

When education goes wrong, nothing can go right

EDUCATIONAL
Evil
Influence
Uncertainty
Chaos
Pretence
ears
Ignorance
Obscurity
Progress

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The Private Higher Education Sector: A Journey through India and China

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Abstract

The world economy is changing as knowledge supplants physical capital as the source of present and future wealth. Countries need to educate more of their young people to a higher standard. The quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions and its accessibility is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness in the global front. The authors are interested in studying the trends and growth of private higher education in developing countries viz., India, China and Ethiopia with the objective of sharing the experiences of India, and China to the Ethiopian Higher Education System.

To achieve the objective of the paper, the authors followed documentary review method. The findings of the study revealed that Ethiopia, where contribution of higher education sector is negligible, has to cater to the current and anticipated demand for medium, high level skilled and highly trained human resource. Indian scenario offers guidelines to Ethiopia while framing her policies of evaluating quality of private higher education institutions. The active and aggressive policies of China to appear as a major player in international education shows how people can become the wealth of this nation. The paper also warns the possibility of brain drain problem of students going abroad for higher education if Ethiopia loses quantitatively and qualitatively. This will have a serious impact on Ethiopia's development in the future.

1. Private Higher Education in India

India has the second-largest higher education system and the third-largest pool of skilled manpower in the world. The system encompasses approximately 304 universities including 62 “deemed universities,” 11 open universities, 14,600 colleges, 10 million students, and 0.5 million teachers. Higher education in India can be classified under two broad heads viz., Technical and Non-Technical (general) education. Technical education in India covers the areas like Engineering/Technology, Architecture, Management, Hotel Management, Pharmacy, etc., whereas Non-Technical courses comprise Arts, Commerce, Science, Law, etc. The Technical courses are governed by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Non-Technical courses mentioned are governed by University Grants Commission (UGC).

India's population is enormous (of course it's only rivalled by China) and has a burgeoning middle class. The use of English-language is wide-spread and often prolific in India – critical for integration into the global economy.

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Indian families are transfixed on education, and will make virtually any sacrifice to provide their young with the best academic environment possible. In just four years, the number of universities rose from 178 in 1997 to 256 in 2001. Between 1994 and 1999, more than 500 new colleges were established annually. Since India's independence in 1947, student registration in higher education has grown to 29 times the original figure. After independence, private initiative and industrial households have played a substantial role in supporting higher education growth in its own way.

Financing of Higher Education in India

At present, the university system is too large for the government of India to maintain financially. Until the late 1980s, the state supplied up to 90 percent of the total funding for higher education. In contrast, student fees contributed around 5 percent. However, after the government saw minimal returns from such a huge investment, it changed its policy, increasing funding at the elementary and secondary levels and decreasing funding at the university level.

Central government's share of total higher education income in 1950/1951 was just 49 percent, although its funding rose to approximately 80 percent during the 1980s. Since the 1990s the government has resorted to cutbacks in higher education in the wake of structural adjustment, paving the way for the rapid expansion of self-financed private higher education whose funding is derived mainly from tuition fees. In the southern states of India self-financing institutions outnumber those that are government-aided.

The inability of the public sector to respond to the rapid growth in higher education is but one aspect of recent developments in the private sector. Rapid advancements in technology around the world demand that the educational system produce a skilled labor force in the shortest possible period of time. While there has been a dramatic increase in the number of public colleges established in recent years, most of them only offer general education courses through syllabuses set by their affiliating universities. These colleges have neither the flexibility nor the financial resources to offer the same innovative programs that private institutions have developed. A graduate of a traditional three-year bachelor's program has virtually no marketable skills as compared to the one that has completed a program that included industry placement and enrichment modules in the same three-year span.

Taking advantage of the provision for joint responsibility toward education, some states have passed their own legislation on private higher education recently. Chattisgarh was the first state to pass a Private Universities Act, in October 2002. The newly emerged state of Uttaranchal succeeded in getting four private universities during 2002–2003. In fact, there has been a sudden proliferation of private medical and engineering colleges, especially in

the southern and western states of India. However, shrewd politicians and businessmen took advantage of this provision, raising exorbitant amounts of money, legally or illegally, through capitation fees beyond the reach of many middle-class families.

In its most recent judgement (August 14, 2003), the Supreme Court has again taken a tough stand against capitation fees and profiteering by the private professional colleges. It has threatened to “de-recognize” private colleges found guilty of charging capitation fees in any form. Again, however, the impact remains unclear; there are reports, for example, of persistent underhanded dealings for obtaining seats in private professional colleges.

