5) **The Accountability Force:** We individually, collectively, and institutionally are accountable to the taxpayers, the learners, the employers of our graduates, and the society at large in terms of demonstrating the highest relevance, quality, and standard of our teaching, research and services. For Sallis (2002), “TQM supports the accountability imperative by promoting objective and measurable outcomes of the educational process and provides mechanisms for quality improvement”. Quality improvement, therefore, becomes increasingly important as institutions and staffs strive to achieve greater control over their own internal affairs. Such control is a freedom which has to be matched by greater accountability. Institutions and staffs, therefore, have to demonstrate that they are able to deliver what is required of them – in qualitative and quantitative terms. (Firdissa, 2009 and 2012).

6) **Customer Satisfaction:** students, the government, parents or sponsoring agencies as customers of our universities are now highly conscious of their rights or getting value for their money and time spent. They are now demanding acceptable quality and relevant teaching and receiving employable knowledge, competence and skill sets, and thus we should constantly worry about the relevance of our courses and programs to the needs of the labor market.
7) **Maintaining Standards**: Universities should always set their own standards comparable with that of the world and update on a continuous basis—year after year. In order to maintain the standards, we should consciously make efforts to improve the quality of the educational transactions, inputs, processes and outputs.

8) **Improve Employee Morale and Motivation**: The concern for quality as an institution will improve the morale and motivation of the staff in performing their duties and responsibilities. If a quality system is in place, the internal processes would be systematic making every lower academic units complementing each other’s service domain and helping in developing internal customer satisfaction leading to high morale and motivation.

9) **Credibility, Prestige and Status**: If we are concerned about quality, continuously and not once in a while, it will bring in credibility to individuals and our institution because of consistency leading to practice, status and brand value.

10) **Image and Visibility**: Quality institutions have the capacity to attract better stakeholder support, like getting merited students from far and near, increased donations/grants from philanthropists/funding agencies and higher employer interest for easy placement of graduates (Mishra, 2006).

**Quality Movements**

The forces and the subsequent reasons for quality have stimulated quality movements, basically as a concept in the 20th century in the manufacturing industry and management. This came with the advent of industrialization and adoption of new scientific approach to management based on strict division of labor. In the initial days of quality movement in the United States and Japan (where it was more popular), statistical approaches ruled the domain. Among the scholars who have contributed significantly to what we know today in the field of ‘quality’ are W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, Philip B. Crosby, Kauru Ishikawa and Genichi Taguchi. The following chronology of quality shows the evolution of the concepts in quality movements (Mishra, 2006, taken from Sallis, 1996).

1. Pre -1900: Quality as an integral element of craftsmanship;
2. 1900-1920: Quality control by foreman;
3. 1920-1940: Inspection-based quality control;
4. 1940-1960: Statistical process control;
5. 1960-1980: Quality assurance/total quality control (the quality department);
6. 1980-1990: Total quality management; and
7. 1990-Present: TQM, the culture of continuous improvement, organization-wide quality management

Though quality has been part of all the higher education functions since the establishment of the first HEI in Ethiopia in 1950 by the name *University College of Addis Ababa* and currently *Addis Ababa University*, explicitly institutionalizing quality assurance is a recent phenomenon. Currently, quality assurance has raised to the top of the policy agenda of our country in general and that of the universities in particular. This is in line with the need for quality already discussed and the new mandates to prepare graduates with new skills, a broad knowledge base, and a range of competencies to enter a more complex and interdependent economic, social, political, cultural, and professional world. The world today demands defining goals in terms that can be understood and shared across borders and cultures (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumble, 2009).
The Process of Quality Assurance
Even without a concise definition of quality in higher education, a pattern for evaluating higher education has been established in most parts of the world. For Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2009), the issue of quality is addressed more usefully as a process than an idea. The new pattern tends to rely on peers rather than government authorities to conduct the evaluation process.

In Ethiopian context, universities conduct self evaluation and report to Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA). HERQA then scrutinizes the self evaluation report through discussions with pertinent stakeholders; observations of classrooms, facilities, equipment, etc and studying documents. Similarly, the currently being put in place peer review mechanism led by the Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities (CEPU) starts with self evaluation report (SER) followed by peer review by team of vice presidents and validated by panels of presidents. The self-study obliges a university under review to undertake a thorough examination of its own practices, resources, and accomplishments with an eye toward measuring performance against agreed upon performance elements/criteria and identifying ways to improve.

The overall approach of the CEPU peer review process is purposive, interactive and consensual in planning, undertakings, giving feedbacks and disseminating best practices. It shall use institutional plans and self-evaluation reports as points of departure and aim at reaching fair judgments through on-site supervision to verify information so provided. The reviewers verify Self Evaluation Report (SER), consolidate their findings of all the deliberations and give preliminary feedbacks to the university both at plan review and performance review levels. The university may appreciate, defend its claims or may confirm the findings. Determination of the effectiveness of an educational program in particular and the achievement of the university in general may require some degree of assessment of inputs, processes and value-added measures that focuses on what students have actually learned as a result of their participation in the programs. Though the current practice mainly focus on macro level institutional plan and performance reviews, in the long run, the practices of student learning evaluations, employer perceptions/opinions, objective tests, student exit interviews, compared scores of incoming and exiting student groups in a cross-sectional study using a Learning Skills Profile (LSP) to measure learning skills, rather than job performance or academic competencies, etc, will be made in.

A mixture of both quantitative and qualitative data would be used. Principally, nonetheless, quantitative data are used to produce quantitative ratings. Though the quantitative ratings generally fail to provide any clear explanations to why certain ratings are given, they facilitate performance comparability, especially on a longitudinal basis and are more suitable for quality assurance initiatives at specific university and nationally. Equally, though qualitative data often provides richer data, which can more readily inform decision making for quality enhancement purposes, they are less beneficial when benchmarking performance. Consequently, dominantly quantitative ratings of the performance elements and/or criteria are used.

The CEPU Peer Review Process covers 11 successive steps followed by subsequent action as outlined hereunder.

Step 1: Setting annual national higher education objectives, goals and performance indicators, and arriving at consensus;
Step 2: Preparation of Institutional plans;
Step 3: Establishing a Team to Review Institutional Plans and Performances;
Step 4: Peer review of institutional plans;
Step 5: Self-evaluation;
Step 6: Submission of the Self-Evaluation Report;
Step 7: Preparation: fixing dates, correspondence with the university;
Step 8: On-site verification peer review, plus Exit exams for assessing output Performance of universities;
Step 9: Presidents’ Panel Review and/or inter panel forum;
Step 10: Decisions: Identification of frontline universities and actions;
Step 11: Dissemination of best practices by MOE (HESC);
Step 12: Subsequent Actions (Firdissa, 2013).

Quality Dimensions in Higher Education

Stakeholders of higher education (the government, providers/funding bodies and the community at large, students, staff and employers of graduates) want to know the different dimensions of quality (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003, cited in Mishra, 2006). The most commonly grouped dimensions of quality are product, software and service. Based on the review of literature on the different approaches to quality in higher education, Owlia and Aspinwall (1996, cited in Mishra, 2006) present a conceptual framework that covers six criteria to depict quality dimensions. These are tangibles, competence and attitude, content, delivery and reliability as have been outlined hereunder.

1) **Tangibles**: Sufficient and modern equipment/facilities; ease of access; visually appealing environment; and support services.
2) **Competence**: Sufficiently qualified (academic) staff; theoretical and practical knowledge, qualifications; up to date; teaching expertise, communication skills, etc.
3) **Attitude**: Understanding students’ needs; willingness to help; availability for guidance and advice; giving personal attention; emotional, courtesy, disposition, etc.
4) **Content**: Relevance of curriculum to the future jobs of students; effectiveness; containing primary knowledge/skills; completeness, use of computers; communication skills and team working; and flexibility of knowledge, being cross-disciplinary.
5) **Delivery**: Effective presentation; sequencing, timeliness; consistency and fairness of examinations; feedback from students; and encouraging students.
6) **Reliability**: Trustworthiness; giving valid award; keeping promises, match to the goals; and handling complaints, solving problems.

The dimensions and the criteria are indicative of the areas that should be of concern to ensure quality in higher education. It might be advantageous to see whether the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) have given space to the dimensions and the criteria.

The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) of Ethiopia

Ethiopia has formulated the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and is implementing it. GTP is a medium term strategic framework for the five-year period (2010/11-2014/15). The design of GTP has made use of the lessons and gains of:
1) Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP)- 2002/03-2004/05; &
2) The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) - 2005/06-2009/10. This was the First Five Year Phase aimed at laying out the directions for accelerated, sustained, and people-centered economic development as well as to pave the groundwork for the attainment of the MDGs by 2015.

**Figure 3:** Development Programs/Strategies/Plans (Source: Firdissa, 2012)

**Objectives of Higher Education Institutions in GTP:** Among others, the pertinent objectives of higher education in GTP are the following.

1) Establish a HEI system which focuses on result-based management, administration and performance, that recognizes and scales up best practices;
2) Produce a higher level skilled and capable human power as per the demand of the development of the country in general and the manufacturing industry in particular;
3) Ensure HE enrolment that prioritizes science and technology;
4) Assure HEIs that have achieved education quality and relevance in accordance with the demands of the economy;
5) Enhance the competitiveness and competency of female students to promote their success and ensure gender equity (MoFED, 2010).

The underlying reason for formulating GTP is to backup Ethiopia’s aspirations to:

- be a middle income country by 2020-2023,
- achieve the MDG targets by 2015,
  - achieve UNESCO’s teacher-student ratio of 1:20
- improve and ensure the quality, relevance and efficiency of education at all levels with the purpose to produce trained manpower-knowledgeable, skillful, enlightened, inspired and innovative citizens in line with the demands of the emerging economy and industry.

GTP, therefore, has ambitiously targeted quantitative gains in teacher development; student-teacher-ratio; annual intake for postgraduate programs, average graduation rates, gross admission and participation rates as have been shown in the following Table.

A look at the above targets generates a concern about quality. Regardless of the growing recognitions for, and the efforts made by the Federal Ministry of education, it seems that plea and applauds, emphasis and resources are directed to quantitative gains- enrolling and graduating whatsoever level quality students. It seems that little conscious efforts are made to consider the quality forces, dimensions, and rationales.
Table 1: The Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) Targets for Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Targets</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. University teachers (no)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Teachers with second degrees (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Teachers with PhD degrees (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Student-teacher ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Annual intake for postgraduate programs (second degree and PhD) (no)</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The average graduation rate of undergraduate program (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. The graduation rate undergraduate programs for females (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The graduation rate undergraduate programs for males (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gross admission for undergraduate program (70:30 program mix) (no)</td>
<td>185,788</td>
<td>467,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participation rate of females in undergraduate programs (%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Participation rate of females in postgraduate programs (%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MoFED (2010).

Relationship between Quality Education and Economic Development

As Firdissa (2012) indicates, quality education and economic development have direct, bidirectional and strong bond. Although growth does not necessarily eliminate poverty, economic growth is a powerful weapon against poverty. Economic growth is generally assumed to be explained largely by stocks of labor, physical capital, and human capital (improvement in the quality of the labor force). Technology is assumed to be part of the growth equation, and the rate of technological change is associated with the availability of highly qualified workers. Demographic structure and change support or inhibit economic growth. Economic growth is a means for poverty reduction. Equally, as with education and economic growth, there is a two-way relationship between education and poverty. Family income is strongly positively associated with education attainment, and low earnings of the poor are the result partly of lower human capital endowments and partly of labor market discrimination (Quibria, 1994).

Studies support the positive impact that education has on economic growth. For instance, between 30 and 50% of that part of American output growth that could not be explained by conventional factor inputs were due to the increase in the quality of labor through education. Reflecting the association of education and poverty, in the Philippines, data from 97 provinces and cities with provincial status demonstrate that the incidence of poverty was associated with the extent of school participation, frequency of school completion, and level and quality of school staffing (Adams, 2002).

As it is true that advanced education leads to preferred employment, poverty reduces the opportunity for education attainment and acquisition of education outcomes (Adams, 2002). Particularly, quality education is the major driver for development. It therefore becomes a necessity:

1) in today's changes in technology, globalization, and demographics;
2) to muddle through, to survive and thrive within this unpredictable world;
3) in producing a labour force with appropriate skills, disciplines and commitment; 
4) to catalyze the means to the end; 
5) to create a strong and versatile economy; and 
6) to remain competitive and/or to be winners within the competitive world.

Economy at the same time expands educational opportunities. The bond demands that all
the programs at all schooling perform well and are in line with the requirements of the
economy. The bi-directional and strong bond between the two can be seen from Figure 4.

**Figure 4:** Bidirectional bond between quality education & Development (Firdissa, 2012)

In today’s Ethiopian Education and Training Policy, tertiary level degree provides high level
knowledge, skills and disciplines enabling new information to be absorbed faster, 
unfamiliar inputs and new processes applied more effectively, and many social and
institutional barriers to economic growth removed. The contribution of quality assurance to 
output growth can be seen in three ways:
1) Through the more varied and better generic skills it bestows on workers; 
2) Through the greater research productivity it generates; and 
3) By contributing to the rate of technical progress or a rise in ‘total’ productivity by
increasing labor and professional quality and productivity.

**Conclusions and Implications**

The current world dynamism is both a chance and a challenge to HEIs in our country. It is a
chance because of the fact that the world developments and trends are heading to our
country. It is a challenge because of the low or no readiness from the side of our HEIs. The
dynamisms call for devising survival strategies by assuring the quality and relevance of the
functions of HEIs in the country. Quality, nonetheless, is indefinable due to priority
differences, perceptual shift, changes overtime, and antecedents within its origin. Regardless
of these reasons, however, it has been viewed as exceptional (high standards), consistency
(zero defects/errorless), value for money (return on investment, accountability/efficiency),
transformative (an ongoing process that includes empowerment and enhancement of
satisfaction), fitness for purpose (fitting customer specifications, needs, and priorities), fitness
of purpose (what the purpose itself needs to be’ for supporting the survival strategy whereby
learners are transformed for the world of life, work, and competition), and a culture (shared values) of the institution and its community.

In Ethiopian context, the quality of HEIs is now evaluated against the ten Focus areas set out by the Higher Education and Relevance Agency (HEROA). There are growing trends whereby the achievements of public universities are judged against a set of Performance elements/criteria developed by the Consortium of Ethiopian Public Universities (CEPU) with a purpose to be responsive to national and international demands. This gradually leads to adopting developmental approach to quality whereby the universities as well as individuals within them are continually changing and learning as they cope up with new situations and expectations by making quality assurance the culture of all the university community and the functions of the university.

One may ask: “Why Worry about Quality Assurance?” It could be due to the concerns and complexities that are born out of the forces and reasons, such as: competitiveness; internationalization; moral; professional; accountability; customer satisfaction; maintaining standards; improving employee morale and motivation; credibility, prestige and status; and image and visibility. These forces and the subsequent reasons for quality have stimulated quality movements, basically as a concept since the 20th century in the manufacturing industry and management. It was customized to HEIs, passed through different chronologies, and currently viewed as the culture of continuous improvement, organization-wide quality management, which is the nature of Total quality Management (TQM).

Current trends also show that there are three dimensions of quality (product, software and service) with six criteria within the dimensions, namely, tangibles, competence, attitude, content, delivery and reliability. These dimensions and the criteria are indicative of the areas that should be of concern to ensure quality in higher education institutions.

It seems that little conscious efforts have been made within the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) to consider the quality forces, dimensions, and rationales. It is more about estimating the rate of return to educational investment solely from quantity as precedence is given to quantitative targets. This is regardless of the fact that quality education and economic development have direct, bidirectional and strong bond.

Virtually, quantitative gains solely serve as surface symptoms for development, but cannot be decisive and requirements for the required development. Whatever efforts are made if quality is not there, the gain is solely quantitative (Firdissa, 2012). Basically, the main reason for Ethiopia to put in place systems, organs, strategies, plans including GTP is to enhance national development. National development is, nonetheless, a result of many conditions (beyond quantitative gains) one of which is the presence of qualified labor force with appropriate skills, disciplines, and commitment- all founded on the provision of quality and relevant education.

The discussions made so far imply the need for:
1) Adopting a dynamic conception of quality whereby the priorities of all stakeholders are addressed, the developmental approach has become a culture of each and every member of the university community;
2) Recapitulating the current trends, the why, movements, and processes of quality assurance responsive to national development endeavors of Ethiopia;
3) Revitalizing the quantitative targets within the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) in
line with the quality dimensions, rationales and forces;

4) Adapting developmental culture of continuous improvement, and university-wide quality management involving all stakeholders, among others by situating and embedding quality assurance structure within and/or near the academic units (colleges/faculties/schools/centers/departments); and

5) Appreciating the direct, bidirectional and strong bond between quality education and economic development.

Specifically, the interconnectedness, interdependence, and incremental roles of the issues cited above for producing knowledgeable, skillful, enlightened, inspired and innovative citizens in line with the demands of the emerging economy and the industry have been shown in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5:** Implications of the quality assurance trends and GTP to national development
References
Introduction
Service sector has experienced significant growth over the past several decades and it accounts for a substantial share in the global economy (Su et al., 2006). Even in underdeveloped countries, the service sector still accounts for a substantial part of their economies. The service industries have not only grown in size, but along the way, these have absorbed all the jobs rejected by traditional industries such as agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. If we give a closer look, we will find that the education sector in one way or other resembles the service industry because it is intangible, perishable, gives heterogeneous output and carries production and consumption (of knowledge) in parallel. In today’s world of globalization, Quality has taken a center stage due to continuous competition among institutions, emergence of new technologies and the knowledge-driven economy. Education sector which is considered one of the most dynamic today needs a tool to create, monitor and improve quality of its each deliverable and delivery processes. On this front, many developing countries formally recognized the importance of higher education and committed itself to the development of manpower by providing full policy support and substantial public funds to create one of the world’s largest network systems of higher education system (Naik, 2004). In this necessity of the education sector can be very well fulfilled by the introduction of Kaizen, Lean and Six-Sigma concept in education sector. Competitive marketplaces require people at all levels in an organization to think of ways to continuously improve the products or services that they deliver to customers. Organizations that succeed in improving the value proposition for customers usually become the supplier of choice, in preference to other suppliers that, for whatever reasons, are not able to improve. While most managers and employees support the general notion of continuous improvement, the specific approaches to continuous improvement tend to be ad hoc or complex. While these approaches to continuous improvement may be successful on occasion, they are not usually responsive to ongoing changes in customer’s wants & needs.

Quality in Higher Education
What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however quality education includes, learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace; Processes through which trained teachers use student-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce...
Establishing a contextualized understanding of quality means including relevant stakeholders of an institution. Key stakeholders often hold different views and meanings of educational quality (Motala, 2000; Benoliel, O’Gara and Miske, 1999). Indeed, each of us judges the education system in terms of the final goals we set for our students our community, our country and ourselves (Beeby, 1966). We defined education as a provider of services. Its services include advice, tutorial, assessment and guidance to pupils and students, their parents and sponsors. The customers—the stakeholders of the service—are a very diverse group and need identifying. If quality is about meeting and exceeding customer needs and wants, it is important to be clear whose needs and wants we should be satisfying. It is important to say something about the idea of ‘customer’ in the context of education. To some educationalists ‘customer’ has a distinctly commercial tone that is not applicable to education. They prefer to use ‘client’ instead. Client, with its connotations of professional service, is seen as more appropriate. ‘Stakeholder’ is another term often used in this context. Others reject all such language and would rather stay with ‘pupil’ or ‘student’. Language is important if an idea is to be acceptable. Some people would make a distinction between clients, who are the primary beneficiaries of the education service, and customers, who pay for it but who may be once removed, such as parents, governors, employers or government. The diversity of customers makes it all the more important for educational institutions to focus on customer wants and to develop mechanisms for responding to them.

It can be helpful to make distinctions between:

- primary customers—who directly receive the service;
- secondary customers—such as parents, governors, sponsoring employers of vocational students, all of whom have a direct stake in the education of a particular individual or in a particular institution;
- tertiary customers—who have a less direct but nonetheless crucial stake holding in education, such as future employers, government and society as a whole;
- internal customers—who are the employees of the institution and who have a critical stake holding in the organization’s success.

The needs and views of the various customer groups, whether they are internal or external, do not always coincide, especially in large and complex institutions, although the conflict can equally be present in small ones. Potential and actual conflicts of customer interest will always exist. One of the best methods of resolving different interests is to recognize their existence and to look for the core of issues that unite the various parties. All stakeholders need to have their views listened to and to be treated fairly. Quality and justice go hand in hand. This is particularly the case when dealing with complaints, which are instances of those critical incidents where it is possible to judge how committed an institution is to a customer-first approach. It is often difficult to ensure that the primary customers’ views are paramount. There are strong forces pulling against it, not least those that can be exerted by funding processes and mechanisms. Where the needs of the learner and funding mechanisms collide, it is very difficult for an institution to put its learners first. This is particularly the case where funding mechanisms emphasize efficiency that can only be achieved at the cost of quality. (Adams, 1993).
Kaizen Models in Enhancing Quality in HEIs

Kaizen is a Japanese word that has become common in many western companies. The word indicates a process of continuous improvement of the standard way of work (Chen et al., 2000). KAIZEN is a system of continual undertaking by an organization to improve its business activities and processes with the goal to always improve quality of education so that the universities can meet their full potential. In simple terms Kaizen is a Japanese term for 'a change for better', which results in 'continuous improvement'. Kaizen ideology can be traced back to the 1980s; Kaizen was first adopted in the West with the influx of Japanese car manufacturers who brought a wave of new thinking. Although Kaizen events have been growing in popularity since the mid 1990s, to date, there has been much systematic empirical research on the determinants of Kaizen event effectiveness. Kaizen logic was first enshrined in written text with Masaaki Imai's book 'KAIZEN - The Key to Japan's Competitive Success' (1996) this book showed what the fundamental Kaizen logic is. Kaizen uses the Japanese logic of bringing improvements internally from within the workplace. In his Kaizen: the Key to Japan's Competitive Success published in 1986 that introduced Kaizen to the Western corporate world, Masaaki Imai defined it as: "a means of continuing improvement in personal life, home life, social life, and working life. At the workplace, Kaizen means continuing improvement involving everyone—managers and workers alike. The Kaizen business strategy involves everyone in an organization working together to make improvements without large capital investments."

KAIZEN is a system of continual undertaking by an organization to improve its business activities and processes with the goal to always improve quality of products and services so that the organization can meet full customer satisfaction. In the use, Kaizen represents the element of continuous improvement that is a fundamental part of the Quality Model for leading a company to commercial success. In a business context, it is expressed in all activities, personal and teamed, that develops and uses learning to make processes better at satisfying customer requirements. In this use, Kaizen has its origins in the fifth of W. Edwards Deming’s 14 management points: “Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service” (Deming, 1982). It is commonly expressed as “continuous improvement.” Deming represented continuous improvement as the repeated application of the cycle of Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) to all activities of higher education institutions in the pursuit of making them ever better in delivering value to customers. Its use as a business strategy inside the United States is usually incorporated under the adoption of Deming’s Quality model (e.g., as part of Total Quality Management) or as an element within the Lean Enterprise model described by Womack and his associates (Womack, Jones, and Roos, 1991; Womack and Jones, 2003). Outside the United States, the term kaizen, on its own, more frequently refers to a comprehensive companywide management program best represented by the work of Masaaki Imai (1986). This program establishes a culture focused on the continuous improvement of all processes and work places through the elimination of waste. As stated by Imai, this use of kaizen means “everyday improvement by every person, everywhere” (Imai, 2010). The creation of this culture begins at the top with management. Every manager model teaches the commitment to continuous improvement by applying it to his or her role and to the systems and processes he or she controls. It spreads across the various functions that constitute a business —executive, administrative, and operational. It is owned by every individual who, as with each manager, seeks ways every day to improve the performance of his or her role and who participates actively in the improvement of the work processes the worker implements and the work places he or she operates within. When used
in this manner, the term kaizen umbrellas many other concepts and tools such as customer orientation, total quality control, Quality circles, suggestion systems, standardization of work, cooperative employee management relationships, total productive maintenance (Imai, 1986). While Imai identifies Japanese management culture as the origin of this approach, in fact it mirrors precisely, but incompletely, the teaching of W. Edwards Deming who these very concepts brought to the leaders of Japanese industry in the early 1950s. He also elaborated the rationale for this approach to business success in what he termed his “system of profound knowledge.”