Notwithstanding the legal rulings, alliances among politicians, business, and academia sustain the commercialization of higher education for private gains. Thus, although, democratic India stands out with the role taken by state governments and courts, it joins a powerful international trend of sharp growth in commercial private higher education, some tied to a new and dominant political economic marketplace and some to the lack of a firmer restraining political legal framework.

The casualty of the reckless growth in private institutions is not just equity, a well-known fact, but also the quality of higher education. Few private colleges offer quality higher education and many have been started with the sole goal of making quick profits. Philanthropy, charity, and education, which were considerations of the private sector in education in the past, no longer seem to figure as motives. The government’s inability to regulate private institutions is becoming increasingly obvious.

Unfortunately, the disparity between the rich and the poor is reflected in the quality of education imparted to each group. Poorer parents have no choice but to enrol their children in state-funded institutions that lack the facilities and teacher talent of their self-financed counterparts.

Private institutions are not completely without criticism. The danger with self-financed institutions lies in the very characteristic that distinguishes them from public institutions. Since they are not dependent on the state for funding, they are not subject to the same regulations regarding the use of resources and quality of education. Professional institutions promise potential students lucrative positions in their field of choice upon graduation, but there is no guarantee that they can make good on their claims. While some of them make significant contributions to the need for a highly skilled work force, others merely capitalize on trends like management and computer education in order to make a profit. Indeed, all of the self-financing institutions collect fees from their students, but too many of them are run for the sole purpose of exploiting teachers and students alike without delivering quality.

Quality Assessment

Both the public and private sectors are under scrutiny when it comes to quality. The issue has come to the forefront of discussions on higher education in India, particularly in the past decade. The University Grants Commission (UGC), established in 1956, is the national authority responsible for determining and maintaining educational standards for colleges and universities.

In 1994, the UGC established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an external agency responsible for grading universities and colleges according to the quality of education they impart. In order to do this, NAAC established a set of criteria that any institution of higher learning can use to evaluate its own performance. These include: curricular aspects; teaching-learning and evaluation; research, consultancy and extension; infrastructure and learning resources; student support and progression; organization and management; and healthy practices. The weight of each of the seven parameters listed above varies in determining the final score depending on the type of institution being assessed.

Almost on similar lines, AICTE, the governing body of the technical education in India has introduced National Board of Accreditation (NBA) to assess the quality of each individual program rather than the institute itself, which is the criterion for quality assessment in higher learning centers. However, they have no power to assess or regulate private, unrecognized institutions. Officials responsible for educational policy must address qualitative issues in the private sector with as much vigor as NAAC or NBA has in this sector.

Additional parameter in the quality assurance adopted by many private engineering/management institutions in India is by obtaining certification from International Standards Organizations (ISO). Institutions that obtained the ISO certification provide a complete transparency on the functioning of curricular and administrative issues.

At the last but not least, media also makes an attempt to evaluate and grade the educational institutions in India like Best B-Schools, Best Medical colleges and Best Engineering colleges, etc. Sometimes, The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) of the Govt. of India takes the support of the media in conducting these surveys to provide a clear picture of higher educational institutions, to enable the Govt., agencies and parents to make clear decisions on funding or granting additional courses/intake, etc.

At present, India is second only to China in the number of students sent to U.S. institutions of higher education. With 54,000 students studying abroad, the potential exists that only a very small percentage will return to their home country and put their knowledge to use. There is no doubt that more students will go elsewhere if higher education in India continues to fail them both quantitatively and qualitatively. This will have a serious impact on

India's development in the future. Let us look into the scenario of higher education in China in the next section of the paper.

2. Private Higher Education in China

A report published by them in April 2003 provides an interesting and stark perspective on higher education in China and India, and makes the following points: China is THE MOST IMPORTANT center in the world in the globalization of education. She is turning out to be a more important International Education Market than India. China and India face similar challenges in their higher education sector with intense competition for admission to the best institutions and universities. But China is far ahead on the supply side with nearly 100 high quality institutions and is investing heavily in creating many more, leaving India far behind. As a result, China is turning out many more top quality students than India.