Kaizen understands waste to be any activity that is not value adding from the perspective of the customer. Work is value adding when it is done right the first time and materially changes a product or service in ways for which a well-informed and reasonable customer is willing to pay. Kaizen attracts and develops people who are capable of creating and sustaining high performance. By its nature, it draws to it people who are achievers by heart —people who are internally driven to make a difference, to perfect something. These people are focused on their work, frustrated by waste, and delighted by the opportunity to improve what they are about so that it excels. Their pursuit of excellence is only excited more with each step toward its achievement. Equally important, Kaizen attracts people who also are inclusive in their thinking and doing. Kaizen, as we implement it, demands a broad view of the connection of an activity to all activities that surround it and so, in its fact-finding steps, it describes the context within which the target work process operates. It also constructs its teams to include people who speak from the different perspectives that populate the workplace, and it pursues its solutions with openness to every voice. People who find Kaizen a gratifying experience are not only pioneering in their attitudes but also inclusive in their disposition (Vitalo, Butz, and Vitalo, 2003). The kinds of people that Kaizen attracts and develops are the heart and soul of high-performing organizations. The broad and sustained application of Kaizen can lead to a rapid emergence of the central element needed for a company to become high performing.

**Lean Principles**

The origins of Lean practices date from late 19th and early 20th century industrial engineering. Lean practices have evolved over the decades since then to become much easier for non-specialists to understand and use. It is now common for people with backgrounds and interests far from industrial engineering to become highly competent Lean management practitioners. Therefore, the Lean management system has the benefit that everyone in an organization can apply the practices without the need for specialists. Seminal work in the application of Lean to academic processes was done by Prof. M.L. "Bob" Emiliani when he was at Rensselaer Polytechnic University in the early 2000s and is described what individual faculty can do to improve their courses and delivery using Lean principles and practices. Teams of faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, and employers can participate to improve their courses using kaizen (Emiliani, 2005). The application of Lean management in any organization is the recognition and daily practice of the Lean principles: "Continuous Improvement" and "Respect for People." The "Respect for People" principle is almost always ignored by senior management, resulting in zero-sum (win-lose) outcomes for people and inferior results. In other words, one party gains at another party's expense, and the losers are much less willing to participate in continuous improvement. This outcome impedes teamwork and information flows, and discourages daily efforts by administration, faculty, and staff to improve processes. In order to function properly, Lean management must be understood and
practiced in a non-zero-sum (win-win) manner. It is not up to the discretion of senior administrators to ignore the "Respect for People" principle. This principle is required in order to sustain continuous improvement.

Impact of Lean in Higher Education

The impact of Lean in higher education can be profound. Substantial improvement in a variety of processes has been achieved compared to the condition prior to improvement. Double and triple digit improvements are achievable in most processes with the first round of improvement. Additional significant gains are achievable if improvement is continuous rather than sporadic. The benefits include lead-time reduction, increase in throughput, lower cost, increased student satisfaction scores, etc (Parasmal, 2009). Lead-time reduction includes less time for assessment and evaluation feedback. Reports analyzing Lean in higher education indicate that Lean principles are being successfully applied. Various Higher education stakeholders will likely perceive their organization to be substantially different or possess unique characteristics compared to other service organizations or businesses using Lean management. While its origins are from industry, not academia, Lean management can be successfully applied to any organization. The challenge is for Higher education administrators, faculty, and staff accept the need for and benefits of process improvement; to better comprehend the Lean principles "Continuous Improvement" and "Respect for People;" to comprehend and practice non-zero-sum management; to engage in daily improvement (versus periodic improvement efforts); and to shift from a "results" focus to a "process + results" focus.

Five’s Model in Higher Education Institutions

![Figure 1: Kaizen 5S model.](http://crollproductivesynergy.com/StandardizationOfWorkflowProcesses5S)

The intent of 5S is to have only what you need available in the workplace of education institutions, a designated place for everything, a standard way of doing things, and the discipline to maintain it. Created in Japan, the 5S's are: seiri, seiton, seiso, seiketsu, and shitsuke. Translated in to English, we have:
• Sort - remove all contents and materials from the workplace that are NOT needed for current programs.
• Set in Order - arranging needed content so that they are easy to find and put away. Items used often are placed closer to employee.
• Shine - making sure everything is clean, functioning, and ready to go.
• Standardize - the method you use to maintain the first 3S's.
• Sustain - making a habit of properly maintaining correct procedures.

For a higher education Institution, this creates fewer defects, less waste, fewer delays, less attrition, and fewer dropouts in student academic performance. These advantages translate to lower cost and higher quality of education. For the employees, the SS’s create a superior working environment. They give the employee an opportunity to provide creative input regarding how the workplace should be organized and laid out and how standard work should be done. Operators will be able to find things easily, every time. The workplace will be cleaner and safer. Jobs will be simpler and more satisfying with many obstacles and frustrations removed.

**PDCA Model**

In compliance with current vision of higher education institutions the process of raising education quality at the basic education level includes teaching /learning processes that encourage systematic thinking with emphasis on real practice. These are relevant to the ‘academic performance’ which serves as a valuable primer for prospective team; such as administrators and administrative committees. These educator bodies work toward effecting change in an orderly, efficient, and effective manner (Fred and Allan, 2004). For the frameworks of ‘Academic Administration’ tasks, there are five undertakings as follows:

1. Academic Planning
2. Curriculum Design
3. Instruction capacity
4. Supervision and Instruction Improvement
5. Evaluation of Academic involvement

The first step is action of a cultural nature of administration, P= plan which is usually operational in every organization and task. Planning must be clear, accurate, and complete through every academic principle and should be systemic. The second step is leading the plan in to practice or doing the following plan according to the purposes and along the short and long working period of each plan. Particularly, only carry out the plan if one knows that it will be effective. Then evaluation and benefit checking for both are important processes for the plan. C-Check is the step for comparing between P-plan and D-doing, by evaluation and checks all learners, teachers and school administrators. This step checks the working result level. If higher than assigned P-plan, it shows that it has reached the set goals. If it is lower than assigned P-plan, it shows that it is not able to reach a set goal. After three steps of P-D-C, one will get an evaluation result to A- action or adjustment step. If this result is higher than the assigned goals then adjust the goals higher for the next operation for it to be challenging. The effective process to control both the internal and external educational quality in
educational administration is confirmed as PDCA theory-in-use, to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels of educators (Figure 2). For the current situation and working with the real state of problems for the educational administration among the Thai students; in the midst of worldwide changes and violence. In a lot of educational research educators found that often proved results; revealed these causes are related to the effect and reflection; by the system of educational administration within the field of ‘academic administration’ (Ho and Wearn, 1996).

![PDCA Cycle](image)

**Figure 2: PDCA Cycle.**

On the other side one would refer to the educational standards and quality assurance for emphasis on the current situation and working with the academic administration and educational system: Passed by the curriculum. Yet, the innovation of educational administration still created and produced much more impact for the students’ learning; environment and decreased the effectiveness of learning; and teaching processes which linked; with the evaluation and measurement reflections of school administrators reputations; and school effectiveness.

**SIX Sigma and DMAIC Model**

Sigma is a Greek letter representing standard deviation or the amount of variation within a given process (McAdam and Lafferty, 2004). Six Sigma is a powerful breakthrough business improvement strategy that enables companies to use simple and powerful statistical methods for achieving and sustaining operational excellence. Six-Sigma is a philosophy which has revolutionized many of the top companies in the world. They have achieved new height of success by implementing Six-Sigma. Six-Sigma is the tool that first identifies the correct problems and root causes in a process and then improves the process in totality with structured approach. Six-Sigma can act as a fresh tool to remove inconsistencies and defects in the sector by applying different measures, process design and / or redesign, improvement and various better management strategies and practices. Six Sigma measures are never “static.” As the requirements of a customer change, the process must change with it. This gives birth to the term “continuous improvement” which is another cornerstone to the Six Sigma philosophy. Constant evaluation of processes is what puts the flexibility in the system allowing it to change with the customers’ needs. All of these business strategies have one thing in common. They stress customer satisfaction and the importance of incorporating customer input into the analysis of their processes. Many services processes tend to be slow processes which often mean they are expensive ones. Often they are slow because there is too much work in progress. A great deal of work, often as much as 80% has to wait while some other task is done (lead time), or some other step is accomplished, sometimes in
another department. When employees in service functions actually analyze their processes they tend to find that most of the steps in their processes add no value to the service, at least not in the eyes of their customers. (Harry and Schroeder 1999). Six Sigma implies three things: Statistical measurement, management strategy and quality culture. It is a measure of how well a process is performing through statistical measurement of quality level. It is a new management strategy under leadership of the top management that creates quality innovation and total customer satisfaction. It is also a quality culture. It provides the way to do things right at the first time and to work smarter by using data information. (Park, 2002)

Here Higher Education institutions act as business unit while qualified students are outputs who are either consumed by society and / or industry as end customers. And in quality centric world it is of prime importance that the product i.e. the students meet high quality standards for society and industry or company jobs. Implementation of Six-Sigma can help establish this confidence and expedite the value creation process. Six-Sigma in principle is a customer oriented tool. This means it works in such a way that it helps to minimize defects in the outcomes and can deliver maximum value from customers’ perspective. It also helps to make sure that the problems found are no more existent and will not be repeated. To bring positive changes study a qualified professional needs to conduct a comprehensive study to understand and analyze institutions’ current trends, their vision, mission, core processes and functionalities along with prominent and seasoned issues etc. Followed by SWOT analysis this can highlight critical areas of an institution that need immediate and prime attention. Once the criticality has been recognized the action plan can be prepared in order to mitigate these issues and eliminate whenever possible. This essentially would need further detailed analysis of each issue in isolation and then synthesis of the same with overall situation. A third party neutral perspective is of critical importance due to the fact that we usually are so close to the problems that we either do not see the bigger picture or miss many minute details that are interconnected. Sometimes it just blurs our vision with rosy feeling of self containment. Recommendations given from careful analysis would lead to the implementation plan; which when gets fully executed can put up a successfully running efficient institutional system which fulfils customer (student, society and industry) demands and yet maintains educational decorum intact.

**DMAIC Model**

Six Sigma aims at reducing variations in a business and manufacturing process via dedicated improvements in the various processes. This requires a sustained commitment from all members of the organization. This principle has been perfectly brought about by the DMAIC methodology, which aims at bringing about process improvement by eliminating defects. It is generally defined as a set of practices which are aimed at bringing about improvement in efficiency and eliminating defects among the many methodologies and strategies that Six Sigma allows is the DMAIC Model. It stands for Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve and Control. This model plays an important role in making the Six Sigma initiative a success for businesses. Black Belts follow this model to base their process improvement projects. The model was developed by Edwards Deming, aimed at reducing defects through improvement in processes.

The first step that refers to defining the goals of the project. Defining the problem and defining what the customer requires (Kapur and Feng, 2005). Process improvement goals may be aimed at increasing market share, the output of a particular department, bringing about improved employee satisfaction as well as customer satisfaction and so on. The goal
has to align the customer demands and the strategic goals of the organization. Data mining methods can be used to find prospective ideas for project implementation. In other words, businesses are designing a road map for achieving the targets and goals of the organization. The second step Measure refers to the analysis of the existing system with various measurement techniques for the defects and levels of perfection that exist. In this step, accurate metrics have to be used to define a baseline for further improvements. This helps Six Sigma team leaders understand if progress has been achieved when process improvements are implemented. Analyze phase is extremely important in order to determine any disparity that may exist in the goals set and the current performance levels achieved. Various statistical tools are available to undertake such an analysis. The understanding of the relationship between cause and effect is necessary to bring about any improvements, if needed. Improvements in existing systems are necessary to bring the organization towards achievement of the organization goals. Creative development of processes and tools brings about a new lease on life for the organization’s processes and takes them nearer to organizational objectives. Various project management and planning tools can be used to implement these new techniques and processes. Appropriate usage of statistical tools is important to measure the data, which is necessary to understand improvements done and any shortcomings that may exist. The last phase of DMAIC is the Control phase. It helps ensure that variations in the processes are rectified before they have a negative effect. Controls can be used to ensure sustained improvements in new processes and operating procedures. The new project components should become a part and parcel of existing processes. Once all the factors are performing to satisfaction, transfer of ownership should be done to process owners and process teams.

Conclusion
This paper has served to provide a review of the current literature and quality practice within higher education. It has identified those applications having Kaizen elements within higher education and the complexity this creates in its measurement and management. Despite this complexity, using kaizen as quality management tool is taken seriously in Higher education institutions and extensive efforts are being undertaken to improve quality management practices. These efforts appear to be divided, however, with earlier approaches adapted from industrial models focusing on the quality of administrative and service functions. In contrast, critics of industrial models have undertaken efforts to focus on the quality of the core products of Higher education, teaching and learning. Given current trends, the priority now must be to achieve greater harmonization between the two approaches in Higher education quality management practices. This paper also identifies various Kaizen elements which are relevant for implementation in higher education system and their performance. However, as the review has relied upon current publications that are mainly outside these fields some, there is clearly a need for further research. Further research should identify whether, within educational fields like higher education, there is a relevance to adopt industrial models like kaizen and six sigma in as a tool to improve quality and whether its application more closely reflect the centrality of the student in line with a student-centered approach to learning. There is a need for these practices to be made more widely known across the academic community.
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Collaborative Meta-Profile Development Using the Tuning Methodology to Harmonize Mechanical Engineering Education in Africa

Venkata, R.A\textsuperscript{1}, Chinyama, M.P\textsuperscript{2}, Onana, C.A\textsuperscript{3}, Delpouve, B\textsuperscript{4}, Raidandi, D\textsuperscript{5}, Megahed, M.M\textsuperscript{6}, Yakasham, L.K\textsuperscript{7}, Sackey, S.M\textsuperscript{8}, Kayibanda, V\textsuperscript{9}, Chama, S\textsuperscript{10}, Mahomed, N\textsuperscript{11}

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Introduction

The African Higher Education system is undergoing a tremendous transformation process. This includes a number of national, regional and continental initiatives among which are the Nyerere mobility Scheme, the African Higher Education Harmonization and Quality Assurance programme, and the Pan African University. In addition these, at the institutional level, reform is underway in most countries. Socio-economic development in Africa is fast emerging as a fundamental policy driver among many African countries. Traditionally, African countries have failed to exploit intra-African trade although organizations such as COMESA, CEMAC, ECOWAS, SADC and others have been established to improve regional cooperation.

It is envisaged that future transport networks and shared infrastructure projects will require cooperation amongst engineers from different African countries. Moreover, recent intra-African technology development initiatives such as Satellite Technology programme for establishing an African Satellite Constellation, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Programme, the African Laser Centre, Regional hydropower building programmes etc., have brought to fore the need for harmonization of engineering programmes across Africa, and the development of curricula that address the specific technological needs of the Continent, (Galal, Salah and Mohammed, 2008 and ARCEE, 2006). The need for technology transfer and reception will further advance the cause of harmonisation of engineering curricula across Africa. Such harmonisation will enhance intra-African mobility, at various levels, namely: high-level research in areas of specialization which necessitates the use of scarce and expensive resources, postgraduate programmes in specialist areas, and joint engineering programmes based on intra-African meta-profiles.

The Place of Tuning: One transformation initiative which links institutional, national, regional, continental and international endeavours is the African Higher Education Harmonisation and Tuning Project (Tuning Africa), which is part of an AU-EU strategic partnership initiative (www.tuningafrica.org). The Tuning methodology is an interactive process in which academics develop high quality curricula and learning standards for students through the identification of generic and subject specific competencies in consultation with employers, students, graduates, peers and other stakeholders involved in higher education. Mechanical engineering is one of 5 subject areas whose harmonisation is
being piloted in Africa as part of this initiative with representation from countries shown in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Universities and Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>University de Yaounde I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Université de Bangui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>Institut Supérieur de Techniques Appliquées Kinshasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Cairo University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Jimma University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>University of Malawi - the Polytechnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Ecole Nationale d’Ingénieurs de Tunis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Kigali Institute of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Copperbelt University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Cape Peninsula University of Technology</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The history of tuning started in various countries at various times and the main aim is to collaboratively contribute to revitalizing and reforming Mechanical Engineering higher education in Africa, to make it more responsive to Africa's developmental needs. Tuning projects in higher education in Africa may further help to improve staff capacity to design and develop curricula, provide opportunities for generation of additional resources and support effective and productive networking. Tuning holds a promise to help establish compatible academic structures, and reference standards across Africa, which would facilitate student and staff mobility as well as enhance cooperation, not only among African academic institutions, but also between African institutions and those in the rest of the world.

Tuning Methodology

The objective of the first phase of the "Tuning Project" is to conceive a mental conception of the "Mechanical Engineering" (ME) degree profile. This is termed here as the degree "Meta-Profile". The procedure followed in developing this meta profile includes the definition of Mechanical Engineering, development of a suitable professional profile of the graduate mechanical engineer, and evolution of initial set of generic graduate competencies and specific competencies. Later, consultation processes with four groups of stakeholders: academics, employers, students, and graduates. Stakeholders were asked to rate the "importance" and the current level of "achievement" of each generic and subject specific competence and also to rank all competencies in a descending order of importance. This rating is made on a scale of 4 as follows: strong =4/4, moderate =3/4, weak =2/4, none =1/4. And finally, reordering and classification of competencies based on the results, development of ME Meta-Profile and followed by comparison of the developed meta profile with existing profiles.

Development of Generic and ME Competencies

Sessions of extensive discussions and deliberations among the representatives of African Universities have focussed on developing two sets of competencies. The first set is common
to all subject areas and hence is termed as "Generic Competencies". The second set of competencies were concerned with holders of a bachelor in "Mechanical Engineering"

**Generic Competencies:** Working in collaboration with four other subject area groups, the following 18 generic competences (Table 2) were agreed upon to as characteristics of holders of a first degree (Bachelor) in any of the subject areas (Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Teacher Education, Medicine, Agriculture).

**Mechanical Engineering Specific Competencies:** Through deliberations between representatives of the 11 universities participating in the ME subject group, 19 competencies specific to ME were evolved (Table 2).

**Results of Consultation Process**
A total of 4323 stakeholder respondents provided answers to the generic competencies questionnaire. A total of 3812 respondents provided answers to the "subject specific" competencies. About 13 % of the responses were associated with ME stakeholders. Analyses of data sets pertaining to levels of importance, achievement and ranking, as expressed by the three groups of stakeholders and competencies, were conducted.

For each set of data, and for each stakeholder group, the following procedure was followed:
- Competencies are ordered in descending order of importance
- The corresponding levels of achievement are recorded against each competence, and hence the level of the gap between importance and achievement was obtained
- The ranking of each competence is then recorded
- For the 18 common generic competencies, the top-7, bottom-7 and the middle 4 generic competencies are identified
- Similarly, the top-7, bottom-7 and the middle 5 ME competencies are identified

**Analysis of Consultation Results for Generic Competencies**
Table 3 shows the numeric data of the views of ME stakeholder groups in the common generic competencies and the following observations can be made:
- Levels of achievement are lower than levels of importance.
- Highest gaps between importance and achievement levels are affiliated to competencies #4, 17, 2 and 5.
- Competencies #1 and 4 are placed at the top of the list in importance and ranking.
- Competencies #13, 18, 14 & 16 are at the bottom of importance and ranking list.
- Generic competencies #1 and 4 are agreed upon as the two most highly ranked competencies in a ME graduate. Employers and academicians rank the use (# 6) much more highly than students and graduates. Of all areas, only the ME disciplines rank (# 6) highly, which indicates that the use of innovation is an inherent feature of the discipline.
- There could have been an overlap between competence # 10 and competence # 6 as employers rank use of technology much higher than its creation. This may probably be interpreted by the nature of industry in Africa where most technology is imported, not created. On the other hand, students and graduates rank creation of technology much higher than its use.
- Students and graduates of the ME discipline rank competence # 11, much higher than academics and employers of ME discipline. Students and graduates of "All Areas" ranked competence # 11, much lower than their ME counterparts. It is puzzling that employers do not rank leadership and teamwork skills highly.
ME graduates identify competence # 17, as having the largest gap between importance and achievement. This provides an example of competencies that need rectification, improvement, and reinforcement in current curricula.

Competence # 7, is ranked very low by students and graduates as well as academics. This feature reflects the fact that local/national languages are not typically employed in technical communications and reporting in the ME discipline.

### Table 2: List of Generic and Specific Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Competencies</th>
<th>Specific Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability for conceptual thinking, analysis and synthesis.</td>
<td>1. Ability to apply knowledge of the basic and applied sciences of mechanical engineering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professionalism, ethical values and commitment to UBUNTU</td>
<td>2. Ability to identify, evaluate and implement the most appropriate technologies for the context in hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Capacity for critical evaluation and self-awareness.</td>
<td>3. Capacity to create, innovate and contribute to technological development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to translate knowledge into practice.</td>
<td>4. Capacity to conceive, analyze, design and manufacture mechanical products and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Objective decision making and practical cost effective problem solving skills.</td>
<td>5. Skills in planning and executing mechanical engineering projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>6. Capacity to supervise, inspect and monitor mechanical engineering systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Capacity to use innovative and appropriate technologies.</td>
<td>7. Capacity to operate, maintain and rehabilitate mechanical engineering systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ability to learn to learn and capacity for lifelong learning.</td>
<td>8. Skills in evaluating the environmental and socio-economic impact of mechanical projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Flexibility, adaptability and ability to anticipate and respond to new situations.</td>
<td>9. Capacity to model and simulate mechanical engineering systems and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability for creative and innovative thinking.</td>
<td>10. Skills in selecting, mobilizing and administering material resources, tools and equipment cost-effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Leadership, management and team work skills.</td>
<td>11. Capacity to integrate legal, economic and financial aspects in decision-making in mechanical engineering projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to work independently.</td>
<td>15. Skills in using information technologies, software and tools for mechanical engineering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ability to evaluate, review and enhance quality.</td>
<td>16. Capacity to interact with multidisciplinary groups towards developing integrated solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Self-confidence, entrepreneurial spirit and skills.</td>
<td>17. Skills in employing quality control techniques in managing materials, products, resources and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Commitment to preserve African identity and cultural heritage.</td>
<td>18. Capacity to conduct life cycle assessment for products and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Capacity to employ mechanical engineering skills to transform local natural resources into products or services through value addition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Consultation Results for ME Competencies

Table 4 provides the raw data of the responses to the questionnaire of ME specific competencies with regard to how the various categories of stakeholders evaluated the levels of importance and achievement of each competence in current curricula, and how they ranked the 19 competencies.

The following observations can be made:
• Levels of achievement are generally viewed lower than levels of importance.
• Academicians, students and graduates commonly identified the competence # 19, as the largest gap between levels of importance and achievement. Employers and students commonly identified the competence # 14, as a large gap between levels of importance and achievement.
• Competences #18 and 16 are seen by academicians, employers and graduates, respectively as competencies with large gap between levels of importance and achievement.
• The most highly ranked competencies are competence #1, 4, 2, 3 and 5. However, there appears to be some overlapping between competence #1, and competence # 4, as by definition, design encompass application of knowledge.
• Competencies #1, #4, #2 stand out as the most highly ranked by students, employers and academicians. Competence #3 is ranked high by all stakeholders except employers. This reflects the preference of employers to use technology rather than create technology. On the other hand, graduates rank design higher than application of knowledge.
• Next, a second batch of competencies that are also ranked high by most of the stakeholders. These include competences #13 and # 19. All stakeholders ranked #19 high. However, the gap between importance and achievement of this competence is high for students and graduates.
• Competencies #17, #18 and #14 are ranked very low by almost all stakeholders. This may be, perhaps, due to the low level of technological development in the continent, quality culture and technological innovation.
• Graduates rank the competence #12 very low, while the competence # 4 is ranked very high, despite the fact that drawing is the tool by which designers express their thoughts. It is believed that graduates and students tend to rank competencies according the degree of complexity.
• Regarding employers, the data reveals a small gap between importance and achievement levels for those competencies #1 and #9. This indicates that, in the eyes of employers, academics have performed their task properly.

Profile Development

After taking an overview of the degree profiles from the participating universities and considering the specific learning outcomes for ME first cycle study programmes, a consensus emerged with regard to the core elements of a ME curriculum. These are depicted in Figure 1, in the form of a pyramid, with their average weightings in percentages indicated. To aptly summarize the key professional tasks constituting the very core (structured combination of competencies that gives identity) of ME and to help conceive the Meta-Profile (mental conception for visualization to help in constructing a degree profile) and to be able to reflect and analyze possible and diverse real degree profiles, the conclusions and inferences drawn from the stakeholder consultation process have been extensively used. It was agreed that the core can be characterized as “Design, Manufacture and Operate Mechanical Systems”. Design is aimed at the realization of new or modified artifacts or systems, with the intention of
creating value in accordance with predefined requirements and desires (Meijers, Overveld and Perrenet, 2005). Manufacturing involves translating design (digital or otherwise) into physical reality while Operation inherently involves safe and efficient use & application of the system.

Table 3: Main Features of Mechanical Engineering Stakeholders Responses to the Questionnaire of the Generic Competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence #</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Ranking Top-Down</th>
<th>Competence #</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Ranking Top-Down</th>
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<td>0.91</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

Table 4: Main features of ME stakeholders’ responses to the questionnaire of the subject-specific competencies.