China has opened up higher education for both private and foreign investment. Foreign investors can come in by tying up with local Chinese partners. Unlike India, China is experiencing a great deal of two-way international student traffic. China has become one of the world's great study-abroad destinations. Currently, more than 60,000 foreigners study in Chinese universities, and that number is swelling each year. China is the number-one choice for U.S. students who want to study in Asia (conversely very few Americans study in India, as most are frightened by perceived security risks). China is active and aggressive about becoming a major player in international education. It recognizes that huge sum of money leave the country when students go abroad, and it is keen to tip that trade balance in its favour.

China's education system struggles with the problem of providing sufficient quality opportunities for outstanding students. Just as is in India, Chinese students must write highly competitive entrance exams to seek places in the nation's best universities. The National University Entrance Exams (NUEE) represents the most imposing and anxiety riddled challenge for China's teenagers. Those who perform with brilliance will be slotted into seats at the two biggest higher education names and brands in the country. But there are many more quality institutions, about 100 in China. The fact that more investors are joining China's higher education sector might result in the envy of those wishing to see India's universities revamped and re-energized. The "Top 100" Chinese universities are public institutions, and they are well-resourced. China's universities turn out thousands of Bachelor degree holders who can easily gain entrance at the top universities in the U.S., Britain and elsewhere. China is turning out many more top candidates than India each year as it has more universities of world class quality.

Private Sector in China

Recognizing that even the Chinese government has its own limitations to fund higher education, the private sector has opened up. China welcomes (and is encouraging) private and foreign investment. It's not a simple matter, as in all such aspects in China there is lots of bureaucratic control and involvement. However, provincial education ministries are actively monitoring to ensure their goals are met. "We want to bring in foreign investment and we want to bring in education expertise," said Mr. Ding Hongyu, the Director of the Office for International Cooperation and Exchange at the Beijing Municipal Education Commission. "A foreign partner must find a Chinese partner, but it is not restricted for institutions to choose certain partner at certain levels. It's logical for them to work with another university, but if they choose to work with high school or a kindergarten, they can."

A Two - way International Student Traffic

China is experiencing a great deal of two - way international student traffic. China has become one of the world's great study-abroad destinations. Currently, more than 60,000 foreigners study in Chinese universities, and that number is swelling each year. Powerful economies and advanced technological societies of South Korea and Japan are sending huge numbers of students to China. For Americans, China is among the most popular destinations for study-abroad and the number-one choice for U.S. students who want to study in China. Delegates from Chinese universities tour Asian countries to promote study at their institutions. Recently, delegates from seventeen Chinese universities from Jiangsu province went to Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia in search of education links and opportunities for student exchanges. China is active and aggressive about becoming a major player in international education.

3. Lessons for Ethiopia

A Brief Description of the Higher Education System in Ethiopia

The first higher education institution in Ethiopia, the University College of Addis Ababa, was established in 1950. In spite of the country's need to expand the higher education sector, little progress was made in the subsequent 50 years. Until 1995, for example, there were only two public universities and sixteen affiliated and independent junior colleges in the country. Recently, following the government's decentralization effort to expand the higher education system in regional states, more universities were added increasing the total number of universities to eight. Among these, Addis Ababa University is the leviation as it accounts for about 42 percent of the regular and 39 percent of the continuing education enrolment (MOE 1998).

Included among post secondary establishments are also fourteen teacher-training institutions with an average enrolment of 55 students each. These institutions are responsible for training prospective teachers for first cycle primary education (grades 1 through 4) for the duration of one year. The higher education system also includes

post secondary professional training institutes, such as the nursing school, bank and insurance institute and the Ethiopian Airlines Pilots and technicians training centers. The total enrolment of all of these is below 1,000 (Habtamu 2000).

Since 1998, five private colleges have been created offering programs for a two-year diploma (Zewdu 2000). In the 1999/2000 academic year, 8,376 students were enrolled in private colleges, accounting for 12.4 percent of total enrolment in higher education (MOE 2000). Some of the private colleges have started programs for a bachelor's degree, with the hope that they will secure accreditation eventually.

The total number of students in regular degree programs increased from 9,367 in 1994/95 to 19,957 in 1998/99 and in regular diploma programs from 5,881 to 6,524 in the same period. Despite these increases, it has been estimated that the gross enrolment ratio in higher education in the years 1995/96 -1999/2000 falls between 1.0 and 0.5 percent with significant gender disparities (MOE 2000).

Students are selected and assigned to a university on the basis of the result of the Ethiopian school leaving certificate examination (ESLCE), which is offered at the completion of grade twelve. In principle, applicants are expected to have over 2.0 GPA in ESLCE in 5 subjects (including English and Math) to qualify for admission into higher education. In practice, however, the GPA cut off point is determined by the space available and the number of applicants each academic year. As a result, access is reserved to the exceptionally few high achievers who represent less than one-fifth of eligible candidates. In addition, the odds are that students from well-organized public or private secondary schools in metropolitan areas have the highest chance of success, further reducing the opportunity for tertiary education among the rural and low-income groups.

Given the small number of openings in the regular program relative to the demand, continuing education remains among the few options left for most students who completed their secondary education. Higher education institutions in Ethiopia run evening and summer programs to address those students not admissible through the regular program. As per the 1998/99 Educational Abstract of the Ministry of Education, there were 22,585 students pursuing their studies (both degree and diploma) through this arrangement, accounting for 35 percent of overall enrolment in the country.

The major clientele of evening programs are either civil servants who intend to upgrade their qualifications or those who have been denied admission to the regular programs. An evening degree generally takes approximately 6 years to complete, while the evening diploma can be completed in 3 to 4 years. The summer arrangement is

basically designed to upgrade the qualifications of primary and secondary school teachers. A five-summer session is needed to complete a bachelor's degree, while a diploma program takes only three summers.

While being less demanding than the regular degree program, the evening program is still competitive and involves a GPA cut off point for screening applicants. The screening procedure further serves to assign students to particular fields of study once their admission has been approved. Business (accounting, economics and management), law and information studies are highly preferred fields and entrance in them, therefore, requires a highly competitive GPA. Most evening programs do not provide courses in the natural sciences, pharmacology and medicine.

Financing Higher Education

In the years following the introduction of university education in Ethiopia, students participating in regular programs were provided with free room and board, and were given pocket money. In spite of the profound changes in the socio-economic fabric of society, the tradition of free higher education has been maintained with students' living and instructional costs coming out of the public purse; only the pocket money has disappeared. Students enrolled in summer programs have their tuition and living expenses (with the exception of some miscellaneous costs including laundry and occasional transportation) covered by their employer, the Ministry of Education. Students enrolled in evening programs, on the other hand, have to pay substantial tuition and cover their own living costs.

On average, it is reported that about 12 percent of the education budget goes to higher education, compared to 65 percent to primary, 17 percent to secondary and 4 percent to other aspects of education (MOE 1998). Of this, more than 40 percent is used to cover faculty and staff salaries. While its allocation from the education budget is relatively small, the unit cost of higher education is higher than the costs for primary and secondary education. According to the 1999/2000 report of the Planning and Programming Department of the Ministry of Education, for example, the unit cost for higher education is 5,250 Birr (US\$3,500) compared to Birr 123 (US\$82) and Birr 255 (US\$170) for primary and secondary education respectively. The high unit cost aside, the recurrent budget for higher education is continuing to increase over time and constitutes a heavy financial burden on the government. The recurrent budgets for the years 1996/7, 1997/8 and 1998/9 were US\$65million, US\$97million and US\$133 million respectively.

While less significant, some assistance to higher education also comes from various UN agencies and bilateral donors. Some of these agencies that finance the system through grants, experts, scholarships and consultancy

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include the UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, the World Bank, SAREC, USAID, SIDA and the British Council (Habtamu 2000).

The MOE in its Capacity Building Program of ESDP-2, 2002/03-2004/05 gives emphasis on Human Resource Development and considers higher education as the central program in improving working system. Since the private sector in Ethiopia is still at its infancy, the MOE feels that the government has to invest more on higher education with encouragement for more private sector involvement.

Training and Development Efforts by MOE

The plan to install a Brain Center to set the strategic direction to changing socio - economic demands and the proposed Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency to develop standards and to monitor and evaluate institutions are programs to develop the higher education sector.

The long-term objective of reducing dependence on government will give more autonomy to universities.

Conclusions

Indian scenario offers guidelines to Ethiopia while framing her policies of evaluating quality of private higher education institutions. The contribution of private higher education institutions in filling the gap between demand for and supply of quality education is significant; at the same time the commercialization of education is detrimental to the interests of the society. Education must be considered a joint responsibility of both the sectors, with stress to equity and quality, rather than disparity and quantity as outcomes.

The active and aggressive role of China in attracting its education sector not only to native students but also to international students must be an eye opener to Ethiopia. The country which faces brain drain or reverse of technology transfer has to become the base for its youth to flourish and cherish to develop a hi- tech Ethiopia. The country where 20th century intellectuals hoped to be the Japan of Africa can show signs of intellectual and technical enhancement with a drastic development of private and public sectors keeping in mind China and India - the international players in this field. The World Bank's financial support for "demand-responsive innovation funds" that seek to foster positive changes in the institutional culture to teaching and learning in tertiary education must be utilized by Ethiopia in this 'information era', where her 'knowledge society' will enable her to be a 'globally competitive economy'.