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<th>Competence #</th>
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<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Ranking Top-Down</th>
<th>Competence #</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Ranking Top-Down</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constituent Profiles and Clusters: The approach followed by the ME group for Meta-Profile development is in line with the development of a competency-based curriculum (Kouwenhoven, 2009). This started with the formulation of a professional profile with key
occupational tasks, followed by a graduate profile with (selected) core competencies that relate directly to the professional profile and subsequently to the curriculum profile where the final attainment levels of the graduate are defined in competence standards for both generic and specific competencies. For greater clarity, competency is understood to be the capability to choose and use (apply) an integrated combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes with the intention of executing a task up to standard in a certain context, with personal characteristics such as motivation, self-confidence, will power being part of that context (Kouwenhoven, 2010).

Profile Clusters: Based on a ranking of the generic and ME specific competencies following the consultation process, clustering was done in terms of cognitive attributes - the drivers and the driven. Drivers are grouped under different categories such as knowledge, skills and attitudes. The driving and the driven elements are conceptualized in terms of gears.

Core and Knowledge Clusters: Each of the competency clusters including the ME core is constituted by both specific and generic competencies with the exception of innovation and creativity and entrepreneurial skills. Broadly, this suggests that they aid and reinforce each other. Ability to be creative and for innovative thinking as well as capacity to contribute to technological development are adjoined with the core competency cluster. This is especially important in the African context, characterized by low level of technological development, and is to be emphasized not only for cost effective utilization of scarce resources but also for acquiring the competitive edge in the global context. A range of ME specific competencies address this aspect and the ability to transform local national resources into products or services through value addition is central. Even under the ME Sciences cluster, the ability to translate knowledge into practice suggests that mere acquisition of knowledge is not enough and what is more important is, what can be done or realized with that. The Quality cluster completes the knowledge grouping of competency clusters, where apart from quality related aspects, safety and risk assessment is appropriately highlighted.

Figure 1: Core Elements of a First Degree in Mechanical Engineering

Figure 2: Mechanical Engineering Meta Profile: A Pictorial Version
Figure 2(b): Competency clusters represented by gears-DIvers and driven.

Skills Cluster: A plethora of skills encompassing resource management (both material and human), practical problem solving, leadership, team work, cost effective decision making, planning, supervision, monitoring and execution of ME projects, needed by ME graduates is grouped under managerial and behavioural cluster. Communication (technical
drafting/drawing as well as oral) is given due importance under communication and interpersonal skills cluster where the ability to use ICT is included.

**Attitudes Cluster:** Positive attitudes to serve the society and influence sustainable development forms the central theme under this cluster grouping. The entrepreneurial skills cluster with ability for creative and innovative thinking as the common thread signifies the need for entrepreneurial spirit, self-confidence and the capacity to use innovative and appropriate technologies for the context in hand. The community engagement cluster is an embodiment, of the need for leveraging ME solutions to societal problems and local community development. The need for sustainability outlook is portrayed by the abilities for socio-economic and environmental impact assessment of ME projects as well as life cycle assessment of products and systems as a separate competency cluster under this grouping. The integration of legal and financial aspects is again clubbed here due to its relevance. Strong emphasis on sustainability is especially called for in the curriculum profile in the present day context.

**The Meta-Profile:** With all the gears (drivers and the driven) assembled as shown in Figure 2, the linkages and the relation between different factors as well as the synergy between various competency clusters in delivering and realizing the ME core, i.e., Design, manufacture and operate mechanical systems can be easily understood. The inter-meshing gear teeth shows the common subset space between the two competency clusters and this is extended by the other gears in contact as well. The same thing can be felt through animation in electronic version of this report.

In order to construct the Meta-Profile, the ME core (hexagonal space visualized to reveal the core specializations as well as the core professional tasks presented earlier) is conceived to be interconnected and serviced by the 6 planets and the 3 outer spaces (apexes of each of the triangles )with the basis shown in Table 5. The 6 planets are ME Sciences, Innovation & Creativity, Quality, Managerial and Behavioural skills, Communication and interpersonal skills, Professionalism and Ethics while the outer spaces represent Community Engagement, Entrepreneurial skills and Sustainability. Thus the Meta-Profile arrived at is represented as shown in Fig. 3 below. The groups of competencies associated with each of the core, 6 planets and 3 spaces in Fig. 3 are written according to the following code: **Final Rank, Type: G or S, Original Order.** Thus, a competence coded as 08-G-02 is interpreted as: the generic competence, whose original order is (02) and final ranking is (08). From the original list, this competence is readily identified as: Professionalism, ethical values and commitment to Ubuntu (meaning “humanness” or respect for the well-being and dignity of fellow human beings).

**Discussion**

The Tuning project gives Africa an instrument which can improve teaching and learning methods with a view to enhancing the curriculum of higher education institutions. Analysis of consultation data for all-areas stakeholders of generic competencies and ME stakeholder groups of the proposed 19 subject-specific competences yielded a number of important general observations. Levels of importance were much higher than levels of achievement. Having developed and defined generic and specific competences and the detailed meta profile for ME, a comparison of the developed meta profile is then made with existing degree profiles. In general the following observations are recorded:
• There exists a remarkable coincidence between the two especially in the ME core area of designing, manufacturing and operations of ME systems.

Table 5: Construction of Mechanical Engineering Meta-Profile: Conceptual Basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core-Affiliated Competencies</th>
<th>Design, Manufacture and Operation of Mechanical Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02-S-04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Planets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet-1 Mechanical Engineering Sciences 01-S-01 02-G-04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet-2 Innovation and Creativity 13-S-09 03-S-02 06-S-19 08-S-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planet-3 Managerial and Behavioural Skills 04-G-11 05-G-05 05-S-05 12-S-06 15-S-10 12-G-09</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planet-4 Quality 17-S-14 18-G-16 18-S-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet-5 Communication and Interpersonal Skills 11-S-12 14-G-07 11-G-12 08-S-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planet-6 Professionalism and Ethics 08-G-02 09-G03 10-G-08 16-S-11 15-G-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outer Spaces

| Space-1 Entrepreneurial Skills 07-G-17 03-G-10 06-G-06 |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Space-2 Community Engagement 07-S-13 16-G-14 17-G-18 06-S-19 |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Space-3 Sustainability 19-S-18 13-G-13 10-S-08 16-S-11 |             |             |             |             |             |             |

Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Mechanical Engineering Meta Profile.

• There was poor correlation between the two, with the existing lacking in emphasis in the areas of innovation and creativity, managerial and behavioural skills and quality

• Further, the existing has serious lack of emphasis in the areas of professional ethics, community engagement, environment and social economic impact assessment and product life cycle assessment.
• Other areas of highest differences between the two included commitment to African identity and provision of ME solutions towards sustainable development.

• Whereas some established degree programmes incorporated some aspects of the integration of legal and financial issues, and in others totally absent.

• It is agreed that the developed one is better than the existing, where in the developed one not only addresses current societal expectations upon a ME graduate but also takes care of the future expectations. Hence, there is a need to review and harmonize existing ones with the developed about which there is unanimous agreement in the ME-SAG.

• Therefore, it is imperative that the developed meta profile be validated by other key stakeholders.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations
In summary, 18 generic competences and 19 ME-specific competencies have been developed, analyzed and synergized, with input from stakeholders, to form a meta-profile that will inform the next phase of the project, which is the actual curriculum development.

The following future engagements are recommended to be pursued, as well:
• Deepening the process by defining detailed learning objectives and outcomes.
• Carrying out gap analysis between the existing curricula & the developed meta profile
• Extending the process to cover: Civil, Electrical and Chemical engineering disciplines.
• Developing generic competencies for all engineering disciplines
• Immediate future work must cover validation, dissemination, and implementation.

When the meta-profile presented is realized by a specific degree program profile, quality can definitely be ensured since the competencies expected can be demonstrated. When harmonization of degree profiles is carried out based on this meta-profile across Africa, mobility will be facilitated leading to exchange of expertise, experience and best practices among different African HEIs which in turn would contribute to capacity building and subsequently achieving quality from a sustainable perspective.

Acknowledgement
Acknowledgement is to the European Commission for supporting this work.

References
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Review of Policy on Quality Assurance through Enhancing Teachers’ Effectiveness

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Department of Economics, Wollega University, P.O. Box 395, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Introduction
Education has long been defined as a vital instrument for development. It is seen as “a means to the sacred end of economic growth” (Hutchins, 1970). Education is also one of the basic human rights. Hence, any nation committed to economic growth and fair treatment of its citizens has to organize and provide an efficient educational system.

As Ethiopia’s attention is increasingly focused on the outcomes of education, policymakers have undertaken a wide range of reforms to improve schools, ranging from new standards and tests to redesigned schools, new curricula, and new instructional strategies. One important lesson from these efforts has been the recurrent finding that teachers are the fulcrum that determines whether any school initiative tips are toward success or failure. Every aspect of school reform such as the creation of more challenging curriculum, the use of ambitious assessments, the implementation of decentralized management, the invention of new model schools and programs depends on highly-skilled teachers.

Because of this, every educational system should strive to attract qualified people to the profession and to provide them with the best possible working conditions and material incentives that will satisfy their needs.

As policy makers in education systems across the world respond to these and other challenges that shape teachers policies, the major career track emerged in teaching is recruitment of less qualified or untrained teachers on short-term contract basis known as contract teachers, partly as a response to the teacher shortages in meeting Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015, or as a conditionality promoted by some financial lending institutions and mainly evident in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

There is a precipitous decline in the status of the teaching profession, with less and less attention paid to the 1966 Recommendation of the UNESCO and International Labor Organization that calls for the education and recruitment of high-performing teachers, improved working conditions, and teachers’ participation in policymaking processes.

Across all nations, there is a consensus among education stakeholders that educational quality is indeed a critical component to securing a future in the 21st century for societies and in improving the physical and human environment. To reach this goal of social progress, researchers have pointed out that teacher quality is one of the most important school-related factors in student achievement and that a teacher’s mastery of the subject content and classroom practices strongly influence what students learn. However, this cannot work alone without adequate resources, supportive school climate, support for students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds and strong commitment to teachers’ continuous professional development, voice and leadership. All these aspects combined together can result in a better quality teaching.
In Ethiopia, in the past decade and half, significant efforts have been made to expand the access to education. However, the greater push given to increasing enrolment seems to have offset the efforts made to improve the quality of education (MOE, 2005b), which makes qualification of teachers a focal point.

**Objective**

In this paper, I reviewed the issues associated with various approaches to ascertaining teacher effectiveness, and suggested a framework for policy systems that might prove productive in both identifying and *developing* more effective teachers and teaching. I draw a distinction between effective teachers and effective teaching that is important to consider if improvement in student learning is the ultimate goal.

**Effective Teachers and Teaching**

Teaching effectiveness may be defined as how an instructor can best direct, facilitate, and support students toward certain academic ends such as achievement and satisfaction. Teaching effectiveness has been investigated extensively in traditional classrooms for more than seven decades (for a meta-analysis of empirical studies from 1995-2004 as stated in Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Recently, research has become directed toward teaching effectiveness in online or virtual classes. As a preface to our study, the reviewer discusses findings and conclusions concerning teaching effectiveness in traditional classrooms. the reviewer do so for two reasons: practically, since all findings are relevant to online teaching, and theoretically, since current research has shown the theoretical equivalency of all kinds of instructional systems within the framework of a unified theory of instructional design.

It is important to distinguish between the related but distinct ideas of teacher quality and teaching quality. *Teacher quality* might be thought of as the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways. The traits desired of a teacher may vary depending on conceptions of and goals for education; thus, it might be more productive to think of teacher *qualities* that seem associated with what teachers are expected to be and do.

**Teaching Quality** has to do with strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. Teaching quality is in part a function of teacher quality – teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions – and it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction. Key to considerations of context are “fit” and teaching conditions. A “high-quality” teacher may not be able to offer high quality instruction in a context where there is a mismatch in terms of the demands of the situation and his or her knowledge and skills; for example, an able teacher asked to teach subject matter for which s/he is not prepared may teach poorly; a teacher who is trained and effective for high school level may be unable to teach small children; and a teacher who is able to teach high-ability students or affluent students well may be quite unable to teach students who struggle to learn or who do not have the resources at home that the teacher is accustomed to assuming are available. Thus, a high-quality teacher in one circumstance may not be a high-quality teacher in another.
Policies and Practices to Augment Teacher Effectiveness

Information alone is not enough to drive improvements in student learning. Strong evidence indicates that the teaching-learning process is one of the most important determinants of student achievement. Too often government policies such as those around teacher training have failed to change classroom teaching practices. Many education policies geared to improve pedagogy have focused more on curriculum reforms than teacher practice. Those directly addressed pedagogy, such as introducing mother tongue instruction, have often ignored the practical constraints on implementing these policies. Moreover, essential classroom practices are often not addressed in teacher training. For instance, in most countries teachers are not specifically trained in methods to teach children to read. The concept of “quality teaching” is complex and open to a range of definitions and interpretations. This review has therefore adopted a pragmatic approach, based on how institutions define quality in their own circumstances.

Those programs that have attempted to change teaching practice have generally failed to have broader impact on policy for two main reasons: (1) they have not been designed and implemented in a way that encourages and ensures broad uptake; and/or (2) they have not included efforts to rigorously analyze or document their impact on student learning. In regard to the first reason, most projects that aim to improve student learning by focusing on changes in the classroom are implemented in only a few schools. Hence, although successful, the project remains too small to have any effect on the larger system. Moreover, many projects are often too costly for long-term government adoption. Other projects, especially those financed by international donors and managed by international staff, have limited impact because the support base within the country is weak and they are usually run parallel to the government system.

The few projects that have focused both on student learning and on large-scale implementation in government schools have, by and large, lacked rigor in assessing student learning outcomes. For example, a 2006 report by the World Bank on its own education lending found that less than one in three projects ever aimed to improve learning outcomes, and that among those projects with a learning outcome objective, well under 50 percent had an evaluation with repeated measures of learning outcomes. There is the tendency to think that factors of teachers’ effectiveness could be defined in terms of teacher characteristics, his experiences, his cognitive and affective properties, the conditions to which he has to adjust and the characteristics of the school, classroom and student. Although each of these characteristics may contribute to teacher’s success, they are not the substance of effective teaching. A proper conceptualization of teaching and teacher’s effectiveness as a yardstick for quality assurance is necessary for a better understanding of what makes a teacher to be effective. It is believed that observational techniques as a strategy could go a long way in making teacher to be effective. This explains why this paper examined how to enhance quality assurance through teacher’s effectiveness.

Reforms to Improve Teacher’s Quality

For more than two decades, policymakers have undertaken many and varied reforms to improve schools, ranging from new standards and tests to redesigned schools, new curricula and new governance models. One important lesson from these efforts is the repeated finding that teachers are the fulcrum determining whether any school initiative tips toward success or
failure. Every aspect of school reform depends on highly skilled teachers for its success. This is especially true as educational standards rise and the diversity of the student body increases. Teachers need even more sophisticated abilities to teach more complex curriculum to the growing number of public school students who have fewer educational resources at home, those who are new English language learners, and those who have distinctive learning needs.

One of the few areas of consensus among education policymakers, practitioners, and the general public today is that improving teacher quality is one of the most direct and promising strategies for improving public education outcomes, especially for groups of children who have historically been taught by the least qualified teachers. Teachers can have large effects on student achievement.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in moving beyond traditional measures of teacher qualifications, such as completion of a preparation program, number of degrees, or years of experience, in order to evaluate teachers’ actual performance as the basis for making decisions about hiring, tenure, licensing, compensation, and selection for leadership roles. A key problem is that current measures for evaluating teachers are not often linked to their capacity to teach. Existing federal, state, and local policies for defining and measuring teacher quality either rely almost exclusively on classroom observations by principals who differentiate little among teachers and offer little useful feedback, or focus on teachers’ course-taking records and on paper-and-pencil tests of basic academic skills and subject matter knowledge that are poor predictors of later effectiveness in the classroom.

A reliable and valid system of performance assessments based on common standards would provide consistency in gauging teacher effectiveness, help track educational progress, flag areas of need, and anchor a continuum of performance throughout a teaching career. Such a system could also be used to establish standards for a National Teacher License that would allow mobility across states, ensure school districts that a new hire meets the requirements necessary to become an effective teacher who can advance student learning, and enable districts to identify and recruit the most able teachers to the neediest schools.

**Quality Teaching in Higher Education**

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within educational institutions. National and transnational debates like the Bologna Process, direct state regulations or incentives, competition among private and state-owned institutions all prompt institutions to put quality teaching on their agenda. Moreover, national quality assurance agencies push for reflection on the subject, even if their influence is controversial.

As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes. Much attention is given to public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to overemphasize research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging.
Ensuring Effectiveness through Policy-Maker Support

There is growing evidence that some well-designed performance-based assessments of teaching detect aspects of teaching that are significantly related to teacher effectiveness, as measured by student achievement gains. The value of using such assessments is that they can both document broader aspects of teacher effectiveness and can be used to help teachers develop greater effectiveness, as participation in these assessments has been found to support learning both for teachers who are being evaluated and educators who are trained to serve as evaluators.

The services dedicated to quality teaching are often vulnerable; they can be subjected to criticism by a reluctant academic community and deemed bureaucratic, useless and non-relevant to the academic mission of the institution. They need permanence, so as to gain visibility, build up their activities and become responsive partners for academia.

Traditional decision-making bodies could also misunderstand the need to improve quality teaching in higher education. In traditional research-intensive universities, a majority of researchers serve on governing committees. They highlight scholarship while overlooking quality teaching aspects that are often considered as incidental to the mission of academia. Research is emphasized because research performance drives the most brilliant academics and doctoral students, allows commercialization and dissemination through patents and spin-offs, attracts extra funding and above all safeguards the distinctive feature of universities in the diverse arena of higher education. Some institutions of that type are discovering, however, that paying attention to quality teaching could be a way to reinforce and secure their institutional reputation.

Institution leaders who would like to expand a quality teaching strategy need to make quality teaching support explicit and legitimate. This could be done by constantly promoting activities and assigning a clear-cut role to the services in charge of quality teaching. Granting them official status in the organizational chart of the institution ensures legitimate interventions across departments and strengthens recognition of the service. Some of them have been officially appointed research centers in the institution. These are mostly services placed under the direct authority of the rector or the leader of academic affairs, hence their legitimacy and ability to operate closer to the academic community, despite the influence wielded by the heads of departments or other key actors. In some cases, academics serve on the governing body of the service dedicated to quality teaching, and conversely the staff in charge of quality teaching might have a voice in the traditional decision-making bodies. The reputation of the service can thus be enhanced, doing away with the negative image of a useless and bureaucratic bureau, as sometimes occurs.

Although every institution has set up a service dedicated to quality teaching and assigned it most of the development of quality teaching, it would require a lot of effort by the institution for a single body to symbolize the institutional effort to support quality teaching. Such a scheme works at Copenhagen Business School, but not every institution is able to provide so much investment (UNESCO, 2000).

However, the institutions point out that there is a risk of having an empty shell. Setting up a service or assigning a position in charge of quality teaching may not have a powerful impact
on teaching improvement in the academic community, unless it is underpinned by a strong and widely accepted commitment to quality teaching. Technical aspects should be set apart from a genuine political commitment from top leadership (e.g. rector or vice-rector of academics affairs). The leaders must demonstrate that quality of teaching is at the pinnacle of their priorities and not just one additional mission. Mission statements could feature the concept of quality teaching in explicit terms. As an example, Alverno College posts a combination of institutional support (reflecting the political commitment, setting up the framework, providing support services, institutional research support, organizing time and room for discussion) and of individual commitment by the departments and other divisions. The office of academic affairs oversees reflection on quality teaching with the abilities departments, the discipline departments and other sub-committees. The office of educational research and evaluation is involved in teaching improvement to teachers. Other institutions argue that some values underpin quality teaching, like excellence, adequacy of job market demand or equal opportunity for all students.

In other cases, quality teaching permeates every layer of institution-wide strategies, like the Teaching and Learning Strategy at Teesside University that overarches specific strategies such as that for e-learning. In France, the four-year agreement signed with the Ministry of Education reflects the objectives of institutions regarding research, teaching and other missions. Hence institutional support is needed for an ambitious quality teaching policy. The institution must be knowledgeable about the aims of the teaching delivered and the means to reach objectives, to take into account the level of the culture of quality and to fine-tune the scope of quality support. Additionally the commitment should include inventing the right structures to organize teamwork, ensure sensible functioning and fulfill the expectations of such a service. This is a question of managing quality teaching at the institutional level.

Hence, academic affairs should not be set apart from the normal organization nor should they be treated differently. The success of institutional quality teaching lies in the acceptance and the involvement of every part of the institution. The more weight the concept of quality teaching carries with the academic community, the more chances of success the institutional policy will have. The Catholic University of Louvain for instance adopted a governing system with cross-department pro-rectors rather than sector-wide positions, so they can design institutional policies (Cheng, 1996a).

Quality Teaching at Institutional Level and Synergy of Policies
Many institutions have opted for a vision of quality teaching, considering that the unique performance of individual instructors could not improve the overall quality of the teaching delivered. Skelton recalls in Times Higher Education Supplement (16 November 2007) that teaching excellence is generally considered to be achieved through individual effort. But individual excellence masks crucial questions relating to basic material conditions of teaching and learning (e.g. staff-to-student ratios, sufficient time to think seriously about teaching and learning processes) which go beyond individual effectiveness.

Information Technology Policies (IT)
A vast majority of the institutions link their commitment to quality teaching with IT policies (ranging from computer acquisition to in-depth technology-based learning strategies). Intranets and discussion forums are seen as a powerful communication tool within the academic community and with the students. There is a strong recognition by all the
institutions that communication has progressed and the level of information has never been that extensive. Even the largest multi-campus universities wishing to foster quality teaching could operate, proposing online courses, offering electronic kits for programme evaluations and hosting virtual good-teaching practices.

Technology provides convenient tools for collecting and consolidating qualitative information. Programme evaluations are computer-processed, and data collection is no longer frustrating for the administrative staff assigned to these burdensome tasks. They are used to filling in student and teacher portfolios, monitoring teacher performance and conducting online satisfaction surveys. The connection with human resources policies is a synergy that is often quoted by the participating institutions. Since quality teaching support aims at evaluating teacher performance, the services in charge of human resources are close partners in the definition and implementation of instruments. The emergence of a results-driven culture has often entailed a profound cultural shift for services that were routinely handling teachers” recruitment process and career progress.

Although quality teaching improvement and assessment seem to pursue contradictory objectives (as echoed in the recurrent debates on quality assurance as a way of improving the programme vs. warranting that quality does exist), this divide happens to be irrelevant for institutions. When they debate curriculum contents, ways of teaching (e.g. lectures in auditorium, one-off seminars, practice-based pedagogy, collaborative working) and their expected relevance and effectiveness regarding the education’s and apprenticeship’s purpose, teachers and staff in charge of quality teaching have the opportunity to discuss both the kind of improvement and the thresholds to be attained. Then the next obvious step can be a collaborative definition of the criteria for benchmarks and ultimately for assessing commitment to quality (e.g. attending development training) and improvement (e.g. refining students” assessment). Even though research-based performance measures are present in most national academic systems, the institutions tend to extend the metrics and to base career progression on quality teaching criteria.

Implications for Institutional Actors of an Engagement in Quality Teaching

For Institution’s Leaders

Institutional leadership and decision-making bodies have a fundamental role to play in shaping the institutional quality culture. They are often the initiators of quality teaching initiatives and their approach directly affects the outcome of these initiatives.

A sustained commitment to quality teaching by senior management is necessary for leading the whole institution towards the common goal of enhancing the quality of teaching. Leaders should be attentive to motivating deans and heads of department. At the crossroads between the institution’s decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, they encourage the cross-fertilization of strategic approaches and nurture innovation in everyday practice. In addition, they discuss the means for implementing and operating, measuring progress and identifying problems.

Involving teachers in the definition of quality teaching initiatives ensures that the initiatives are responsive to needs and promotes a sense of ownership. Adequate time, human resources, funding and facilities must be dedicated to planning and implementation of an
initiative. There must be an effective vehicle for discussion and sharing experiences, and perhaps a specific unit or other means of focusing organizational support. Opportunities can also stem from external factors that encourage institutional reflection on quality: periodical institutional evaluations, international ratings, national reforms or transnational processes.

Leaders should convey the relevance of the whole community (including administrative staff and students) in the implementation of the quality culture. The students should be mobilized, putting emphasis on their opinions and their contribution to the definition of quality teaching and the design of specific initiatives.

**For Teachers**

Much of the success of quality teaching support depends on its acceptance by teachers and the use of the instruments at teachers disposal. Quality teaching initiatives provide an occasion for teachers to think about their own role in the enhancement of quality: these initiatives help them to teach better. Gaining teachers commitment to reflective practice and consequential adaptation is vital. Technology-based teaching (e.g. the e-learning platform), intranets and discussion forums are pedagogical tools that can improve student-to-teacher interaction and assess student progress. It is important to link practices and tools with the institutional quality teaching policy, and link teacher expectations to institution expectations in terms of learning outcomes.

Teachers are the central actors for a reflection on the evaluation criteria of quality teaching: Which aspects have to be addressed and which changes have to be put in practice? Collaboration with the quality units in the design and implementation of curricula can be a good starting point. The definition of quality teaching is related to each teacher’s values, aptitudes and attitudes: teaching is a dynamic activity, which has strongly subjective aspects that depend on personal and collective philosophy and values. Teachers career progression may be influenced by the fact that quality teaching issues are gaining importance, and institutions are seeking ways of rewarding teachers who are committed to quality teaching.

**For Students**

Students, the primary beneficiaries of quality teaching initiatives, are increasingly becoming a force promoting quality teaching. Students can collaborate with teachers and leaders in the definition of the initiative (and of the quality teaching concept itself), keeping the interaction alive and raising concerns about teaching, learning environments, quality of content and teacher attitudes. They can best contribute if invited to serve on governing bodies or used as evaluation experts on par with academic reviewers.

Student groups can bring new ideas and influence the institutional policy on quality teaching by launching discussions and raising problems.

**Conclusions and Implications for Institutions in Ethiopia**

Most of the teachers engaged in higher education are non-trained on teaching methodologies. There is a need to give high priorities towards pedagogical training: training which brings a change in consciousness; raising the income level of teachers still further; providing training opportunities at all levels; re-emphasizing the importance of the teacher to society. Nowadays, training is highly linked with ones political outlook; improving learning...
conditions; discourage political harassment of teachers (Chen, 1997). Since most of the teachers in our educational system are subject matter experts, priority must be given to develop their ability in methods of teaching.

High quality teaching can only be achieved through sound teacher policies. That means it is time to take a serious and sustained look at initiatives aiming at improving teaching quality, such as adequate learning and teaching conditions, professional autonomy, a supportive and coherent education system that is adequately financed and focused on improvement rather than control. The improvement of teachers’ qualifications is also an important consideration; one that requires investing in programs and procedures to ensure qualified teachers for every classroom.

Although all these efforts across the world point to the need for improvement in teaching quality, there is currently no international forum that transcends regional boundaries in which ideas and best practices can be shared on this topic. There is a great need now for nations to learn from each other practical ways to approach these issues. Through the use of technology, combined with the ease of international travel, it is now possible to come together in new and more dynamic ways to develop solutions.

Changes in student profiles and learning requirements over recent decades have had a decisive impact on curriculum contents and teaching methods. The quality of teaching must therefore be thought of dynamically, as a function of contextual shifts in the higher-education environment, such as the internationalization of studies and the additional missions that education is being asked to fulfill (innovation, civic and regional development), producing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

To introduce an effective institutional policy for the quality of teaching involves harnessing synergy between two groups of factors:
1. Factors external to institutions, at the national and in many cases international levels (e.g. the Bologna Process in Europe): they work as facilitators or catalysts, fostering a general climate conducive to the recognition of teaching quality as a priority.
2. Internal institutional factors: the institutional context (e.g. the development of an in-house quality culture, the participation of students in academic affairs) and specific circumstances (e.g. the appointment of a new chief executive) are likely to affect the pace of development of quality teaching initiatives. Across institutions there are overlapping layers (the institution, the departments, the disciplines, the programmes) which are more or less open to quality teaching initiatives and whose influence varies over time.

The vast majorities of the initiatives taken by institutions to enhance teaching quality (for example programme evaluation or teacher training) are empirical and address their particular needs at a given time. Initiatives inspired by academic literature and research on the subject are rare.

For a university to consolidate these initiatives coherently under an institutional policy remains a long-term effort subject to multiple constraints. There are no models to follow, but rather a host of conditions that must all be met. Institutions should be aware that it is a university’s local environment that primarily shapes the extent of its commitment to the quality
of teaching and that a sustainable commitment of the university’s top leadership is a necessary condition for success in quality teaching. Encouraging bottom-up initiatives from the faculty members, setting them in a propitious learning and teaching environment, providing effective support and stimulating reflection on the role of teaching in the learning process all contribute to the quality of teaching.

The institutions most advanced in initiatives to promote the quality of teaching have explicitly stipulated the educator’s role and missions in the learning process, and they know how to explain their conviction that the quality of teaching is an important area for development. Neither the size nor the specificity of an institution poses a major obstacle to the development of institutional policies as long as the involvement of the institution’s management is clear and permanent, and sufficient funding and adequate facilities are earmarked for the quality of teaching on a long-term basis.

Commitment on the part of all university stakeholders, and above all by the academic community, is crucial to the success of any policy to improve the quality of teaching. Participation bolsters the dedication and motivation of teachers when it begins at the very conception of an action or a policy in which their educational function is put forward and stated explicitly. The participation of faculty deans is also vital insofar as deans, at the crossroads between an institution’s decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, encourage the cross-fertilization of strategic approaches, build and support communities of practice, and nurture innovation in everyday practice in the classroom.

The deployment of policies for quality teaching also hinges on an institution’s capacity to strike a balance between technical aspects of quality support (e.g. development of course evaluation questionnaires) and the fundamental issues raised (e.g. assessing the added value of the teaching initiatives in achieving curriculum objectives). Clearly, goals related to the quality of teaching can be neither reduced to, nor achieved through, mere technical improvements or extensions of existing mechanisms. Conversely, these fundamental issues lose relevance if they are not backed up by specific actions deemed useful by the academic community. It is all a matter of balance, tailored specifically to the culture and modus operandi of each institution.

Quality teaching initiatives have emphasized the role of teaching in the educational transformative process, have refined the interaction between research and teaching, and have nurtured the culture of quality within the academic community.

However, institutions need to develop innovative evaluative approaches to measure the impact of their support on quality teaching. The higher education sector is still struggling to understand the causal link between engagement in teaching and the quality of learning outcomes. The reason for this lies in the difference in approaches between the teacher’s work and the learning activities, which makes any causal link between inputs and outcomes difficult to measure, although such links undoubtedly exist. Institutions tend to monitor their initiatives essentially through indicators of activities and resources (e.g. curriculum structure, use of educational technology and enrolment figures), whereas learning outcomes are shaped by numerous factors deriving from context-dependent variables (e.g. students and faculty characteristics), from the setting in which learning occurs (e.g. teaching delivery, pedagogy, learning facilities) and from the student’s prior learning experience. An exploration
of the correlation between inputs, processes and outcomes of higher education calls for pioneering and in-depth evaluation methods and instruments.

The support for quality teaching usually generates awareness of the responsibility of teachers in the learning process and justifies the institutional need for helping them to fulfill their mission.

References
Gender Disparity in Higher Education in Ethiopia
Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators from three Selected Universities

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Introduction

The question of gender in education began to intrigue research and policy attention since last four decades. The interest ever since was to reduce gender disparity in education by promoting equal erudition of females with males. Despite the advocacy and some promising scenario, gender disparity in education is still continuing in favor of males in many countries of the world, particularly in Africa (Bunyi, 2004; FAWE, 2002). As such, the MDGs, “To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education [by] 2005 and in all levels by 2015”, would less likely be achieved. Therefore, the need for research is comprehensible.

The low participation of girls in tertiary education in Africa is attributed to many factors which include social and structural impediments such as sexual harassment and gender-blind institutional structures and leadership (FAWE, 2002). Sexual harassment stands for unwelcome and unwanted sexual behaviors which are judged by the recipient(s) to have resulted in mental, physical, and social discomfort and even interference with academic performance (FAWE, 2002).

The issue of gender disparity in education in Ethiopia has started to attract government attention very recently in spite of its prevalence across several educational ladders (Alemu, 2003, Seyoum, 1991 and Genet, 1991). The higher up the educational ladder in the country the wider the gender disparity in favor of males become (MOE Statistical Abstract, 2007). Nevertheless, the forms and sources of gender disparity in the country’s higher education got inadequate research consideration. This paper intends to understand these gaps by investigating the forms and causes of gender disparity in higher education in Ethiopia by focusing on succeeding educational ladders of three reasonably selected universities: Addis Ababa, Haramaya and Jimma Universities.

Some Theoretical and Conceptual Basis

Theoretically, gender is analysed through a socio-cultural lens (Collier and Rosaldo, 1981; Moore, 1986). This is because the power of gender stereotypes is not just in the mind; they have a perfect material reality. The material reality helps to reinforce the social and economic conditions within which they have developed and employed. Thus, gender disparity in the present context refers to the unfair treatment of females as compared to males in education, which is rooted in the way society and its culture works.

Culture either enhances or impinges academic performance as our performance in academic or otherwise is fed by our culture. Performance theorists like Matthews and colleagues (2000) subscribe to this assertion. Education and other integral parts of our culture explicitly value successful performance. In fact, performance is influenced by various contextual factors which involve the external environment, internal qualities of the person (e.g. the emotional state), and the task itself (Matthews et al., 2000).
Performance in academic or otherwise is the function of opportunity (the physical and social environment provided by the organization in which individuals perform tasks), capacity (all the basic characteristics that promote good performance such as intelligence), and willingness of an individual (motivational and attitudinal factors which may allow the person to use his/her capacities to full advantage, or, alternatively, hinder him/her to use his/her potential).

On any task, some people perform better than others, even when the amount of practice is controlled. This is because factors such as the intra-personal environment, nutrition, and early childhood experiences may affect the brain. Men and women may differ in cognitive function, because boys and girls are treated differently, exposed to different activities, and so may acquire different cognitive skills. Explanation of this kind refers to social and cultural factors which may influence the performance of men and women differently on different activities (Matthews et al., 2000).

In the Ethiopian educational setup, females have been largely excluded for long since the inception of modern education in the country to the last few decades. Apart from the patriarchal socio-cultural system of the country, the factors displayed in flowchart often appear to have been the major hurdle to female students’ equal participation with males in schooling in Ethiopia.

**Flowchart 1:** Conceptual model to understand gender disparity in education

(Teshome, 2003)
**Research Questions**

- Is there gender disparity in higher education in Ethiopia in enrolment, dismissal, performance and graduation?
- If so, what quantitative indicators do exist?
- How does the gender gap behave across the successively progressing academic ladders in university education?
- Why does the disparity exist (if any)?
- What measures should be taken to reduce the disparity?

**Materials and Methods**

Target areas and population involved in this study were Addis Ababa, Haramaya and Jimma Universities and their student and staff communities. Sources of quantitative data were registrar offices of these universities. Qualitative data, however, were generated through interviews with officers, instructors, and students; observation of gender advocacy environments; and attention alluring individual case studies. Data analysis was made by entering Microsoft Excel to construct line graphs for informative data analysis, thematic analysis, quoting narrations, and individual case description.

**Results and Discussions**

**Gender Disparity in Enrolment**

Since the last few years there has been considerable increase in the number of students being enrolled for university education in Ethiopia. But gender disparity still lingers on behaving in favor of males (Figures 1 and 2). The disparity reflects its ugliest face in the postgraduate programs.

![Figure 1: Percentage of Female Students in the Regular Undergraduate Enrolment by Year and University (Compiled from AAU & HU Registrar Offices, December 2006).](image-url)
As Figure 1 shows the enrolment of female students in the undergraduate regular program at AAU and HU has increased from nearly one-sixth to more than one-fifth between the 2003 to 2007 academic year. Although there is variation between universities in this regard, the percentage of female students in enrolment is still underrepresented in both universities. The rising scenario by itself was the result of the affirmative action given by the state for female students to join university education. This means that yawning gender gap (e.g. 40% at AAU and 60% at HU in 2007) in enrolment in the universities is still persisting. Within roughly five years (2003-2007) the enrolment of female students has almost doubled, i.e. it rose from 16 percent to 30 percent.

Figure 2: Percentage of Female Students in the Regular Masters Degree Enrolment by Year and University (From the registrar offices of AAU & HU, December 2006 & March 2007)

Figure 2 indicates that the gender gap in the enrolment of masters program at AAU and HU between 2002-2003 to 2006-2007 was extremely big, with the yawning gap being reducing over years. The overall gap in female students’ enrolment in the regular masters programs of these universities during the years selected for this study goes down from 86 percent in 2002-2003 to 80 percent in 2006/7 at AAU, while the gap at HU during the same year plummeted from about 96 percent to about 78 percent.

Figure 3 depicts that the gender gap in the enrolment of PhD fellows at HU was to some extent worse. Gender gap moves from worse to the worst in favor of male students as the level of education goes from Masters to PhD degree programs. The overall female students enrolment in the PhD program constituted 1.4% (only one female). The over all gender gap in this program was 97.2 percent. This implies that the PhD programs appear to be the exclusive domain of males. For AAU, female students’ PhD enrolment was about 11 percent in 2002/3 but immediately disappeared in the next year, of course, to rise to nearly 6 percent in 2004/5. Actually, the gender gap in this program did not show sign of significant decline as it remained absolute male domain (100 percent in 2002-2003 and 98 percent in 2006-2007).
Figure 3: Percentage of Female Students Enrolment in PhD Programs by Year and University

![Graph showing percentage of female students enrolment in PhD programs by year and university.]

Figure 4: Percentage of Female Students in the Regular Undergraduate Enrolment by Year (Ethiopian Calendar) in Jimma University

![Graph showing percentage of female students in the regular undergraduate enrolment by year in Jimma University.]

Figure 4 shows that female students’ enrolment in the regular undergraduate program at Jimma University has been slightly increasing from 20 percent in 2000 E.C. to 31 percent in 2004 E.C. But these figures still demonstrate that the gender imbalance in favor of males is about 70 percent implying the fact the wide gender gap is more likely unwilling to offer hope of pragmatic resolution.
Figure 5 shows that in masters and PhD programs enrolment of the last two consecutive years (2004/2011 and 2005/2012), the latter being just started, the share of female students was below 10 percent in average.

Overall, female students’ enrolment in the regular undergraduate degree studies of the universities under study went on increasing since the last few years mainly because of the affirmative action strategy given on the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Certificate Examination (EHEECE) at grade 12 for females by the Ministry of Education (MOE). However, there was still considerable gender gap in favor of male students. Gender gap in enrolment against females at the postgraduate levels is quite worse especially at PhD level.

**Gender Disparity in Academic Dismissal**

As compared to males, an appreciably less number of female students were being enrolled in regular undergraduate degree programs of the universities under study, which Figures 1 & 4 confirm. Quite amazing, however, a relatively larger number of them were being forced to leave their university education because of academic dismissal (Figure 6). Thus the numerical fact of gender disparity in this case is not in favor of males but female students though it is a catastrophic problem against their opportunity to survive their study in the universities.

Figure 6: Percentage of Female Students’ Academic Dismissal from Regular Undergraduate Programs by Year and University (Registrar Offices of AAU and HU, December 2006)
Figure 6 indicates, a relatively larger number (53% of the total 833) of female students were academically dismissed from AAU within two academic years (2004-2005 to 2005-2006 G.C). But the case of HU was different in that the share of academically dismissed students in these years was above 60 percent. In sum, it is only in academic dismissals that female students averagely outnumber their male counterparts in university academics. Thus, the gender disparity in this case is problematic not for males’ numerical superiority but for less number of females get enrolled and greater number of them get dismissed as compared to their male counterparts.

Generally, the gender direction of considerable academic dismissals from the two universities was reversed for the last few years. That is, female students began to embrace the greater percentage, unlike the situation before the last few years when males outnumber females in academic dismissals. This was especially because of the affirmative action strategy which favors female students to join almost gender blind universities even with free promotion. Besides their deprived academic base and their evolution from gender insecure socialization, female students are often victims of sexual harassment in universities by male community members of universities. The cumulative effect of these factors is highly responsible for the larger number of female students’ academic dismissal from university education. In sum, the reasons for gender disparity against females in university education in general and in academic dismissal in particular can be complex, but are often due to a range of socio-cultural, economic and political factors.

**Gender Disparity in Academic Performance**

It should be noted that the parameter utilized in this study to describe the academic performance of male/female students was their CGPA within the range of honorable achievements at the moment of graduation (a CGPA of 3.25 and above for Bachelor Degree and 3.75 and above for Masters and PhD Degrees).

![Figure 7: Academic Performance of Regular Undergraduate (3.25 at graduation) and Masters (3.75 at graduation) Degree Students by University, 2006 (Registrar Offices of AAU and HU, April 2007)](image-url)
Figure 7 shows that the number of female students found in the honorable academic achievements during the moment of graduation at AAU and HU in 2006 G.C. were very insignificant. This is, of course, not to mean that they were not entirely good in their academic work. It means that the honorable lists seem to be the reserved “right” of male students.

Only a diminutive proportion of female students, about 10 percent in average from both universities’ regular undergraduate degree students, were within the range of distinction and above. The gender gap in honorable graduates for the Bachelor degree was 86 percent and it was 90 percent in the Masters degree. With regard to the PhD graduates, these universities have got only male honorable graduates for this year so that it was not just gender disparity which was found but an exclusive privilege of males in this respect. Note that several attempts were made to obtain data for academic dismissal and achievement from Jimma University but of no avail.

Dealing about the reasons why female students perform less than that of males and why they outnumber their male counterparts in academic dismissal pertaining to university education is almost similar to talking about two sides of the same coin. In the undergraduate degree studies they were competing with their male counterparts in university education with relatively poor academic base which has a detrimental impact on their academic performance and/or academic dismissal. It is perhaps logical and persuasive that as the level of their academic performance decreases the level of their academic dismissal increases and vice versa, which in turn would have strong implication on the representation of female students in the postgraduate studies.

**Gender Disparity in Graduation**

Figure 8 shows that the percentage of female student graduates from the regular undergraduate, masters and PhD programs of AAU in 2006 was 16 percent, 10 percent and none respectively. The scenario in these programs at HU in the same year for female students was 12 percent each in undergraduate and masters programs and not any in the PhD studies.

![Figure 8: Regular Undergraduate, Masters and PhD Graduates by University, 2006 (AAU's Registrar Office, December 2006)](BD=Bachelor Degree, MD=Masters Degree)
As Figure 9 clearly depicts, the percentage of female graduates from Jimma University within the last five years has remained below 20, with slight rise and fall in some years.

![Graph showing percentage of female (F) and male (M) graduates from Jimma University by year from 2006 to 2011.]

**Figure 10:** Masters Graduates from Jimma University by Year and Gender (JU registrar office, 2012)

Described above are the quantitative indicators of gender disparity in enrolment, academic dismissal, academic performance and graduation of the regular degree students of AAU, HU and JU. It can be discerned that the quantitative reality of gender disparity in these four forms (enrolment, dismissal, performance and graduation) entirely behaves against female students in the universities under study. This is not mainly due to the lack in policy in favor of females' education as there is affirmative action policy implemented for females’ opportunity to join university education over the last two decades. It is because of culture in the most generalized term. In most parts of Ethiopian society the ways of life (in which patriarchy, differential gender socialization and marriage etc) highly impede females’ equal public activities (example, education in general and higher education in particular) with males. At the level of postgraduate studies it is marriage and the resultant family responsibilities that obscure females’ equal representation with males. Based on the qualitative data obtained during my fieldwork (see the next section), I can say that after getting graduated from their undergraduate studies most females prefer marriage to their opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies. Once getting married, however, their probability to pursue postgraduate studies could be very less partially because their husbands show unwillingness to encourage them for postgraduate studies. In sum, as Alemu (2003) found, gender disparity in university education is the cumulative effect of socio-cultural constraints (such as marriage, religion, patriarchy, differential gender socialization) against females’ opportunity to equally involve in different education levels with males.

**Sources of Gender Disparity in Higher Education in Ethiopia**

In-depth interview results show the prevalence of many factors behind the unequal engagement of females with males in higher education in Ethiopia. According to both focus group and individual interviews with instructors, students and university authorities the factors can be categorized into four major domains: vitiated family behavior, gender-specific problems of female students, sexual harassment and affirmative action.

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Proceedings of the National Symposium on "Establishing, Enhancing & Sustaining Quality Practices in Education"
1) Vitiated Household Behavior
Obviously, the family politics in Ethiopia has always been male dominated with male children cherishing household behaviour. This has resulted in many undesirable upshots against female members of the society, particularly producing deprived academic base for female students.

2) Gender-Specific Problems
As member of university population, female students also suffer from gender-specific problems. Focus group discussion with female students of the universities under study exposes the fact that the image of female students in academic excellence quite deteriorated. Even instructors were unwilling to recognize self-contained honorable academic performance of their female students. One top ranking female student, for example, narrates this: "መምህራኖችና ከስርና ከይወቱ ከአሬና ከአይነት ያስገልግሎት ያለች" (instructors and some students call me, ‘she performs like a male). The message is that males’ gender in our society is often associated with a dominating power while that of females’ is traditionally recognized in all subordinate spheres of life not only in academic issues. Another female student narrates, "Instructors indictment our excellent work as if we were copying our performance from axerera". Axerera is one of the many university campus based emerging terminologies denoting short note or a piece of paper which students use as a folder of the gist points of their lecture and other relevant notes. From male students, one student validates the above assertion by stating "Dubartiin dheertuu malee beektuu hinggaabdu" (there is no knowledgeable female but tall). Close to the gate of female students’ dormitory on all of the campuses of the universities under study there is a special social space named "በግተራ" (to mean female sphere, though the literal meaning of the former term is sheep and thus sheep sphere). At this space, females and males hotly interact with sexual mood. It serves as a suitable scene for making conversations centered in the order of sexual advances slowly leading to ultimate disparaging situations for female students. One of the terrible cases was observed at Haramaya University where on an average seven female students per year give birth to babies from hasty sexual gambling while in their university education. The problem exacerbates when they imagine the social exclusion to prompt post-labor dates and insecure university accommodation for such incidents. The remedy they opt for this kind of occurrence has always been either undergoing abortion or murder of their infant. In few cases the victims of undesirable pregnancy on the campus were reportedly interrupt their education only to hide themselves in nearby hotels and restaurants. They never feel to return to their parents as the social stigma would have been so much.

3) Sexual Harassment
Triggering factors for this category of impediment involve pornography, sexually oriented emotions and expressions, natural beauty and academic talent of female students, fashionable dress styles and need for cosmetics. During the interviews, female students echoed that five clearly identified factors usually result in sexual harassment of female students in universities: peer-pressure, threatened downgrading of marks, apprehension of dismissal as a result of the refusal of sexual advances, creation of an intimidating environment for female students, female students’ physical and mental beauty. The latter means outstanding academic performance.
4) Affirmative Action (AA)

The affirmative action in use for female students in Ethiopia is more likely a brilliant policy measure executed to reverse the longstanding absence of females from the world of education in Ethiopia. Evidently, during the imperial era the share of females in education was zero even at primary and secondary levels, and it remained below 10 percent and 14 percent during the period of Emperor Haile Sillasie and Derg respectively (Alemu 2001). But the measure had been vitiated at the base and apex. During male students’ focus group discussion one strongly argued, “The affirmative policy measure has no leg and head”. This is to mean that female student were not being benefited from this policy package at pre-high school and post-high school levels of education. The government provides differential mark for females and males to pass from grade 10 to 11 and then from 12 to join university education. No more differential treatment before these levels and afterwards.

Conclusion

Although the current trend demonstrates increasingly growing percentage of female students' participation in university education in Ethiopia, they have still lopsided representation in relation to their male counterparts. The disparity against female students reveals its ugliest face in the graduate programs, especially not the PhD programs.

Gender gap in enrolment has been understood as greater than 50 percent in Bachelor degree, greater than 80 percent in the Masters degree, and greater than 90 percent in PhD degree. It is only in academic dismissal that female students outnumber their male counterparts. This has negative implication on the number of female students who want to pursue postgraduate studies. Indeed, female students' lower academic performance has a detrimental implication on their opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies as this level of studies admits relatively few students on strong competitive basis. Keeping the story of temperature and altitude, the number of female graduates decreases as the level of education increases.

The present study indicated four major factors: vitiated family behaviour which has been depriving the academic base of female students, gender-specific problems wherein female students feel discomfort in their academic life, sexual harassment which paves the way for their academic dismissal, and affirmative action which is vitiated to fully serve its desirable intervention measure.

Suggestions

Strategies which let both males and females fairly engage in the cumbersome domestic chores need to be designed, anti-sexual harassment policy should be adopted and strictly implemented in the universities under study and the current affirmative action policy need to be reconsidered to be implemented appropriately just with genuine commitment. As the most impinging hurdle against female students' equal participation, retention and performance in university academics with their male counterparts more likely lies in the early educational foundation stage in the family institution, appropriate intervention strategy need to be devised and executed. The existing autonomous gender affairs ministry could be further enhanced and expanded to the very grassroots level the way the institutions of agriculture and health have been doing over years in the country. That is, the gender affairs ministry should not act merely rhetorically. It should develop mechanisms such as having a package for gender extension workers like health and agricultural extension workers to revisit the family domain...
in rural areas of Ethiopia. If appropriate mechanisms will not be employed and the current
gender disparity in education remain unresolved, the problem will not only result in sustaining
gender imbalance in education but will sustain impoverished domestic development which in
turn hamper the national impoverishments since the component individual households
together make up the whole national scenario.

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INTRODUCTION

Education quality influences what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. Whether a particular education system is of high or low quality can be judged in terms of input, output and process. However, much discussion of educational quality is centered on only system inputs in terms of the provision of teachers, teaching materials and other facilities, and on output in terms of students’ achievement (Derebssa, 2006). According to Dejene and Schippers (2007), improving the quality of education through improving the teaching-learning process is assumed to be cost-effective than through improving system input which is more difficult for countries like Ethiopia. Realizing this fact, parallel with the rapid expansion of the education system, the government called for improving quality of education by employing interactive teaching and learning process.

According to Barrow and Leu (2006), process quality factors relate to teachers and students activities and interactions in the classroom. This implies that for the teaching learning process to be of higher quality, students and teachers should actively take part in the process actively. A teaching strategy is not just about the activities of teachers, although that will be one component. It is actually a plan for someone else’s learning, and it embodies the presentations which the teacher might make, the exercises and activities designed for students, materials which will be supplied or suggested for students to work with, and ways in which evidence of their understanding and ability will be collected. A teaching strategy means all of the activities and resources that a teacher plans in order to enable students to learn (Derebssa, 2006).

According to Heritage (2010) assessment has two essential purposes: to provide information on students’ current levels of achievement and to inform what teachers should do in classrooms to ensure that students make progress toward desired outcomes. In recent years the first purpose has been paid attention, especially in accountability contexts, where measuring student achievement in relation to standards has been of primary importance. Despite its centrality to effective practice in the classroom, the second purpose has attracted rather less attention. The default assumption has apparently been that teachers will determine what needs to be done next to move learning forward, using the assessment information about students’ present achievement levels. This is an assumption that has inherent problems.

A student-centered approach, which actively engages the learner in the learning process, is critical if skills which result in healthy behaviors are to be promoted and developed. Consideration should be given to enable students to plan some learning experiences. Barrow and Liu (2006) had found out that teachers explained quality education in terms of student
participation and asking questions to build their self-confidence. They also referred to the importance of employing various teaching strategies and materials to motivate students as well as continuously assessing student performance.

Problem Statement
In an effort to enhance the education quality, closely monitoring the instructors’ performance so as to provide needed feedback is critical. This is because, instructors are the key actors in betterment of educational quality in any context. Besides, assessment of the academic performance of male and female students is very important to selectively respond to mitigate the problem based on the result. If not, poses difficulty to address the performance gap between male and female students. Moreover, it is less likely to understand what is really going on, related to performance of instructors in teaching/learning process. Other than for the purpose of promoting or granting scholarship for instructors or for other purpose, no formal study was made to assess the instructors’ performance in teaching-learning process in our University so far. The academic performance from gender perspective is also not examined.

Thus, this study is designed to investigate performance of instructors’ teaching-learning process linked with the students’ academic performance focusing on gender aspect. The result of the study is helpful because in future, it may be used as baseline information to analyze the improvement or deterioration in the teaching learning process and academic performance of students. Hence, the study bridges the currently existing gaps.

Objectives
The general objective of this work is to determine whether there is difference in academic performance of male and female students and whether there is response difference of male and female students’ evaluation of teachers’ teaching learning and assessment performance.

Specific Objectives
a) To investigate the academic performance difference of male and female students
b) To examine the teaching, learning and assessment performance of instructors
c) To explore the response difference of male and female students about the performance of instructors regarding teaching and learning.
d) To investigate the instructors’ performance in teaching learning process in relation to students’ academic performance.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1
\[ H_0: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does not vary significantly} \]
\[ H_a: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does vary significantly} \]

Hypothesis 2
\[ H_0: \text{There is no significant difference in mean response between male and female students} \]
\[ H_a: \text{There is significant difference in mean response between male and female student.} \]

Hypothesis 3
\[ H_0: \text{There is no significant difference in mean response between second year and third year students.} \]
\[ H_a: \text{There is significant difference in mean response between second year and third year Students.} \]
Methods
Sampling Design
The units of analysis were students and instructors of Ambo University, College of Business and Economics. There were total of 405 second and third year students at the end of the first semester of 2011-2012 academic year in the regular program at the college attending in five programs out of which 61 students or about 15% were selected randomly to assess the teaching learning performance of students. The ratio of male to female in the entire population was 3:1 and first year students were not considered as subjects of study as they were admitted lately, in the second semester. There were also about 45 instructors in the college out of which about 50% were selected randomly to be assessed by students.

The students and instructors lists were obtained and sample respondents were taken from all sections and departments and both gender (male and female) to minimize sampling bias. Moreover, all second and third year students’ academic performance was taken and processed.

Data Collection Methods
To successfully carry out the study secondary and primary data were obtained. Particularly, secondary data (the most recent students’ cumulative grade points average of the entire program and all the students) were obtained.

Primary data were obtained using questionnaire to get the opinion of students regarding teaching, learning and assessment performance of instructors of the entire courses. To quantify the response of students about the instructors performance, five points likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) was used.

The experts and experienced persons have commented on the exhaustiveness of parameters selected for assessment of instructors' performance in teaching learning process and based on the comment, the revised questionnaire was distributed to the students. Pilot test had been conducted to assess whether the question items were clear and understandable to the respondents.

Data Processing and Analysis
The design of the research is case study that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In order to test the significance of the academic performance difference between male and female students, Chi-square is used by categorizing the academic performance proxy (CGPA) as High (CGPA>=2.75), Medium (CGPA>2.00 but less than 2.75) and Low (CGPA<2.00) and the number (frequency) of students in each performance range is considered. In order to test whether there is significant difference in mean response between male and female respondents (students) the t-test was used.

The response of the students was labeled using likert scale: ‘strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree’. To obtain the response of students, positive statements were developed and the value of the labels range from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree. Therefore the possible highest value for a response was 5 and the lowest value for a response was 1.
Results and Discussion
This section presents the academic performance of male and female students comparatively. Following it, the chi square table is constructed to test whether there is significant difference in academic performance between male and female student. The analysis was undertaken and displayed by using bar chart as a tool.

Comparative Analysis of Academic Performance of male and Female Students
Students’ academic record shows that about 45% of total male population scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 while only 22% of total female students scored the CGPA specified. The proportion of male students who scored CGPA of more than 2.75, which is (45%) is more than the proportion of total students scoring the same which is (39%). But the proportion of female students scoring CGPA more than 2.75 , which is 22% is much less than the proportion of total students scoring the same(39%). On the other hand, about 9% of male students were academically warned or dismissed compared to 23% of their female counterpart. This clearly indicates that female students perform lower than their male counterpart. This is clearly displayed in the figure below.

![Figure 1: Academic performance of male and female students comparatively.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Range</th>
<th>Count of Second Year Students</th>
<th>Count of Third Year Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&gt;=2.75</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=&lt;CGPA&lt;2.75</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&lt;2.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>305</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>405</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows students’ academic performance categorized in range between male and females, i.e academic performance is categorized as high (CGPA=2.75), medium performance (CGPA between 2.00 and 2.75) and low CGPA less than 2.00.
The question of whether the academic performance difference is statistically significant is tested below:

**Hypothesis 1.**

\[ H_0: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does not vary significantly} \]

\[ H_a: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does vary significantly} \]

The observed frequency, expected frequency and computation of the chi square value related to academic performance of students from the gender perspective are as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Frequency(O)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (E)</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)²</th>
<th>(O-E)²/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calculated Chi square value**

24.471

At 95% confidence, the degree of freedom is computed as follows: (2-1)*(3-1)= 2. Therefore, the chi square value at 5% critical value and 2 degree of freedom, as read from chi square distribution table is 5.99 while the calculated chi square value is 24.47 as shown above. This implies that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the academic performance difference between male and female students is significant, that means the male students perform more than their female counterparts.

**Comparative analysis of academic performance by batch**

The figure below shows that about 45% of total second year students scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 while only 33% of total third year students scored the CGPA specified. This specifically shows that second year students have performed better as compared to the third year students. From the chart given below, one can easily understand that the percentage of second year students who scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 is more than the percentage of all students scoring the same. On the other hand, about 12% of second year students were academically warned or dismissed compared to 13% of the third year students who are academically warned or dismissed. This clearly indicates that almost equal proportion of students of second and third year are academically warned or dismissed in the first semester of 2011/12 academic year.

To precisely test the academic performance difference between second and third year students, chi-square test is used (Table 3).
Test of performance difference between second and third year students

Table 3: Academic performance range of second and third year students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Range</th>
<th>Count of Second Year Students</th>
<th>Count of Third Year Students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPA &gt;= 2.75</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 &lt;= CGPA &lt; 2.75</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA &lt; 2.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>212</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
<td><strong>405</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Academic performance of second and third year students does not vary significantly
H₁: Academic performance of second and third year students does vary significantly

Table 4: Observed and expected frequencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Frequency (O)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (E)</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2</th>
<th>(O-E)^2/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>212</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.18</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At 95% confidence, the degree of freedom is computed as follows: (2-1)*(3-1) = 2. Therefore, the chi square value at 5% critical value and 2 degree of freedom, as read from chi square distribution table is 5.99 while the calculated chi square value is 6.18 as shown above. This implies that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the academic performance difference between second and third year students is significant, that means the second year students performed better than their third year counterparts.
Assessment Result of Instructors’ Performance

a) Response of male and female students on instructors’ performance

In the figure below the mean response of male and female students on teaching learning for parameters mentioned from number 1 to 20, which are proxies of instructors’ performance in teaching learning process whose maximum value is 5 and minimum value is 1. The grand mean performance of instructors is 88.5%. This shows that the teaching learning performance of instructors from the students’ rating perspective is very good. Whether the mean response difference of male and female is statistically significant is tested. For this purpose, independent sample t-test was used and shown as follows.

![Graph showing response of male and female students](image)

**Figure 3:** Mean response of male and female students.

**Hypothesis 3.**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in mean response between male and female students

H<sub>a</sub>: There is significant difference in mean response between male and female student.

The hypothesis is tested using the t-test and the output is displayed as follows in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.437338E0</td>
<td>.1558213</td>
<td>.0348427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.417533E0</td>
<td>.1534541</td>
<td>.0343134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.947</td>
<td>0.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>37.99</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Levene’s test for equal variances yields a p-value of 0.947. This means that the mean response difference is statistically insignificant and the statistics in the first row should be used because, the responses are assumed to have equal variances. The p-value (sig 2-tailed is 0.688) is greater than 0.05, indicates that there is insignificant different between average assessment result of female and male students. This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted implying that the response is independent of gender. This mean there is no statistically significant difference between mean responses of male and female students about the instructors.

b) Response of second and third year students on instructors’ performance

The summary of second and third year student’s mean response about their instructors is shown below.

Hypothesis

\( H_0: \) There is no significant difference in assessment result between second year and third year students

\( H_1: \) There is significant difference in assessment result between second year and third year students

Average response of second year students on instructors’ academic performance is 82.8% and the response of the third year students of the same is 91.8%. This shows that third year students’ mean response on instructors’ performance is higher than the mean response of second year students.

The figure given below shows the mean response distribution of male and female students for parameters mentioned from number 1 to 20, which are proxies of instructors’ performance in teaching learning process whose maximum value is 5 and minimum value is 1. The response of second year students is consistently less than the mean response of third year students except for proxy number 17.

Whether there is statistically significant difference between mean response of second and third year students’ response, t-test is used as follows:

![Figure 4: Mean response of male and female students.](image-url)
### Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.14256</td>
<td>0.254519</td>
<td>0.056912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.59209</td>
<td>0.109016</td>
<td>0.024377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances Assumed</td>
<td>4.839</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-7.261</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.449534</td>
<td>.061913</td>
<td>-.5748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances Not Assumed</td>
<td>-7.261</td>
<td>25.744</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.449534</td>
<td>.061913</td>
<td>-.5768</td>
<td>-.3222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Levene's test of equal variance has p-value of 0.034, less than 0.05 implying that equal variances is not assumed. Therefore, the second row is considered for interpretation. The p-value (sig 2-tailed is 0.000) is less than 0.05, indicates that there is significant different between average assessment result of second year and third year students.

This shows that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the response is not independent of class year. This mean there is statistically significant difference between mean responses of 2nd and 3rd year students about the instructors. Particularly, the average response of 2nd year students is 4.14, which is lower than the average response of 3rd year students, which is 4.59.

**Conclusions**

- The academic performance of male and female students show that male students have performed better than female students and this difference is tested to be statistically significant.
- When academic performance of second year students are compared with the third year students, second year students have performed better as compared with their third year counterparts. This is a good signal for future improvement. Again the difference is tested and found to be slightly significant.
- The teaching-learning performance of instructors in the college was found to be very good. The mean response difference of male and female students is statistically not significant and hence we can say that the academic performance of instructors is rated to be consistently high for male and female students.
- The overall academic performance of students was relatively poor; particularly out of 100 students about 12 students are academically warned or dismissed. Only 39% of students scored the high category academic performance (CGPA greater or equal to 2.75) and majority of students, i.e nearly 50% of them scored moderate academic performance. When we see the teaching learning performance of instructors, it is quite mismatch as instructors performance rated to be very good.
The relatively poor performance of students is not attributable to performance of instructors in teaching learning process.

**Recommendations**

- The fact that academic performance of female students is relatively poor necessitates that there should be special support program for female students to capacitate and enable them to improve their academic performance. This could be in the form of critically evaluating and identifying courses for special tutorial program; providing academic and non academic counselling and mentorship as needed; arranging workshop & panel discussion to create awareness as to how to properly use time, study methods & the likes; establishing the system of cooperative learning & peer support.
- For the relatively poor overall academic performance of students, there should be institutional determination to implement the new methods of learning-teaching and assessment. Moreover providing timely feedback to assist them learn more. Besides, it is advisable to fulfil the basic facilities and services of education.
- The teaching learning and assessment performance of instructors is very encouraging and poor academic performance of students is not attributable to teaching learning performance of instructors. Hence the performance of instructors needs to be kept up and worked for better performance.
- Students have specifically commented that in implementing the continuous assessment approach, sometimes overstretching students is becoming visible and not notifying the exam schedule ahead of time is becoming apparent. Hence instructors should try to implement it optimally.

**Acknowledgement**

I am highly indebted to the some of the staff of College of Business and Economics, who commented on the drafts of this study and provided me with very constructive suggestion for improvement. Moreover, I would like to thank the students who devoted their time and energy in filling the questionnaires item by item.

**References**


Effect of Prompt Letter-Naming Accuracy on Early Childhood Learning to Read Amharic

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Introduction

Theories of reading development vary depending on the specific focus area and the heterogeneous nature of reading components. Among these, theories on reading fluency emerged with most giving credit to La Berge and Samuels (1974) as being the first researchers to discuss a theoretical basis for reading fluency and automaticity. Wolf and Katzir-Cohen (2001) infer that La Berge and Samuels (1974) derived the model of automaticity theory from information processing mode. This theory emphasizes the ease and rate of processing reading to play a critical role improving automaticity and fluency. Insufficient reading fluency demands higher level of attention and cognitive resource for decoding and hinders progress towards comprehending texts (La Berge and Samuels, 1974 as cited in Spencer, and Manis, 2010 and Samuels, 2006). Increased automaticity and instructional approach at the sub skill or letter identification level improves reading comprehension (Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, 2001).

The Model of Automaticity

The theoretical assumption of automaticity theory is that reading fluency occurs when reading sub-skills such as letter identification and word decoding accomplish quickly without delay, then high order reading (e.g., comprehension) can be achieved concurrently (Deeney, 2010; Samuels, 2006; Samuels and Flor, 1997, in Kuhn, 2010). Fluent reading involves four components: speed, effortlessness, autonomy and lack of conscious awareness (Lagan, 1997, Moors and De Houwer, 2006 in Kuhn, 2010). These four components of fluency were described further and speed is related to quick reading (Logan, 1988 in Kuhn, 2010) while effortless refers to reading at ease with speed; accuracy refers to the correctness while reading (Logan, 1997 in Kuhn, 2010).

The automaticity model indicates that “When one describes a skill at the macro level as being automatic, it follows that the sub skills at the micro level and their interrelations must also be automatic” (Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, 2001). The automaticity theory of reading by La Berge and Samuels (1974) consider word reading as a sub-skill or lower level reading and comprehension and automaticity are recognized as higher level of reading. In this study it is argued that letter-name automaticity can be found at sub-skill or micro level of reading for orthographically regular language where word reading fluency develops automatically.

The theoretical approach chosen for this study is the model of automaticity. The model of automaticity theory from La Berge and Samuels (1974) was adapted to the language nature of Amharic orthography. According to Samuels (2006), automaticity theory deals in reading fluency at basic reading level (word reading) where fluency is recognized as the ability to decode and comprehend concurrently.
This theory was chosen because it is possible to provide instructional approach that allows full engagement of children with accurate and quick reading practice designed to teach letter-name accuracy and automaticity. In Amharic language reading, word reading is a skill of connecting letter and associated names as fast as possible since the association between letter and name is explicit.

In the orthographically consistent language (Amharic), fluency at word reading is the collection of automaticity at letter naming. Alphabet learning and letter identification seems a school tradition in most schools around the world however, prompt letter identification is rarely recognized as basic for automaticity at word level. Hence, this research design includes prompt and accurate letter-name decoding which result in automaticity at word level which in turn contributes to word reading fluency and comprehension.

Explicit and Prompt Phonic Decoding (EPPD) instructional approach in this study refers to the ability to connect and identify individual/ explicit letter-name association with accurate and fastest rate possible. The more children learn to promptly read letters, the better chance to increase their word reading fluency in consistent written form of language. However, the theory of automaticity considers fluency as the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time (Samuels, 2006). This indicates that students could only be considered fluent at word level where both decoding and comprehension can be practiced. It is argued in this study that in orthographically transparent language reading, the essence of fluency begins at quick letter name association since word reading is the direct, rapid and consistent result of a group of letters. Automaticity theory claims word decoding as a sub-skill where comprehension as a higher level reading. However, in this research, automatic letter-name association is considered as a lower level skill which enhances word reading fluency where meaning can be exercised and plays a vital role in upgrading the reader to the higher order reading skill (such as comprehension).

The advantage of an orthographically consistent language for the readers is that at initial reading practice level there is an ease to form correspondence between letters and sounds. Particularly, when letter-name correspondence is one-to- one breaking the code could be mastered easily. Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp and Jenkins, (2001) support the initial step of letter-name automaticity that reader able to bring names together in to whole word automatically. It is advantageous for slow readers that once children are able to decode a one-to-one relationship between letter and name decoding concurrently with speeding up letter naming from print, word reading simply becomes a matter of enhancing rate on calling of individual letters in the words. This instructional approach is found essential for beginner Amharic readers and teacher need to realize the crucial role of letter-name calling rate and accuracy to enhance word reading fluency that lead to comprehension on later reading level.

Studies assert that knowledge of letter-naming is one of the strongest predictors of success in learning to read (Share, 2004).Letter-naming has a significant impact on continuing letter-sound identification that eases word reading (Cardoso-Martins, Resende, and Rodrigues, 2002). Research emphasize that letter-naming fluency is the initial step on associating meaning to print. Beck and Juel (2002) called this initial skill acquisition as coding. Effective coding skill leads the reader to word recognition. However, with some quick readers, the coding skill quickly shifts to word recognition without exposure to planned instruction for the development of word decoding skill (Beck and Juel, 2002).The finding from Beck and Juel
point out that once letter decoding is established, some fast readers may not necessarily need time to explicitly practice word decoding. Struggling beginner readers, however, may have challenge to easily decode words without explicit instruction (Bowling, 2011).

Letter-naming is one of the reading characteristics expected to develop in reading skill acquisition and it is the understanding that beginner readers realize the relationship between printed letter or grapheme and associated name morphemes. In orthographically deep languages, the role of letter naming might shift to letter-sound identification where phonics awareness may take the leading role towards word decoding. Much research claim the valuable input of phonics instruction in accelerating reading skills (Gats, 1999; Ballard and Jacocks, 2001; Williams, 2009).

Hence, the predictors of reading skill may rely on phonic and/ or word decoding in orthographically deep languages (Kuhn and Stahl, 2000; Torgeson, Rashotte, and Alexander, 2001 in Torppa, Lyytinen, Puolakanaho, et al., 2008). In orthographically consistent languages such as Amharic, letter-naming accuracy and automaticity seems the best predictor of the overall reading achievement because letter-name association in has a one-to-one correspondence and consistent. Still, even though potentially easier, reading instruction within orthographically consistent languages needs to involve suitable approach and effective steps for assisting struggling readers. Because, according to Ethiopian early grade reading assessment, EEGRA (2010), significant number of Amharic reader children found to read below their grade level.

Amharic language reading instruction does not require a significant amount of instructional time on word decoding. Tadesse and Takara (2009) seems to give less emphasis on phonological awareness because it may not be a priority and a crucial component in learning to read Amharic. Phonological awareness is necessary for autographically deep language since letter-sound association appear varying from word to word and in consistent. In Amharic language orthography for example letter-name association is explicit and the name of the letters are never ignored or changed when reading and they only represent a single name no matter where they appear in words. This orthographic nature of Amharic language is assumed to ease reading; however, significant number of beginner readers still often having challenges learning to read (EEGRA, 2010). Research claim that explicit decoding instruction on letter-name correspondence improves word reading skills (Oudeans, 2003) particularly within orthographically consistent language; an explicit approach at letter-name identification seems to enhance ease in word reading.

Explicit Instruction
The Nature of Amharic Language

Amharic is the official language of EFDRE and has shallow phoneme-grapheme correspondence where orthographic characters appear as they are spoken (Tadesse and Takara, 2009). Amharic has a large number of speakers second to the Arabic language from Sub-Saharan languages (Hayward and Richard 1999; in Solomon and Menza, 2007). The language has 33 consonants and 7 vowels, which appear with 231 letters with consonant-vowel combination of almost a one-to-one correspondence between the spoken sound and printed graphemes and letter name (Tadesse and Takara, 2009).

Related to the orthographic nature of Amharic, the basic letter is modified in different ways to indicate various consonant-vowel relationships. The written form of Amharic language has seven modified / letters which is derived from the symbol of the consonant of each letter family, with the 6th symbol of the consonant and the rest (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th) are the symbol of the consonant-vowel combinations (Tadesse and However, with all the advantage of orthographic simplicity in Amharic language, the rate of reading for most children is found to be slow with the majority of students reading at below reading benchmarks for reading fluency and for their grade level (MoE, 2008) and appear to read words letter-by-letter even in third grade (EEGRA, 2010). As a result, repetition and drop out at primary school level become evident and reading problem is a likely cause. Due to lack of research and evidence-based instructional method that can potentially reduce the exhaustive effort involved in learning to read, children have been at schools in Ethiopia. Therefore, the purpose of this experimental study is to find out instructional gap that affect success in Amharic reading and examine the effect of explicit and prompt instruction on letter naming, word reading and non-word reading fluency.

This study addressed research questions stated below:
1. What achievement exhibited on letter naming fluency among students who took explicit and prompt letter-naming instruction?
2. Is there a difference in word reading fluency among the intervention and control group?
3. Will explicit instruction contribute to non-word reading fluency?

Method

Participants

Grade one students were selected as a population of this study from one government primary school. The number of students who participated in the pre-test per-class was: class A (n=43), class B (n=47), and class C (n=42). Gender breakdown was as follows: female students (n=88) and male students (n=44). The age distribution within grade one was as follows: age 7 (n=60), age 8 (n=43), age 9 (n=11) age 10-12 (n=18) and the mean age for all children in grade one was 7.99 years. Prior to participant selection, all students were pretested to ascertain their rate of letter reading per-minute (LRPm). Across all students (n=132), the mean pre-test score was 35.03 LRPm with a maximum of 105 and a minimum of 0 LRPm and standard deviation of 26.

The socio economic background similarity of the students from both groups was analyzed using Levene’s Test and the difference between the intervention and control group was not significant. The father’s education level T- value = -54 and P- value = .59. The mother’s education level T-value = -1.50 and P –value = .143. On the father’s working situation, T-
value = -69 and \(P\) – value = .495 and the mothers working condition found to be \(T\)- value = -1.45 and \(P\)- value = .155. The family income was also analyzed and the result indicate that \(T\)- value = -2.03 and \(P\) – value = .51. In relation to the existence of study assistance at home for the selected students, both groups are facing close similar experience, the \(T\)- value = 1.2 and \(P\) – value = .239. The overall comparisons on six basic family features indicate that there is no significant difference between the two groups. Before assigning in to two groups, students were categorized in to four reading level based on their LRPm score (0-10, 11-20, 21-30 and 31-40) to protect the homogeneity on reading level between the two groups. Using a stratified (reading groups) random assignment procedure, students were assigned to the intervention and control group using lottery method.

**Design and Procedure**

To investigate the effect of explicit and prompt letter naming instructions on letter, word and non-word reading fluency, pre-test post-test control group design was employed and had stratified random and simple random assignment of students to conditions. 67 students who read below the mean for grade one letter reading were identified and placed in one of the four groups based on their LRPm score (0-10, 11-20, 21-30 and 31-40). Based on stratified random sampling and then lottery method, students were assigned to the intervention and control groups. The intervention group (n=33) and the control group (n=34) were the study participants. The general background of the intervention group on sex, age and class distribution was identified. Accordingly, the sex related distribution, female (n=20) and male (n=13) while age 7 (n=20), age 8 (n=12) and age 9 (n=1). The control group (n=34) with gender breakdown of 18 female and 16 male. Age of control group was as follows: age 7 (n=17), age 8 (n=13) and age 9 (n=4). Classroom break down within the control group was as follows: 13 from class A, 10 from class B and 11 from class C. The mean age for the intervention group was 7.58 while the mean age for control group was 7.4.

**Instrumentation**

There were two primary experiment dependent measures. First Amharic letter probes were developed for pre-test and post-testing by randomly selecting letters from grade one Amharic student textbook. These probes were used for both pre and post-test assessment. Secondly a word probe was developed from randomly selected words from grade one Amharic student textbook. The word probe was only implemented as a post-test measure. The intervention was administered during the school Amharic teaching program at similar time when control group and none -selected students attend the regular classroom instruction.

**Intervention**

Quick letter naming; audio recording to let students listen to a good model of speedy letters naming which was used at the initial three sessions of the intervention instruction, drumming table, faster stick movement to regulate the speed of letter naming, clapping hand and daily oral reminder to quickly call letters was the major intervention approach. In addition, to enhance letter decoding accuracy, each session of the lesson involved repeated letter calling. The intervention started on November 02/2011 and lasted to March 01/2012. It took place in 36 sessions of 45 minutes each and was conducted for two school days per- week.

Treatment and assessment integrity was checked using checklist to supervise the coverage of the lesson planned on letter-naming fluency instruction. All (100%) pretest students score sheet was kept for further reference. In addition, out of 36 sessions of the intervention
instruction, 10 days (27.8%) of the intervention instructions was video recorded. All the post-intervention assessment for both the intervention and control group was video recorded.

Data Collection and Analysis
Measure of LRPM was collected from the intervention and control group at pre-intervention and on post-intervention sessions. Post-test WRPM and NWRPM assessment was made from both groups. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability statistic for pretest measure, T test, Levene’s Test for Equality of Means, ANOVA and correlation statistical methods were used to determine the significance on mean difference between groups.

Results
This part contains general statistical feature of the pre-test data for the whole grade one students in the selected school. The mean letter reading per-minute for 132 students was 35.03 with a standard deviation of 25.26. The minimum score was zero while the maximum was 105 LRPM. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability statistic or per-test LRPM score was .98. Based on the criteria set for selection (age and letter reading score per-minute) students age 7-9 and LRPM scoreless than 40 LRPM were selected. During the assessment no student appeared with additional severe disability that affect reading development hence, exclusion was limited to the two points; age and reading score below the cutoff point. The score between 0-40 letters per-minute was taken as a cut-off point for two reasons; (1) the mean score of grade one (n=132) students was 35.03. (2) This study planned to include students who appeared to read approximately below the 55\textsuperscript{th} percentile for the school letter reading record. Sixty-seven students were selected to participate to the intervention or control group.

There were 67 grade one students who participated in the experiment and control group. 34 students were in the experiment group while 33 were in the control group excluding two students from the control group who dropped out from the school. Out of the total number of 132 students in the three classes of grade one, 25.76\% (n=34) participated in the experiment group and 25\% (n=33) participated in the control group hence, 50.76\% of the grade one students from the selected school participated in this study. The mean for pretest letter reading per minute of the intervention group was 18.73 and the standard deviation was 9.06.

The mean for letter reading per-minute of the control group was 19.18 and standard deviation 9.94 which was not significantly different between the two groups. It is also realized that the Standard deviation is high at pre-test level among 132 students and among the intervention and control group since there was much more difference between the higher LRPM score and the lower LRPM score. For any difference between the intervention and control group at pre-test measure, Levene’s Test for Equality of Means was used that indicate no significant difference exhibit at pre-test level and on this measure; T-value was -.049 and P-value = 0.961 and DF=64. As P-value is >.05 it has confirmed the homogeneousness of the two groups in letters reading at pretest level and proven that random assignment to intervention and control group worked properly.

The assessment scores from the assistant researcher and the researcher was checked for inter-assessor agreement on Pearson Correlation and it was found to be .999 for LRPM and .993 for WRPM. The average score from the two assessors was taken as a final score for each student.
To examine the first research question, the difference on letter naming accuracy and rate per-minute, the statistical difference on post-test score between students who attended the EPLN instruction of the intervention and the control group who attended the RCI in the regular program was examined. The result indicates that the mean difference on post-test score for letter read per-minute between the control and intervention group was significant. Descriptive statistic indicates that the post-test mean score on LRPm of the control group was 29.18 and standard deviation 18.46. The mean score on post-test LRPm of the intervention group was 58.20 and a standard deviation of 19.74. The standard deviation continue to be high at post-test score as well since the minimum LRPm score was 4 for the control group and 32 for the intervention group. Levene’s Test for Equality of mean was used to analyze for any difference on post-test measure from both groups. The measure for difference indicate that T-Value = 6.22, P-Value = 0.000 and DF = 64 and 95% confidence interval with the difference (lower 21.31 and upper 38.3) was found. In addition, ANOVA Analysis of Variance for post-test correct letter reading involving Adjusted SS for Test research question results using pre-test correct as covariate is high and also bigger than pre-test F.

More statistical analysis, ANCOVA was used using pre-test correct as covariate and the result was significant. The effect size difference (Cohen’s d) was 1.52 which is considered high effect since a large effect ES = above .80 (Cohen, 1988). Statistical difference on post-test word reading fluency was assumed as a gain from the EPLN instruction. Note that word reading instruction was not provided in the intervention design. However, the assumption was that EPLN instruction which targeted letter naming accuracy and automaticity expected to improve word reading fluency. One sample T test analysis indicates that a mean score in WRPm for control group is 10.42 and a mean score in WRPm for intervention group was 21.44. The standard deviation on WRPm for control and intervention group was 9.3 and 9.5 respectively.

In addition to the mean score on the difference for WRPm among the two groups, Levene’s Test for Equality of mean was used to analyze the mean score for WRPm. 95% confidence interval of the estimate difference between -15.18 and -7.53 was found. T value= 6.05, P-value= 0.000 and DF= 64. This score indicate that word reading performance was significantly higher for the intervention group as compared to the control group. Moreover, the effect size difference and results of Cohen’s was analyze and found to be 1.17 which is a significant difference in favor of the intervention group.

Non-word reading fluency was also assessed for both groups. The descriptive statistics indicate that the mean score on non-word reading per-minute (NWRPm) for the control group was 21 while the mean score on (NWRPm) of the intervention group was 35. The standard deviation on NWRPm for control and intervention group was 6.24 and 8.42 respectively.

Levene’s Test was used to analyze for any difference on post-test measure on NWRPm score for both groups. The measure for difference indicate that T-value = 5.87 and P-value = 0.000 and DF = 64. The statistical analysis confirms that there is a higher and significant difference on non-word reading fluency among the intervention group due to EPLN instruction.
Discussion

It is realized that the regular classroom instruction and the student text has little emphasis to underpin letter knowledge. The grade one Amharic text book begins with words developed from unfamiliar letters from the starting page. The letter name was not introduced to the children initially before learning to read words. It was recognized during the preliminary situational assessment of this study that children found trying their own technique to escape from calling the word with the unfamiliar letters and hence, students were tending to look for the associated picture presented with a particular word on their text book and guess on calling the word. As the picture was covered and ask the students to read the word associated to the picture most students were not able to read correctly. Even those who were able to read correctly, it was with slow pace and non-fluent. Realizing the trained in the regular instruction, EPLN instruction tried to reduce challenge associated letter knowledge and lack of reading fluency through automatic letter naming which was found successful and resulted in 1.52 effect size on the intervention group.

Letter reading accuracy and automaticity was assumed to exceed for intervention group on the post-test measure. The result indicated that there is a significant difference on letter reading accuracy and automaticity among students who participated in EPLN instruction and control group. The instructional design initially targeted to focus on explicit instruction that promote speed and accuracy on letter naming. The assumption is that Amharic language orthography has one–to–one letter-name correspondence and once students are able to identify the letter-name relationship with increasing speed on letter calling, it helps improve their word reading fluency. Literature on Amharic reading indicates that the orthographic nature of the language leads reader to identify words without reading assistance once the students get the knowledge of letters (Solomon & Menza, 2007; Tadesseand Takara, 2009).

However, the orthographic nature of a particular language may not solely guarantee reading success and instructional approach requires emphasis on accuracy and automaticity at letter level. Poor, inflexible, insufficient and ineffective reading instruction that may not consider benefiting from both the nature of orthography and crucial approach may lead to failure on reading (David, et al. 2002; Flax, et al. 2009; Flax, et al. 2008). Others also argue that the overall literacy environment needs to be considered to enhance reading success (Reis, Eckert, Mccoach, Jacobs, and Coyne, 2008; Hassett, 2008; Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, andFanuele, 2003, in Aaron, Joshi, Gooden, and Bentum, 2008). EPLN instruction instructional approach that focused at basic letter skill master became evidence on word reading improvement.

In Amharic reading, non-word reading also gets similar advantage since the best skill expected is mastering quick letter-naming knowledge hence, EPLN instruction was appropriate to check for its input on non-word reading fluency. Research also claims that non-word reading skill indicates letter-name knowledge (Kaminski and Good, 1996) and EPLN instruction in letter automaticity found to improve non-word reading fluency.

The measure for non-word is considered as a powerful predictor of early reading proficiency in alphabet knowledge (Fien, Baker, Smolkowski, Smith and Kame’enuiand Beck, 2008). The role of EPLN instruction in this study indicates that as students are able to accurately and quickly detect Amharic letters; this skill is a powerful resource that helps readers to easily
read words and non-words as compared to those who attended the regular classroom instruction.

**Conclusion**

Generally in this study the students selected for both the intervention and control group had statistically confirmed homogeneity on both letter reading skill and family background. During the course of the intervention with close discussion with grade one Amharic language teachers showed the difference between the two groups was the instructional approach to learn reading Amharic letters. To avoid diffusion of the intervention to the control group, control group was not identified by the teachers and classroom students as well as the control group students themselves and confounding variables were supervised. The post-test result for LRPm, WRPm and NWRPm was significantly different between the two groups and exceed for the intervention group which is the result of the EPLN instruction.

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Determinants of Student Attrition at College of Business and Economics, Mekelle University: Econometric Investigation

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Introduction

Higher education enrollment statistics in Ethiopia has been growing tremendously due to strong emphasis of the government on the sector. Moreover, the government has been striving to ensure that some disadvantaged members of the society (like females, individuals from particular ethnic groups in backward regions, disabled individuals, etc) get access to higher education institutions. Obviously, all these efforts are not without cost. Despite this, student attrition or dropout from universities is rising. Although there is no comprehensive study conducted in relation to the percentage of dropouts from Ethiopian universities, some studies (e.g. Abebayehu, 1998) revealed the dropout rate was between 10% and 15%, with the largest losses occurring in the first year of study largely because of difficulties in adjusting to campus life.

A variety of factors including poor preparation and commitment, mismatch area of interest and field of placement, poor social integration, and lack of appropriately developed instructional and assessment methods can be regarded as determinants of student achievement in Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and cause of student dropouts or persistence. Student related factors that can promote retention include proper preparation and motivation as well as commitment and diligence. The institutional factors point to inputs like information dissemination; designing an appropriate and relevant curriculum along with its suitable delivery methods; appropriate assessment techniques; and fruitful student support mechanisms. Although these factors are important (both student and institutional), it appears that the institution-related factors carry greater weight, not only in terms of directly influencing retention but also indirectly in enhancing the student-related factors (Elizabeth et al., 2004).

The host of factors that affect student enrollment persistence and degree completion have been investigated by several researchers (Pascarella, Terenzini, and Wolfe, 1986; Tinto, 1975). Some examined the impact of specific factors on retention, such as selected program major (Mau, 2003), admission status (Laden, Matranga, and Pelitier, 1999), student ethnicity and gender (Grandy, 1998; Leppel, 2002), classroom-based learning experiences (Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan, 2000; Tinto, 1975), institutional support services (Lau, 2003), academic and social integration (Beil, Reisen, and Zea, 1999), and pre-college academic preparation (Cambiano, Denny, and DeVore, 2000). Betts and Morrell (1999) found a significant effect of student background (gender, ethnicity, family income) on student CGPA. Besides, they found school resources also have significant effect on student performance though lower than the student personal background. Grunder and Hellmich (1996) indicated that students from families of higher income levels perform better in their academic assessment (CGPA) as compared to those who come from families of lower income brackets. Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) also found that there is significant gradient between each parent’s education level and their child’s educational attainment. A work by Martin and Walker (2006) found that students’ observable and unobservable characteristics seem to play a more important role in explaining student outcomes than university inputs (class size & teachers).
Looking into gender aggregated studies the research conducted at Addis Ababa University indicated that there is no significant difference in the survival rates of males and females (Tilahun, 2003). Similarly a study conducted at a medical school in Pakistan revealed that dropout rates among males and females did not significantly differ (Huda and Agha, 2004). However, other studies (e.g. Semela, 2007; Yeshimebrat et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2003) indicated that there is a very high rate of dropout for female students in most of the universities in Ethiopia.

Students who drop out of college education often face personal disappointment, financial constraint, lowering of career and life goals. All are detrimental to the society, hence student drop out can be considered as one of societal problem. Thus, this study examined the phenomenon of student attrition and academic performance at College of Business and Economics (CBE) in Mekelle University (MU) and the factors that affect student performance and dropout in different departments of the college.

Following Bair (1999) and Martin and Walker (2006) that considered multiple factors that affect student performance, namely; academic factors, demographic factors, individual (socio-economic and psychological) and human (habit and culture) factors, we investigated the factors behind student performance and attrition at CBE using a multiple regression model.

**Research Methodology**

**The Data**

CBE has five departments offering six undergraduate and five graduate programs in business, finance, economics, and development studies. In the 2010/11 academic year, there were about 4,000 students both undergraduate and postgraduate in the regular, evening, distance admissions. College has nearly 160 plus academic staff both on duty and on leave.

The data for the study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from students using a structured questionnaire distributed to high performing and low performing students\(^1\). High performing and low performing students were grouped based on an agreed cutoff-point. This is because, it is highly likely that students having CGPA of less than 2.49 may still be at risk of dropping out during the ensuring semesters, hence they should not be considered as high achievers. A total of 270 copies of questionnaire were distributed out of which 255 were filled in and collected. We gathered secondary data from students CGPA and attrition from Student Service Center\(^2\) of CBE and Departments’ data base\(^3\) in the College.

As one of the purposes of the research was to examine the factors that influenced students’ academic performance, it was mandatory to design a questionnaire that assesses their academic, individual, psychosocial, and human experiences. As one of the pre-college indicators of performance, national level entrance examination\(^4\) overall result and Mathematics

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\(^1\) High performing students are students with CGPA of above 2.75 and low performing students are with CGPA of below 2.49

\(^2\) The office Responsible for student records at college level

\(^3\) Center responsible for maintaining data at department level

\(^4\) Ministry of Education use to conduct a national level entrance examination for university education called Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Qualification Examination (EHEEEQE)
and English results were considered, since previous academic achievements and excellence in Mathematics and English indicate a high degree of association between the two (Lotkowski, et al., 2004).

Data Analysis
In order to achieve the proposed objective of the study, different qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The study used simple statistical measures (frequencies and percentages) to describe the level of attrition and academic performance of the students. To investigate the factors behind student performance and attrition we estimated two models. First, a regression model (equation 1) estimated to single out the factors behind students’ performance. That is, we estimated higher education production function to find the effect of each factors (academic, demographic, individual and human factors) on the student performance measured in terms of CGPA.

\[ cgpa_i = \alpha + A'\beta + D'\varphi + I'\gamma + H'\delta + \xi_i \]  (1)

Where: \( cgpa_i \) is the students measure of academic performance, \( A \) is vector of academic factors, \( D \) is vector of demographic characteristics of the student, \( I \) is vector of student specific individual factors and \( H \) is vector of human factors. \( \alpha \) is the intercept, \( \beta \), \( \varphi \), \( \gamma \) and \( \delta \) are vector of parameters to be estimated. \( \xi \) is the usual disturbance term.

Second, we estimated a probit model to identify factors that affect student attrition (Equ. 2):

\[ pr(y_i = 1 | X) = \Phi(X'\beta) \]  (2)

Where \( pr \) is the probability, \( y_i = 1 \) is an indicator if the student dropout and \( y_i = 0 \) is otherwise. \( \Phi \) is the normal cumulative density function (CDF), \( X \) is vector of the several factors that determine student attrition and \( \beta \) vector of parameters to be estimated.

| Table 1: List of model variables with their labels |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Variable Name   | Label Name      |
| Age             | Age of the sampled students |
| Gender          | Gender          |
| Ent Exam        | Ethiopia Higher Education Entrance Qualification Examination overall result |
| Ent Mathr       | Ethiopia Higher Education Entrance Qualification Examination Mathematics result |
| Ent Engr        | Ethiopia Higher Education Entrance Qualification Examination English result |
| Café user       | Café user       |
| Study hrspd     | Study hours per day |
| Study day spw   | Study hours per week |
| Stu choice      | Student department first choice |
| Dad edu         | Father Education in years |
| Mom edu         | Mother education in years |
| P stream        | Preparatory Stream of the students |
| Fin constrstu   | Financial constraint |
| Dn smok         | Student smoking habit |
| Dn chew         | Student chat chewing habit |
| Dn drink        | Student alcohol drinking habit |
Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics Results

The data was analyzed using STATA and Microsoft Excel. 56% were male and 44% females were surveyed. For first year and second year students the proportion of female respondents was 33% and 35% respectively; while the proportion of female students in third year was 65%. The high representation of female students in the third year was due to the fact that the college had admitted 80% female students during 2008/09 academic year. The mean age of respondents is 20.9 for first year, 21.5 for second year, and 22 for third year. Of the total respondents, 31.51% (79) are from Tigrai, 25.7% (66) from Addis Ababa, 25.3% (64) from Amhara, 10.5% (27) from Oromia, and 5% (13) from SNNP, and the remaining 2% (6) respondents are from other regions of the country.

Students’ academic performance of the CBE, in terms of CGPA of above 2.75 (HP) and below 2.49 (LP) in second semester of 2010/11 academic year, shows that in all the departments female students are over represented as low achievers as compared to their male counterparts (table 2).

Table 2: Proportion of High Performing (HP) and Low Performing (LP) Students by Year and Gender in 2010/11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accounting and Finance</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>260 (168M, 92F)</td>
<td>318 (148M, 170F)</td>
<td>261 (48M, 213F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>89 (52%)</td>
<td>29 (20%)</td>
<td>18 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57 (62%)</td>
<td>25 (27%)</td>
<td>133 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>113 (77M, 36F)</td>
<td>72 (53M, 19F)</td>
<td>63 (31M, 32F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 (40%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>9 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24 (66%)</td>
<td>10 (28%)</td>
<td>7 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>258 (217M, 41F)</td>
<td>225 (173M, 52F)</td>
<td>158 (77M, 81F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55 (25%)</td>
<td>30 (58%)</td>
<td>38 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12 (29%)</td>
<td>19 (46%)</td>
<td>14 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>167 (93M,74F)</td>
<td>278 (148M,130F)</td>
<td>298 (124M, 174F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25 (27%)</td>
<td>55 (36.5%)</td>
<td>59 (47.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30 (40.5%)</td>
<td>23 (31%)</td>
<td>129 (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and Development Mgt</td>
<td>150 (110M,40F)</td>
<td>262 (158M,104F)</td>
<td>224 (69M,155F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56 (51%)</td>
<td>44 (28%)</td>
<td>27 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27 (67.5%)</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
<td>83 (53.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Student Service Center, CBE (2010).
In different departments of CBE, for the 2008/09–2010/11 academic years, the regular undergraduate students’ enrolment and attrition rate is presented in table 3. In all the department first year students were dismissed more than any other batches; & the dismissal rate was highest in the Department of Economics (62%) followed by the Department of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Admission Year &amp; Student Number</th>
<th>2009/10 Male</th>
<th>2009/10 Female</th>
<th>2010/11 Male</th>
<th>2010/11 Female</th>
<th>Overall Male</th>
<th>Overall Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting &amp; Finance</td>
<td>2008/09(71M, 497F)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>11.60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10(148M, 170F)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Marketing</td>
<td>2008/09(33M, 32F)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10(53M, 19F)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>2008/09(130M, 251F)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10(173M, 52F)</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2008/09(111M, 358F)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10(148M, 130F)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin &amp; Development Mgt</td>
<td>2008/09(100M, 281F)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>30.50%</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10(158M, 104F)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Student Service Center, CBE (2010)

Data on attrition (dropout) includes: dismissed due to academic failure, dismissed for all other reasons, withdrew, transferred to another institution, required to repeat entire year/semester, and promoted but required to repeat one or more courses.
Accounting and Finance (48%), and Department of Management (44%). For those admitted in 2009/10 academic year, students attrition is highest in Public Administration and Development Management (28%) followed by the Department of Accounting and Finance (19%), and Department of Economics (10%). Overall attrition rate in each department for 2008/09 admitted students is 66% in the Department of Economics, 54% in the department of Accounting and Finance, 48% in the department of Management, 36% in the department of Public and Development Management, and 3% in Cooperative Marketing.

**Econometric Results**

This section presents OLS results of the model in (1) above. Table 4 report the OLS results for the whole sample. We found that student gender negatively affect student performance (CGPA). Female students have lower CGPA as compared to their male counterparts keeping other things same. This is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Another factor that statistically significantly affected student CGPA is the student’s school leaving result (EntExamr). Students that performed very well in the national level entrance examination also do well in the college. This implies that good pre college performance affect student performance in the college. In fact, we could not find statistically significant effect of national level entrance Mathematics (EntMathr) and English (EntEngr) examination results.

| Dependent Variable: Student Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Variable**     | **Coefficient**  | **t-ratio**      |
| Age              | -0.0220906       | -0.85            |
| Gender           | -0.3985611***    | -3.28            |
| EntExamr         | 0.0019971***     | 2.89             |
| EntMathr         | 0.0023759        | 0.78             |
| EntEngr          | 0.0028781        | 0.88             |
| Cafeuser          | 0.1049564        | 0.92             |
| Studyhrsdp       | -0.0000198       | 0.00             |
| Studydayspw      | -0.0033444       | -0.12            |
| Stuchoice         | -0.1439873       | -1.32            |
| Dadedu           | 0.0852254        | 0.85             |
| Momedu           | 0.064284         | 0.65             |
| Pstream          | 0.0519601        | 0.55             |
| Finconstrstu     | -0.2363426***    | -2.95            |
| Dnsmok           | 0.2118946        | 1.15             |
| Dnchew           | -0.180866        | -1.08            |
| Dndrink          | 0.0623492        | 0.78             |
| Constant         | 2.467001***      | 3.58             |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of obs = 255</th>
<th>F(16, 238)= 5.53</th>
<th>Prob &gt; F = 0.0000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R-squared = 0.1948</td>
<td>Root MSE = .57949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***,** and * indicate statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.
Financial constraint is also found to negatively affect student CGPA. That is, financially constrained students performed less compared to those unconstrained ones. This is in line with our expectation that students with financial constraint for basic goods like stationary and other expenses may feel distracted and/or are not be able to prepare very well since they do not have the required academic materials that impact their performance.

Table 5, presents the OLS estimates disaggregated by students department. In Accounting and Finance program, student’s age, gender, reparatory stream, student’s department choice and maternal educational background found to affect his/her performance significantly. The older the student, the lower the performance of the student in Accounting and Finance program holding other factors same. Similarly, students from natural science background perform lower than other students (from commerce or art stream). Student’s placed without their first choice at the accounting and finance program found to perform poorly compared to those placed on their first choice. We also found that student’s maternal education to positively affect student’s performance.

The results of economics department students indicate that student’s gender, national entrance examination overall results and mother education level significantly correlate with student performance. Female students found to perform lower than male students. Student’s national entrance examination overall result is positively correlated with the student performance which is in line with our expectation. Those Students who do not drink alcohol found to have better academic performance than otherwise. Student’s mother educational background significantly affects student CGPA, i.e. the higher the level of mother education in years the better the student to perform keeping other things the same. For Public and Development Management students we found student’s gender, age and financial constraint to negatively affect academic performance. We also found that national entrance examination overall results and Mathematics result significantly affect student performance. Study hours per day and father education also positively affect student academic performance.

In summary, the results for students in the management program are different from those reported for accounting economics, and PDM students. We found that national entrance examination English result and number of study days to affect student performance under the management program. Except for few differences, we found same results as the whole sample model result while the management department being an exception. Student gender, national entrance examination English results and financial constraint found to significantly affect the student’s performance. The results hold true for students from programs in Accounting and Finance, Economics and Management. We could not feasibly estimate the model for Cooperative Marketing students due to small sample size we had.

Further, we estimated the model disaggregating the sample by class year. Here the results are consistent with our earlier findings for the whole sample as can be seen from table 6. Student’s gender, national entrance examination overall result and financial constraint found to have significant effect consistently on student performance in each class year. Additionally, student’s age found to negatively affect student performance in second and third year. Study hours per day seem to matter in year two and student’s smoking behavior have an effect in year three. That is, students that study longer hour in year two and those third year students that do not smoke have better performance than otherwise.
Table 5: Disaggregated OLS Estimates for Determinants of Student Performance by Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Student’s Last Semester Cumulative GPA (CGPA)</th>
<th>Accounting</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>PDM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>t-ratio</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>t-ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.733475***</td>
<td>-2.85</td>
<td>-0.0553744</td>
<td>-1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-4.348048**</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>-0.6973364***</td>
<td>-2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntExamr</td>
<td>0.0012311</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0028167***</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntMathr</td>
<td>-0.0028904</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>0.0066615</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntEngr</td>
<td>0.0100748</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.0006351</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeuser</td>
<td>0.2669998</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.2297402</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studyhrspd</td>
<td>-0.0200403</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>0.0063565</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studydayspw</td>
<td>-0.0374343</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>-0.0581939</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuchoice</td>
<td>-5.467461**</td>
<td>-2.57</td>
<td>-0.1380005</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadedu</td>
<td>0.024181</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.0203159</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momedu</td>
<td>.4058947**</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.3084507**</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pstream</td>
<td>-0.3047101*</td>
<td>-1.72</td>
<td>-0.1029051</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finconstrstu</td>
<td>-5.458565***</td>
<td>-3.15</td>
<td>-0.1828352</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnsomok</td>
<td>0.31494</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.6746197</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dncwew</td>
<td>-0.4389713</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>0.063198</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dndrink</td>
<td>-0.099142</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>.3031123**</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.209394</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>2.52**</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 48 Number of obs = 77 Number of obs = 52 Number of obs = 50
F(16,31) = 3.74 F(16,60) = 3.27 F(15,36) = 2.32 F(16,33) = 1.15
Prob > F = 0.0008 Prob > F = 0.0004 Prob > F = 0.0195 Prob > F = 0.3578
R-squared = 0.6588 R-squared = 0.4656 R-squared = 0.4915 R-squared = 0.2234
Adj,R-squared = 0.482 Adj,R-squared = 0.323 Adj,R-squared = 0.2796 Adj,R-squared = 0.1681
Root MSE = .43844 Root MSE = .50711 Root MSE = .48836 Root MSE = .68846

***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

In conclusion, from table 3-5, consistent result emerges. That is, student’s gender, national entrance examination overall result and financial constraint found to significantly affect students college performance. While other factors like parents background, student behavior, study hours, student’s department placement found to have an affect only in some group (class year or department).

We estimated a probit model to find out the factors that lead to student attrition or dropout in CBE. Table 6 presents the probit estimates. Keeping other things same; the older the student, the higher the likelihood of attrition. Over all national entrance examination and Mathematics and English examination result found to negatively correlate with probability of
attrition. Similarly, students that study longer hours have less probability of dropout. Students that use cafeteria service have lower probability of attrition compared to non-café users.

Table 5: Disaggregated OLS Estimates for Determinants of Student Performance by Class Year.

**Dependent Variable:** Student’s Last Semester Cumulative GPA(CGPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.0013781</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-.098742**</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
<td>-.0643026*</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.3069176**</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>-.4299001**</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>-.4275361**</td>
<td>-2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntExamr</td>
<td>.0041382***</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.0076103***</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>.0033918**</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntMathr</td>
<td>-.0048192</td>
<td>-0.86</td>
<td>-.0067847</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
<td>-.0055747</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntEngr</td>
<td>-.0027733</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>.0011855</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>.0037351</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeuser</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.1405716</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-.111207</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studyhrsdp</td>
<td>-.030772</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
<td>.0379033*</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>-.0114647</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studydayspw</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.0187696</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>.079711</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuchoice</td>
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<td>0.27</td>
<td>-.0248605</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-.2824513</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadedu</td>
<td>-.0175557</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>.1855855</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.1487858</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momedu</td>
<td>-.1346476</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
<td>.1259653</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.1306551</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pstream</td>
<td>.0062434</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>.2630402*</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>-.060078</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finconstrstu</td>
<td>-.3320354**</td>
<td>-2.20</td>
<td>-.2438502*</td>
<td>-1.95</td>
<td>.0235016</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnsmok</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.1005706</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>.6633335**</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnchew</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.0146357</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-.2551869</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dndrink</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.0999382</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-.0158018</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.275968***</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.941442***</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.782353***</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Number of obs     | =92         | =91     | =72         |
| F( 11, 85) = 2.11 | F(16, 79) = 5.19 | F(16, 55) = 3.25 |
| Prob > F = 0.0276 | Prob > F = 0.0000 | Prob > F = 0.0006 |
| R-squared= 0.2148 | R-squared =0.5124 | R-squared = 0.4857 |
| Adj.R-squared=0.113 | Adj.R-squared=0.413 | Adj R-squared = 0.3360 |
| Root MSE = .60657 | Root MSE = .49704 | Root MSE = .49284 |

***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

Contrary to our expectation, we found that students that are financially constrained to have lower probability of dropping out from college. Similarly, we found mother’s and father’s level of education to have divergent effect on student likelihood of attrition.
**Table 6: Probit Estimates for Determinants of Student Attrition.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.131701*</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.2383274</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntExamr</td>
<td>-.0067952*</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntMathr</td>
<td>-.0304512**</td>
<td>-2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EntEngr</td>
<td>-.0050477</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeuser</td>
<td>1.10407**</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studyhrspd</td>
<td>-.1717246**</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studydayspw</td>
<td>-.1941936</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuchoice</td>
<td>0.030347</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadedu</td>
<td>-1.200164***</td>
<td>-2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momedu</td>
<td>1.287537***</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pstream</td>
<td>0.5625537</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finconstrstu</td>
<td>1.271431***</td>
<td>-2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnsmok</td>
<td>-0.0055</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnchew</td>
<td>0.045407</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink</td>
<td>0.0069433</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.1130416</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 239  Pseudo R2 = 0.4138
Wald chi2(14) = 69.74  Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Using cross-sectional data drawn from sampled students in five undergraduate programs in CBE (MU) during second semester 2010/11 academic year, we assessed the level of attrition and determinants of student performance and attrition. The level of attrition varied from nearly 3% to 66% and female students are overrepresented as low achievers. Our results also show that first year students are more dismissed that the other years. Reasons for attrition are academic failure and others.

Our regression results consistently found significant effect of student’s gender, national level entrance examination overall result and financial constraint on students’ college performance. While other factors like parents background, student behavior, study hours, student’s department placement found to have varying effects by class year and program. With regard to student attrition, our prohibit estimates revealed that higher national level entrance examination overall results and more study hours reduce the likelihood of student dropout. The older and the more financially constrained the student, the higher the likelihood of the student attrition. Student’s father and mother’s educational background has opposite effects on student attrition.

The implication of our study is at CBE undergraduate students’ performance is determined based on the student’s gender, previous preparatory results and financial constraints of the student. Further research is required to look at the effects of the school resource (class size, text book availability, teachers’ qualification and experience, etc) and whether our findings are similar to natural science, arts and humanities disciplines. Moreover, the low performance of the female students warrants an in-depth investigation given the support programs (like tutorial and remedial) by the college in place.
References


Communicating for Development and Democratization in Ethiopia: Journalistic Practices and Challenges

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Introduction
In the contemporary world, to a greater extent than ever before, the mass communication media have increasingly become central to every aspect of human lives. With the immense power of the electronic media, enhanced by the advanced computer and satellite technologies, media have assumed key position in the political, economic and socio-cultural activities of a society, making media indispensable to governments and the public, principally in a democratic political setting where government power emanates from the people. Most importantly, in developing world, where majority of the citizenry suffer from undesirable socio-economic and political conditions, the media have long been recognized as engines of development (Melkote, 2001 and Murthy, 2006).

In Ethiopia, where poverty is a reality, for example, the FDRE government has adopted democratic developmental state political economy with the purpose to bring about socioeconomic and political transformation. Accordingly, the media are entrusted the role of promoting development, democracy and good governance and a new journalism model, i.e. development journalism has been embraced (FDRE, 1995 Constitution, Draft Media Policy Document, 2008). Indeed, media can play such desirable roles as witnessed by many developing countries, notably in Asia such as India, Taiwan and Philippines; however, it should be noted that the power of the media in accomplishing these responsibilities is subject to various determinant factors, including the feasibility of operating environment in various contexts.

Thus, acknowledging the adoption of development journalism model in Ethiopia in principle, this study has the objective to assess the practices of and challenges to the new journalism model in the Ethiopian media institutions from the perspectives of the practitioners, media managers, the publics and pertinent official documents and media products. To this end, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How is development journalism being practiced by media institutions in Ethiopia?
2. What are the challenges to the application of development journalism in the country?

Methods of the Study
The study employed descriptive design where by qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from relevant sources. The data were obtained from journalists and media managers of the federal and regional states media institutions and private press based in Addis Ababa as well as selected members of the public from Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara and SNNP regional states. Relevant documents pertinent to media activities in the country and media products were also used as sources of data in this study.
The data were partly drawn from the comprehensive research and was recently conducted on the role of media and communication for development and democratization in Ethiopia. Questionnaire, interview and observation of media practices were employed as data gathering tools. Moreover, data from my observation of the trends in development journalism in connection with the courses offer at the Graduate School of Journalism and Communication, AAU. Review of related literature was also considered to underpin the discussion and conclusions. The quantitative data underwent statistical computation by using SPSS and the qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Development Journalism: An Overview

With the period following the end of World War II marking the ‘era of development’ and independence from colonial rule, a new journalism model informed by development communication theories was introduced to the developing world, including Africa. However, there seems to be confusion about the meaning and scope of development journalism (Skjerdal 2009). According to Banda (2006), the concept of development journalism has been possessed by demons of all sorts of confusion and “deliberations about its validity and usefulness have been bogged down in arguments structured by Western notions of press freedom,” diverting attention from important questions pertinent to the role of journalism in promoting democracy and development. Thus, it is important to clarify the concept before delving into the practices of and challenges to the discipline in Ethiopia. This is best done by first interpreting development, one of the core component concepts.

Scholars in the dominant paradigm tent may understand development as modernization or westernization; however, communication scholars prefer to interpret it as “improving the living conditions of a society,” (Milkote 2001) which constitutes “increased living standards, improved wealth and well-beings for all, and the achievement of whatever is regarded as a general good for society at large” (Thomas, 2000). Development is also viewed as freedom from prison of economic poverty, political tyranny, sickness and disease, ignorance, and oppression and violence” (Tony Blair in Crown Copyright 2006). In other words, poverty is lack of choice, socioeconomic and political deprivation whereas development is a freedom from poverty or empowerment of the people (Amartaya Sen, 1981). Pant and Kumar (1995, p.50) also see development as a whole range of economic and social development which “carries with it, not only the idea of economic betterment but also of great human dignity, security, justice, and equality.” This means development is not merely economic growth but multidimensional process incorporating economic, socio-cultural and environmental transformation.

Development as multidimensional process also concerns democratization, i.e. “political change moving in a democratic direction” which is one aspect of political development (Potter 2000, p 368) and beyond multipartyism, “requires that the society, the economy, politics, the constitution of the state, the electoral system and the practice of government be democratized” (Newabueze, 1993, p. ix as cited in WorldViews, 1997). In Ethiopian context, for example, development is understood as empowerment of the people in every aspect of life and is inseparable from the process of democratization (Sen, 1999) as cited in Bahiru and Pausewang, 2002).
Moreover, the compatibility of holistic development with good governance is a plausible argument because equitable development cannot be achieved without establishing good governance—considered synonymous with sound development management and the capability of the state to perform its key functions in response to its citizens’ aspirations and needs—which aims at fighting corruption, upholding the rule of law, accountability, institutional pluralism, participation and the guarantees of the civil and human rights and effective participation among others (Potter 2000).

The meaning of development journalism, thus, springs from the understanding of development as discussed above and journalism as a socially responsible profession, serving the needs and interest of the society at large by creating the necessary intelligence they need to lead better lives. Informed by the ideals of participatory development communication, in terms of the general role entrusted to the media, development journalism upholds that the media have the responsibility “to contribute to overall socioeconomic development by assuming an active participatory role. The media thus collaborate with the larger development team as one of many agents” (Skjerdal, 2009). As implied in this explanation is participant journalism in which journalists consider their role as participant, advancing the view that news is the product of journalists’ “efforts to investigate and analyze what is going on” (Williams, 2003). In other words, development journalists have to be intellectually and professionally engaged so as to rally the people behind development efforts.

In a similar vein, Banda (2006) notes that development journalism is "an intellectual enterprise in which the journalist form a kind of free intelligence and should critically examine the aims of national development and the applicable instruments in a rational discourse and solve them by reasonable criteria free of social constraints." To this effect, he further notes that development journalism has to:

i) motivate the audience to actively cooperate in development; and
ii) defend the interests of those concerned.

For Wimmer and Wolf (2005) development journalism can be understood as "the reporting of ideas, programmes, activities and events, which are related to an improvement of the living standard," implying that the essence of development journalism rests in journalistic principle with prior emphasis on promoting holistic development that equally benefits the people. According to Murthy (2006):

- Development journalism is the promoting of development process rather than events; development news covers the entire gamut of socio-economic and cultural development;
- In its treatment, development journalism is not different from investigative reporting.
- A development journalist should critically examine, evaluate and report the relevance of a development project to national and local needs, the difference between its impacts on people as claimed by the government officials and as it actually is. It is not synonymous with officially prepared handouts, so-called positive news.

Moreover, Murthy (2010) asserts that good development journalism is characterized by comprehensive coverage of important subjects in socioeconomic activities and "exposure of
incompetence and indifference of government officials while tackling corruption in government can change polices, besides saving government money. Conversely, bad journalism is misinformation which fails to report news or reporting depthless, inaccurate and unfair news leaving people dangerously uninformed”. Similarly, Shah and Gayatri (1994) and Rmaprassad (2002) emphasize that practitioners of development journalism have the obligation to critically investigate development activities, their relevance and benefits to the people.

Development journalism can also be explained in contrast to Western journalism model, i.e. “a general type of libertarian fourth estate journalism” (Skjerdal, 2009). Western journalism model is informed by a liberal or neoliberal political economy which makes media ownership the prerogative of private businesses who value their own profit than the actual development needs of the majority. In a sharp contrast to development journalism, Western journalism is dominated by day-to-day events and tabloidization (Reeves 2006, p.180), implying that Western journalism model promotes a different concept of news values. Campbel (2004) illustrates the concept of tabloidization as:

First, in both print and broadcast journalism, tabloid news is distinct in its emphasis, which can be summarized as the devoting of ‘relatively little attention to politics, economic, and society and relatively much to diversions like sports, scandal and popular entertainment’ and the devoting of ‘relatively much attention to the personal and private lives of people, both celebrities and ordinary people, and relatively little to political process, economic developments, and social changes’. Second, and slightly broader feature, is ‘a shift in the priorities within a given medium away from news and information towards emphasis on entertainment’.

In conclusion, development journalism is one which prioritizes the actual development problems of the people, i.e. pressing the socioeconomic, political and good governance issues so as to bring about improved living condition for all.

Data Analysis and Discussion
As noted earlier this part examines the practices of and challenges to development journalism in Ethiopia. The discussion has been drawn from the analysis of the quantitative data computed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and qualitative data through thematic approach. It is important to note that the detail statistical analysis has not been presented here for the sake of brevity.

The Practices of Development Journalism in Ethiopia
Coverage of Development Issues and Limitations
Promoting Socioeconomic Development
Given the demanding situation of poverty, illiteracy and lack of good governance in Ethiopia as late as the imperial era, attempts were made to address the actual socioeconomic and political development issues of the people in the form of oral literature and books such as the literary work by Kebede Michael entitled ‘Japan Indemin Seletenech’ meaning how did Japan modernize as the immature mass media of were restricted from serving the interest of the people, including fighting the unjust land tenure system. Currently, journalistic practices, according to the finding, seem to have a good beginning in promoting socioeconomic
development basically by practitioners of the government owned media institutions where development journalism model has been officially embraced. As regards to coverage, they give relatively better emphasis to rural development issues than the private media do. The private media seem to give more coverage to political and good governance issues in a relatively critical tone, whereas government media cover more of socioeconomic development issues.

The study also showed that when compared to the other development contents, social development was relatively more emphasized. Programming related to education, health, HIV/AIDS and family planning were reported to have been given more coverage by the government media. The adequate coverage given to rural development issues by almost all government media institutions, federal and regional, print and broadcast, reflects that the practices of journalists working for the government media institutions are informed by the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) policy and is also responsive to the current Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). Nevertheless, the study also indicated that there are still gaps in framing development issues and addressing the real problems of the community at the grassroots level.

**Promoting Good Governance and Democratization**

There are indicators of journalistic efforts in tackling good governance problems as part of development journalism. In almost all government media institutions at federal and regional levels there are programs devoted to address good governance issues. Best examples are from ERTA’s Aynachin/ Fitifefit and special program on good governance issues in Oromia Radio and Television Organization, Amhara Mass Media Agency and Debub Mass Media Agency. These programs have the objectives of ensuring accountability of public officials in discharging their responsibilities. Moreover, related programs from some of the private press and radio such as Fana Broadcast Corporate’s ‘Teguaj Neqash’ are promising attempts worth mentioning.

However, when compared to other development contents, the journalistic practices in promoting good governance seem to be insignificant. In the Ethiopian context, issues related to urban land management, whether the people including farmers and the poor in urban areas are getting justice or in the contrary suffering at the hands of rent seeking government officials and corrupt private business elites ought to have been addressed as important content of development journalism. Moreover, the quality of education in Ethiopia and particularly in relation to the expanding government and private higher education institutions in the country appears to be a pressing good governance problem but it has not been given due emphasis by the media.

For instance, journalists were expected to be the first in investigating and exposing the recurring problem in urban land management in Addis Ababa and almost all big towns in the country where few corrupt officials managed to bulge their stomachs with the revenue from ‘urban land businesses’ which is constitutionally prohibited. Rather, it was the government which takes the courage to examine such practices and bring the criminals to justice. In other words, although the media, through their investigative reporting, were supposed to feed the government with the necessary information about urban land mismanagement, the media were seen reporting the information they received from the government pertinent to this
problem. It is important to note that promoting good governance does not mean merely telling people to behave well or be a good citizen, against corruption. It also means investigating mismanagement and abuses of power, disclosing corruption and scandals, enforcing transparency and accountability of the government officials so as to create conducive environment for development activities.

Moreover, promoting democratization has been considered as compatible with promoting development almost by all media institutions in the country, including privately owned ones although there are differences in their focus. This also might be informed by the current political economy of Ethiopia as developmental democratic state. However, practitioners and media managers admitted that although they have made efforts in raising public awareness about the democratic ideals their practice in promoting democratization is unsatisfactory. Some government media journalists seem to misunderstand promoting democratization as merely giving coverage to election process which happens once in every five years. Their practices lack important elements of demoralization such as upholding the rule of law, creating public forum for free debate and exchange of opinions, providing unbiased, quality, complete and timely information to the public.

Nevertheless the federal government media institutions’ editorial policy, underlines that the media “have the obligation to broaden public understanding of democratic principles, rights and freedom, promote public participation in democracy, check whether government officials perform their duties in accordance with democratic principle and let the public know about it, expose corruption, promote transparency and accountability.”

Promoting Peace and National Consensus

In this study, peace and national consensus building has been considered as important element of development journalism. The finding showed that promoting peace and national consensus, as journalistic practices reinforcing development and democratization, was relatively well practiced. Regardless of their media ownership, employer organization and medium type, the journalists confirmed that peace and national consensus issues were given emphasis in their practices. This might be because the government usually appeals to peace and national consensus in order to win the hearts and minds of the people and rally them behind the new socioeconomic and political development plan.

The priority given to peace and stability is evidently appropriate and has to be sustained because even our past legacy teaches us that instability and lack of peace and national consensus is the root cause of underdevelopment in Ethiopia. Nogogo (1986) asserts that “For a society to develop its productive forces and for social progress to take place that society must, at least for a reasonable period of time, enjoy marginal peace. No society can develop in a situation of war, destruction, pillage, etc.” Studies affirm that realization of peace and stability helps a country to focus all the human capital and finance on development activities than spending much on military imputes. For African Economist (2005) “Investing in development is investing in peace” and in Adedeji’s (1993) view, “Political stability, the pursuit of economic activities, recovery and transformation are all impossible without peace and security.”
Reporting Approaches

Information Dissemination

With regard to approaches used in promoting development, the study found that the major activity of the media was informing the public about government achievements in development to increase public awareness about the seriousness of underdevelopment and how to overcome the problems. In this respect, the best examples are programs related to environmental degradation, its causes and how it affects sustainable development and the role of farmers in afforestation and soil conservation; the use of fertilizers and improved seeds in increasing productivity, market information and how to access them to get better price for their products. The information dissemination also concerns promoting development through good governance and democracy. In this respect, emphasis has been given to teaching the public and officials to be good citizens free of corruption. In fact, rising public awareness level about development problems and mobilizing efforts in finding solutions is at the center of development journalism (Murthy, 2006). However, there are also limitations in adhering only to such approach because the mere dissemination of information at the absence of enforcing accountability cannot bring about the desired effect.

Predominantly Success-Oriented

It was found out that success stories mainly originated from government sources were given more emphasis in development reporting. The success stories are basically economic in nature and are framed from the government officials’ perspectives. Though there are attempts to set development agenda through wider and frequent coverage of development contents, they are presented mainly from government angles. This is partly because the information predominantly comes from government authorities and government news agencies than directly from the public who were supposed to be the major sources of information. The result of this study revealed that 85% of the practitioners depend on government information for their development reporting. Media portrayal of the government as the champion of development and good governance and the selective presentation of only success stories equated the practices of government media journalists to image building exercise. On the other hand, the finding indicated that practice related to investigating problems in development and good governance activities was found to be unsatisfactory. The government media journalists in principle perceive their role as being developmental but were found to be less confident about the effectiveness of their practices.

Promoting achievements or success is part of development journalism; however, relaying on only success stories may damage the credibility of the media and limits the impact of the message. It may also lead to public apathy and dislike of the media and stereotyping journalists and the government. As can be understood from the finding, the majority of Ethiopian journalists are aware that they have low status among the society. The study revealed that the government media’s emphasis on success stories encouraged the construction of a stereotyped image of government media by the public, particularly those who are relatively well educated, as the willing mouthpieces of the government. The surveyed academics and university students stated that such practice made them expect only biased stories from the Ethiopian government media as a result of which they were forced to favor other media like the VOA and German Radio broadcast in Ethiopian languages and even the BBC and Algageeera than their own media. Some also dared to
criticize ETV as a channel which failed to present the real life that most Ethiopians are leading.

This, however, does not imply that development journalism should be similar to bad-news-mongering. The implication is that balance in reporting has to be maintained in the Ethiopian media practices. It is important to note that the public does not like both extremes, i.e. only positive or only negative stories, but balance. Development journalism should not be misunderstood as accentuation of success stories produced by government agents or any source. It has to go to the people at the grassroots, reveal the real urban and rural life, and disclose the injustice besides promoting exemplary achievements from which others can draw lessons.

**Top-Down Approach**

Development journalism encourages two-way communication with sufficient opportunity for the public to be in the news by way of interacting with journalists pertinent to development activities. In other words the public is not mere passive recipient of message but also source of information. However, the communication approach pursued, as the study depicted, was top-down, i.e. gathering information from government sources and addressing the same to the public without investigation. This is evident from media institutions’ source selection practices. In this regard 85% of the journalists reported that they always or most of the time depend on the government and the ruling party and 50% on the government owned news agency for information, whereas less than 30% reported that they also use the public as sources of information. The qualitative finding, however, showed that journalists rarely contact the public, and if they happen to meet them they cover only positive stories about the government. Even in their limited access to the public, the media are blamed for not being able penetrate through the remote villages for gathering information and are rather limited to areas near the capital city or big towns, mainly those villages situated along the high ways.

**Event-Oriented**

As noted earlier development is continuous process and consequently development journalism should also deal more with the process-from the planning stage throughout the implementation to the end of the development activities, including related good governance issues- than focusing on day-to-day events. However, the study showed that the Ethiopian journalists, irrespective of media ownership, medium type emphasize events rather than process in covering development issues. The surveyed journalists indicated that although they are well aware of process reporting, they are obliged to emphasize event reporting mainly because the media managers prefer wider coverage of successful events which has become a norm guiding assignment of reporters in government media. Similarly, the media managers justified that events are given more coverage than the process because the former is relatively less costly and more time-effective. The study by Dejene (2010) on Addis Zemen’s development reporting practices and Dheressa (2012) on ETV’s framing of development news also endorses this finding. Whatever the justification given by media institutions may be, however, claiming effective practice of development journalism and emphasizing event reporting seem to be contradictory and indicates prevalent limitations in the practices.
Challenges to the Practice of Development Journalism in Ethiopia

In any country, journalism affects the economy, politics and socio-cultural conditions of the land and is in turn influenced by these factors in various ways. In Ethiopia, too, journalistic practices are subject to both internal and external challenges of different sorts. The major internal and external challenges to the practices of development journalism in Ethiopia are discussed briefly as follows.

Internal Influences

Socioeconomic Constraints

The result of the present study depicted that economic factor is the most serious challenge to the practices of development journalism in Ethiopia. This challenge manifests its influence on the media practices in different ways: lack of sufficient financial support for journalistic activities, poor media infrastructure, and limitation of material resources, low salary for practitioners, less investment in the media sector because of economic reasons, and the public’s lack of exposure to media. In this respect, both the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from journalists working for the government and private media as well as the academics rated economic related constraints as the most serious. For nearly 90% of the journalists, economic influence was a very serious constraint. The journalists emphasized that the root cause of poor quality journalism in Ethiopia is poverty. It is evident that journalists’ low economic status coupled with their family responsibility can have a bearing on their confidence in discharging their responsibility.

Media managers of the surveyed institutions also indicated that they often overlook newsworthy events due to shortage of finance, reporters, vehicles, cameras and poor infrastructures. However, development reporting, in its nature, is different from covering easily accessible events and ongoing political process at the capital of the country and or in the nearby urban areas merely to fill the available airtime or newspaper space. Development reporters have to go to the people, get the facts from the people and also take the facts to the people (Pant and Kumar, 1995).

Economic challenge also manifests itself by limiting public’s access to media messages. The finding indicated that a large proportion of the rural population lack access to the media even to radio which is believed to be the medium for the poor. The respondents attributed this limitation mainly to the widespread poverty, illiteracy and limited circulation of newspapers. In support of this study, literature on public media use in Ethiopia shows that only insignificant proportion of the public has access to the media. Panos (2007) documented that the area coverage of Ethiopia radio is estimated to 70% and ETV to about 50% of the total geographical area. However, only about 25% of the population listens to radio. A study conducted by Ethiopian Economic Association (2006) also showed that of the farmers surveyed on their access to media messages related to agricultural development “only 5% are able to read leaflets and manuals, around 75% of the farmers do not listen to any radio program, and only 1% of the farmers have access to television. Thus limited access to media was a major cause for the low level of utilization of available agricultural information. Television use is limited to the major urban areas where electricity is available, few people can afford to buy television sets and only one percent of 80 million population read newspaper on regular basis in Ethiopia and the daily circulation of newspapers is less than 50,000 (Skjerdal, 2009 & Lishan, 2004), though it seems that the situation is now improving.
Political Influence
The government media and private media journalists and the academics who participated in this study indicated that media practices in Ethiopia are not free of political influence. They rated political challenge as the second serious constraint to the practice of development journalism. They argued that the government uses different mechanisms to interfere in media activities. The mechanisms they mentioned include government's dominance of media ownership, maintaining monopoly on the important sources of information, overriding media management by appointing media managers and editors who are members of the ruling party and imposing restrictive media laws and pro-government judicial practices among others. This, according to the finding, forced practitioners, particularly government media journalists to conform to the government position and emphasize success stories in their practices. The participants indicated that deviation from serving the government’s interest would cause unfavorable consequences. The major consequences they mentioned include: editors reject stories critical of the government; journalists with strong position to balance their stories would be accused of having conspired with the opposition; media managers issue formal and informal warning in connection to national security, public safety, peace and order and threaten journalists with possibility of losing job and facing detention. They also stated that fear of facing the consequences force journalists to strictly practice self-censorship and overlook investigative reporting.

Most of the federal state media reporters and private media journalists blame political interference for lack of investigative reporting in their practices. For example, a reporter from one of the regional states media said: “The risk of investigating corruption or mismanagement is too high for a journalist to bear. We attempted to report on problems of good governance but we faced lots of challenges and learnt that exposing corruption is so harmful to journalists. Politically, some government leaders harass you.” A journalist from another regional state media added, “Corruption is interlinked with many people and it is difficult to do unless backed by government. Once, we started corruption investigating project and found out that corruption has prevailed as if there were no government, but we were forced to interrupt the program because the program appeared to damage the image of the government. Corruption is expanding to the extent of being considered as a normal ‘help me to help you’ business.”

Though, in a developmental democratic state, the government and media work together to promote development, democratization and good governance, it is important to note that if political influence on journalistic practices prevails, that is totally unacceptable because it contradicts the Constitution and democratic principles.

Journalists-associated problems
a) Professional Constraints
It was found out that low professional competency of practitioners in the Ethiopian mass media institutions are among the challenges to journalistic practices in promoting development and democratization though it was perceived as relatively less serious. By professional constraint is meant journalists’ lack of relevant training in journalism and communication in general development journalism in particular. The journalists’ lack of appropriate training in journalism and communication is manifested in their practices and can be attributed mainly to the reasons outlined below.
• Limitation of institutions offering journalism and communication training and research in the country until very recently
• Shortage of well-trained educators in the area of journalism and communication
• Absence of collaboration between media institutions and the available journalism and communication training institutes (media practices are not supported by research and training from universities)

According to Wondwosen (2009) training can make a difference because only journalists with high professional competency can genuinely serve the public interest.

Lack of collaboration between media institutions and journalism training institutions adds up to professional constraint. The media institutions admitted that they have not established formal link with universities offering journalism and communication. Some media organizations revealed that they rarely attempted to use educators from universities for training journalists. What is more, as journalistic practices are not guided by research findings, journalists repeat the same mistake in reporting development issues. Nevertheless, given the expansion of public universities offering training in journalism and communication currently, this problem may not continue to be serious constraints.

b) Lack of Shared Journalistic Value:

Journalistic practices in government media and private press institutions in Ethiopia are mainly contrasting with each other in terms of contents, angles of story and emphasis in reporting. In addition, practitioners in the two media houses hardly view each other as professionals; rather each tends to portray those in their own group as heroes, and the others as villains. The present study revealed that the government media and most of the private media journalists tend to approach their professional practices on the basis of contrasting ideologies of different political parties and consequently, the two media seem to set completely different agenda for the same public with the same problems as if they were serving two different nations.

This is also clear from Skjerdal’s (2009) observation that there is a great divide in opinion between journalists of the government media and private, where the former is perceived as pro-government and the later as pro-opposition parties in their practices, implying tense relations between journalists working for the government media and private media. It is, thus, safe to conclude that lack of national journalistic harmony towards achieving common goals is another impediment to development journalism practices in Ethiopia.

c) Lack of Confidence

The result of the study showed that journalists themselves are to blame for lack confidence to address the actual development issues of the people. Respondents who hold this position argued that Ethiopian government media journalists in particular prefer to serve as willing mouthpieces of the establishment only because they are not bold enough to practice the profession as expected of them, not because they were forced by the government in any way. Some of the journalists and almost all the media managers who participated in this study indicated that the great challenge to their practices is not government’s restriction of journalistic freedom but journalists’ lack of confidence to practice their profession. They underlined that most journalists tend to read unwritten laws and mistrust their media
managers and the government even when the managers encourage them to maintain balance and produce stories critical of the government when necessary rather than always hunting success stories.

d) Conspiring With Corrupt Elites

Fighting corruption is part of development journalism because corruption in its different forms impedes development efforts. This implies that journalists determined to champion the socioeconomic and political transformation of their country are required not only to disclose corruptors but also to be free from conspiring with them. However, it is not unusual to observe some journalists falling into the trap of corruption. The finding revealed that such practices exist in Ethiopian media institutions to some degree. Some journalists from both the federal and regional government media and one reporter from the private media hold the view that journalists are part of the problem of good governance. They stated that, “Let alone investigating corruption, journalists themselves have actively involved in corruption by conspiring with corrupt officials and businesspersons.”

A well experienced editor from one of the regional government media also said, “Even the journalists are not free from corruption. As they earn low salary, they are easily deceived by whatever benefit they get. When they go for reporting their daily allowance is not sufficient; they do not reject when government leaders and NGOs offer them extra benefits in exchange of favorable reporting. In such circumstances, how can they investigate corruption? When journalists attempt to investigate corruption, after they conduct the first interview with an official, the journalist will be granted a plot of land for own house construction. Some journalists take land from different cities and towns.” A reporter from another regional state media similarly raised the issue of journalists involving in the “urban land business.” Some practitioners, however, tended to justify such practice, nicknaming it as ‘buche’ or ‘bucheqa’, which they regarded as a normal compensation for their efforts rather than corruption.

e) Low Status of the Profession

Credibility is the biggest asset for any media institution. In other words, if the media have credibility, they can influence the public to have trust in the media, prefer that particular media and depend on it for information, which means that the media can set agenda for the public. Among Mozambican society, for example, media institutions have become the most trustworthy ones and the society has increasingly become dependent on their media because they understood that the media serve their interest through investigating corruptions and promoting accountability (Ronning, 2009).

Nevertheless, media malpractices and/ or misconceptions may erode media credibility. In the case of Ethiopia, the present study revealed that the media in general and journalism in particular has been stereotyped as rumor disseminating machine, mouthpieces of the government or the opposition political parties. Such perception can be an impediment to development journalism practices as it affects public’s acceptance of media messages and also damages the practitioners’ reputation. Moreover, given the past legacy of the century-old repressive monarchial and military governance in Ethiopia, associating journalists with the mouthpieces of the government carries negative connotation for the profession and the journalists. Indeed, the finding indicted that the public, particularly the educated ones, attribute low status or poor image to journalism profession and journalists in Ethiopia.
External Influences

Influences emanating from external sources are serious but are indirect and often unnoticed. These challenges are basically enforced by Western governments, international institutions, Western media journalists and academia. As Ndlela (2009) denotes, the influences manifest themselves through various practices:

- Pro-Western style journalism campaign by Western governments and media;
- Trainings to journalists from developing countries in Western universities;
- Western-based international media outlets such as the BBC, the CNN, and VOA;
- Western-originated journalism books disseminated throughout the developing world;
- Western media managers, editors, technical experts and educators working for media institutions in developing countries;
- International news agencies and the networks of international information flow;
- Advanced information and communication technology and globalization.

The external challenges to development journalism gaining momentum goes back to the mid-1970s when Western governments led by the USA sharply opposed New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), the move by the non-aligned movement to halt the unjust global information flow and media use. Gradually, as developing countries proceeded with their preferred journalism model, the Western capitalist nations and their multinational institutions and media continued weakening any practice that deviates from their own model. The West, through international agencies and under the banner of free flow information doctrine, advanced the interest to spread their values, particularly liberal and/or neo-liberal democracy earlier to halt the spread of the contending Communism and later to promote their hegemony in every aspect. As Part of this effort is the spreading of Anglo-American journalism models throughout the developing world (Reeves, 1993; Abrahamsen, 2000 and Ndlela, 2009). According to Ndlela, “The experience in Africa has so far shown that media and journalism education has been shaped, and continues to be shaped, by developments in trendsetting countries, mainly North America and Western Europe”.

In the case of Ethiopia, in addition to the earlier influence on media practices by British and American expertise during the Imperial era where they worked as editors of Ethiopian media houses, is the recent case of MA program in Journalism and communication, founded by support of Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). According to Skjerdal (2009), the NORAD support came to Ethiopia guided by the recently redirected mission of enhancing Western style democracy, human rights and good governance. As he clearly puts, “In line with the donor’s sharpened emphasis on free media, a curriculum was designed with particular focus on democracy and human rights”, disregarding the pressing issues of socioeconomic development.

The cumulative effect of external influence on development journalism practice is reflected by the ‘Third World’ journalists’ and publics’ tendency to praise Western style journalism without scrutiny. Practices, life style, politics, etc. in the West, seem to be accepted as symbol of perfection coming from ‘above’. Some think that whatever comes from the West is superior and should be accepted or adopted with no objection. In this regard, the analysis of the data obtained from selected media users or academics in the present study has interesting...
implications. To the question about which media they prefer to get information about Ethiopia, 66.4% of the respondents stated that they prefer international media such as the BBC and VOA, claiming that these media are more credible, which may be a ‘constructed reality’ or image deliberately imposed by the international media to alienate audiences in developing countries from their own media.

Conclusion
Media’s role in effecting change is evident but citizens benefit only if journalism is practiced properly. “If journalism of convenience prevails, chances of improving life in much of the world will be slim... Doing good is possible. News coverage can influence public opinion, which in turn can nudge the policymaking process. At the end of this chain- sometimes- is progress. The hungry might be fed, the sick might be treated, the besieged might be rescued. Reaching this end is one challenge facing today’s journalists” (Seib, 2002). In a context where people are afflicted by poverty, illiteracy and injustice, journalists cannot take pleasure in practicing convenient journalism, but are expected to comfort the afflicted by creating the necessary intelligence that can emancipate them from the prison of poverty and injustice. The media with their power to reach the mass, ability to set public agenda and influence government policy, have big responsibility in Ethiopia where poverty is a biggest threat. The challenges identified in this study have to be overcome with determination, effective leadership, appropriate training and research and sufficient financial support for journalistic activities and Ethiopia has to strengthen journalism responsive and accountable to its people.

If at all there has to be ‘partisanship’ in journalistic practices, it has to be in favour of the people by ensuring loyalty to the citizens through promoting peace, justice, equitable and holistic development, genuine democracy and good governance. Overcoming the curse of polarized stance of public media and private media by way of increasing the level of interaction between journalists working for the two news media through seminars, research conferences and vibrant professional associations, Ethiopian journalism, whether practiced by public or private media journalists, needs to have shared values in order to address the real development and governance problems of the people. Ethiopian journalism has to serve the right purpose in the right context and should never operate as ‘hired guns’. To this end, we have to decolonize our mindset from adoring irrelevant journalistic perspectives and promote our own ways of thinking, solving problems and also embrace relevant models from elsewhere so as to deal effectively with the pressing problems of our country.

References

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Section IV:
Brief Report on Symposium
The Quality in Education Symposium: A Brief Report

From the age of antiquity to this day, conference, seminar, workshop, panel discussion and symposium have been an integral part of intellectual get-together. In ancient Greece, the symposium (literally meant “a drinking party”) started with two noteworthy dialogues by Socrates, Plato’s and Xenophon’s Symposium etc. Symposium has been a vibrant forum for discussions amongst experts of a subject in front of an invited audience with an objective to discuss and understand relevant points, minimize ambiguity and normally concludes with recommendations. Though we are not officially designated “symposiarch”, we have been there from the day the university decided to hold a national symposium on “Establishing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education” on 26th and 27th April 2013. That is why the report presented here is authentic to the best of our knowledge.

The First Day of Symposium (26th April, 2013)

The steady surge of papers for a month in response of “Call for papers” resulted in several rounds of meetings to decide and select those papers which were in accordance with the quality paradigm set for the symposium. The organizing committee for EESQPE invited 20 presenters and on the appointed day all of them reached the venue (Nekemte City Hall). They were received by the members of the reception committee in traditional Ethiopian style. When the opening ceremony started with the welcome address of His Excellency Prof. Fekadu Beyane (President, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia), the hall was packed with eager participants. They were participants in the sense that all of them were going to be active listeners with goading questions.

The Keynote Address was delivered by Prof. Dirbsa Dufera. The overall impact of his talk on “Quality Practices in Education” was mesmerizing and enchanting. The key note addresses were continued in the same vein and two more experts expressed their thought provoking opinions about quality and its direct relationship with HEIs. At 10 am when the first session for the presentation of papers started after the health break and Ato. Thomas Ayana adorned the chair along with Mr. Dinkisa Keno as co-chair, all eyes were set to look at Ato. Yirgalem Alemu from Haramaya University. As it was already decided that each presenter would be allowed 30 minutes of time including time for discussion and deliberations, the presenter answered all the questions asked by the audience with equanimity and composure. The able team of rapporteurs noted the deliberations for record and further use.

The tone was set and one paper after another was presented during both the days. On an average, three papers per session were presented in each session. Each paper was devoted to one or the other sub-thematic areas and in this way contributed to the overall aim of the symposium. We could have given you an eye-witness account of the two days deliberations as what you get as proceedings is only a partial view but due to reasons beyond control it is not possible and only a brief mention of some of the papers follows. The three papers presented in the very first session were Assessment of the provision of Guidance and Counselling Services in Secondary Schools of East Harerge Zone and Harari Region Ethiopia (Mr. Yirgalem Alemu), Kaizen Approach for Enhancing Quality Management Practices in HEIs (Mr. Sarvan Kumar Reddy and Mr. Sarfaraj Karim), and Towards Quality Legal Education in Ethiopia (Mr. Lamessa Berber and Mr. Ayoob Khan).

After the lunch break The second session started and the papers that are worth mentioning are of Dr. Deepika Nelson and Dr. Julia Devardhi from Haramaya University (Correlation
between Teacher’s attitude & Quality Paradigm), Mr. Kefyalew Tadesse of Ambo University who spoke on “Teaching-learning Performance of Instructors in Relation to Academic Performance of Students from Gender perspective” and of Dr. Gopal Sharma from Wollega University who spoke on “The Student Satisfaction Approach to Quality Enhancement”. The session was chaired and co-chaired by Dr. Firdisa Jabesa and Mrs. Eyersusale Tadesse.

After the health break the last session of the first day started with Dr. Raghavendra HL and Mr. Abebe Zewuide in the chair and co-chair respectively. They conducted the session with alacrity and poise and were able to allow three papers to be presented in time. Mr. Khalid Kaleem of Wollega University presented a paper on “Making use of ICT for enhancing quality Assessment and Formative feedback” and Dr. S. Ganesan of Haramaya University spoke on “A Study on Quality based Education through Information & Communication Technology (ICT) - A Conceptual Study”. The last paper of the session was co-authored by Dr. Robert Marshall and Ms. Alan Bleakley from Exeter University (UK) and was based on an innovative concept “Perception and beliefs in Medical Education toward an Aesthetic Medicine”.

The first day event came to the required halt with participants discussing a number of issues with the presenters over a cup of coffee. It was seen that when the visiting cards were exchanged and the participants from other locations wished to go for shopping and merry-making. The organizers took a sigh of relief when some of the dignitaries expressed satisfaction for the smooth conduct of the first day events.

The Second Day of Symposium (27th April, 2013)
The second day was a new day, new in the sense that the very first paper scheduled for the day was the work of a team of scholars from a number of African countries. Prof. R. A. Venkata presented the paper on “Collaborative Meta- Profile Development using the Tuning Methodology to Harmonize Mechanical Engineering Education in Africa”. Dr. Kannan A. and Mr. Tena Bekele chaired and co-chaired the session. The two other notable papers presented in the session were “Information Technology Entrepreneurship: ways forward for the development of entrepreneurship in Ethiopia” (Dr. Temesgn Goroma, Wollega University) and “Determinants of Student Attrition at College of Business & Economics, Mekelle University: Econometric Investigation” (Mr. Tsehaye Weldegiorgis, Mekelle University). The discussion part of the session was notable.

After the health break (you must have understood by now that the health break was one of the items in which the participants could directly challenge and discuss the issues with the presenters of their liking and choice. The so-called tea break has ever been a rejuvenating experience for body and mind of the researchers), the presenters chaired and co-chaired by Dr. Negash Geleta and Dr. Getachew Beshrago spoke at length on the burning issue and the theme of the symposium. Dr. Tesfaye Teshome (HERQA), Dr. Firdisa Jabesa (Addis Ababa University), Mr. Dereje Fekadu and Mr. Kebede Nemomsa (Wollega University) were the prudent speakers of the session and they left no stone unturned in underlining their concerns of each and every one with regard to quality in education and Quality Education.

After the lunch break when the participants entered the Nekemte Hall, they were sure of two things. “There are two sessions left and after that the valedictory function will be held.” The time was running out and there were many papers left. So it was decided to club the two sessions together and the post lunch session was started with the presentation of Dr. Yirgashe Bekele of Addis Ababa University. She presented the paper on “Effect of Prompt
“Letter- Naming on Word Reading Fluency” and was followed by Dr. Negeri Lencho of the same university who very adroitly took the issue of development and democratization in his paper “Communicating for development and Democratization in Ethiopia: Journalistic practice and Challenges”. Another significant paper was presented by Dr. Lemessa Mergo. As an expert in gender studies, he knew what ailed and so was able to very effectively put forward his views based on his research entitled, “Gender disparity in Higher Education in Ethiopia: Qualitative and Qualitative Indicators from three Selected Universities”. Another issue that had scarcely been researched is of cheating, malpractice by students and its effect of quality education. This area was keenly investigated and the paper presented by Dr. Alemaryehu Teklemariam on “Academic Cheating, Prevalence, Causes, Strategies and its Consequences in 23 Selected Secondary Schools of Addis Ababa” was an eye opener indeed. The session was chaired by Prof. Gopal Sharma and Mr. Tamiru Olana was the co-chair person. The concluding session also resulted in a number of exploding questions and the heated discussion had to be curtailed because of the paucity of time.

On the backdrop of nearly two days’ discussion, that was the time when some general discussion had to be taken up to consolidate the gains of a number of deliberations. Prof. Fekadu Beyene, Prof. Dirbsa Dufera and Prof. Mitiku Teso, took the centre stage and directed the attention of the audience and participants towards the theme of the symposium. They were the torch-bearers to guide the gathering to reach the desired goal. Their discussion and mutual deliberations permeated into the minds of the audience what was intended to be instilled. When the quality perspective was well-taken and received, it was the time to present a copy of the recommendations and resolutions of the two days’ symposium. The declaration was read and discussed. Amendments were suggested and then with a voice vote the acceptance of the recommendations was announced.

What was left then but the closing remarks of the dignitaries, vote of thanks and distribution of certificates? Once these formalities were over, participants started strolling towards the vehicles ready to take them for a tour to the historic city of Nekemte. They visited Kusa Morada Palace and were bewildered to listen to the guide who brought the history alive. Cameras clicked incessantly to capture memories. A visit to the University workshop impressed the onlookers. The linguistic landscape of the town mesmerized the city-dwellers. When they returned at Desalegn Hotel to enjoy the social evening specially arranged for them and found the piping hot dinner and drinks ready, their fatigue of the day took to the heels. One of the organizers who nearly lost his voice due to work-pressure regained it in an instant. Satisfaction of the work well done was writ on several dazed faces.

Wollega University hosted a national symposium in which intellectuals from several new and old universities participated. Looking into the sparkling eyes of the guests, the members of the organizing committee gave them the return look full of gratification and repose. The two days’ bond will not be a transient one as the intellectual bonds are always everlasting and perpetual.

In this work when it shall be found
that much is omitted,
let it not be forgotten
that much likewise
is performed.

Dr Samuel Johnson, upon completion of his dictionary, 1755
Section V: Resolutions
The Symposium Resolutions

Participants of the National Symposium on “Establishing, Enhancing and Sustaining Quality Practices in Education” organized by Wollega University on April 26th & 27th 2013 resolve the following,

- We, the stakeholders of education agree, to identify and take positive initiatives to put into practice the quality education according to real life situations of HEIs.
- As “Quality Demands Quality”, we, the stakeholders of educational institutions shall work hard to improve and maintain quality of inputs, process and outputs of education.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall work to bridge the gap between the academic achievements of female and male learners through engagements of students in the learning process.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall sustain the promise of quality practices in education at all levels through implementation of formative assessments and provisions of periodical feedback.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall utilize ICT packages intensively to establish, to enhance and to sustain quality of education.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall improve the guidance and counselling services for students in higher education.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall work to emphasize on giving continuous professional development training for instructors.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall work towards addressing the need of learners in education by improving teaching learning environment.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall promote experience sharing among the educational institutions towards quality practices.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall be fully committed to realize quality practices in active collaboration with each other.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall fight against academic dishonesty and corruption.
- We the stakeholders of education, shall reduce attrition rate of students by implementing enabling strategies.
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