The World Bank's observation (during a regional training conference held in Ghana on September 22-25, 2003) about African education system must be a warning to Ethiopia too. Unemployed or departed graduates represent a tragic squandering of scarce resources. Part of the cause is that higher education is often not very relevant to the

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needs of the region. Mostly modelled after European higher education, African systems are evolving rapidly from elite structures.

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***Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships for Development of Competitive Higher Education
in Ethiopia: Some Reflections on Private Higher Education***

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Abstract

Judged by the number of higher education providers in the private sector and by the size of their enrolments, one could note that private higher education is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. Such a growth of private higher education provision is a logical outcome of a traditional education system that has a serious structural deficiency, which has created a backlog of hundreds of thousands of potentially able and willing learners; i.e., the demand for higher education was far exceeding its supply. This growth has also brought about a new and important development in terms of changing people's attitude towards higher education - i.e., it has demonstrated that people should and could take responsibility for their own (and their children) education. Although private higher education institutions are 'private', their product is for 'public consumption'. Private higher education institutions are thus playing a big role of social responsibility.

This paper attempts to present a general framework for productive public-private partnerships for the development of competitive higher education in Ethiopia. It first outlines the major points of departure that guides the arguments in the rest of the paper. These points revolve around the role and position of higher education in determining the country's competitiveness in the global marketplace, the problems with the traditional approach of organizing and providing education, the concept of education as a business, the balance between quality enhancement and expansion of enrolment, and issues of sustainability. Then some of the salient outstanding issues are identified including expansion, access, quality and relevance. This is followed by charting out a general framework that defines productive public-private partnership and collaborative engagement. The divergent perspectives surrounding private higher education which guide and dictate the behavior, actions and outcomes of any partnerships are discussed. The argument is that the dominant perspectives tend towards either a highly restrictive or facilitative environment determining the performance of the partnership and its outcomes. Shared vision on higher education, clarified mission and roles of actors as well as mutual trust are identified as building blocks. Within the purview of such convergent vision and clarified missions, the role of each counterpart is outlined: government ought to work in such a way as to induce demand, influence supply and facilitate quality assurance, thus enhancing the competitiveness of the institutions and the country at large in the global marketplace. Private HEIs ought to demonstrate that they have a stake in quality through, for example, formulating a robust and rigorous quality assurance mechanism and implementing it through innovative approaches and organized response. Useful lessons could be drawn from both success and failure experiences elsewhere.

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The paper concludes by reiterating the importance of considering higher education as a social good even when it has to be provided through private means, the significance of viewing quality assurance and expansion of market share as mutually reinforcing objectives in the medium-long term, the relevance of promoting the development of quality higher education provision for the country's competitiveness, the instrumentality of productive public-private partnership based on convergent vision, and the criticality of the attitude, behavior, and actions of the private higher education sub-sector in determining the outcomes. The role of external factors is to facilitate or retard the pace.

1. Introduction

Ten years ago there wasn't a private higher education provider worth the name. In a matter of less than a decade's time, several colleges have mushroomed throughout the country even though most of them are geographically concentrated in the capital, Addis Ababa. Such a proliferation of higher education providers is a logical outcome of an education system that has a serious structural deficiency, which has created a backlog of hundreds of thousands of potentially able and willing learners; i.e., the demand for higher education was far exceeding its supply. Hence, even at the time when many people took to their faith the conviction that higher education was supposed to be paid for by the government and not to be self-financed, tens of thousands of learners and parents opted for financing their (and their children's) education by their own bootstraps. This fact that people first and foremost should assume responsibility for their education is an important development which also gave the impetus for a further proliferation of higher education providers in the private sector.

Private higher education is the fastest growing sector in many countries. It has long dominated higher education systems in many Asian countries including Japan, South Korea, Taipei China, Indonesia, and the Philippines. There has been a dramatic shift from public to private higher education in Latin America. For example, at least half of higher education students are enrolled in private higher education institutions in Brazil, Mexico, Columbia, Peru, and Venezuela. The reason for such fast expansion largely stems from an inability in many countries of the government to fund expansion.

The situation also resembles what had actually happened in many other African countries. Once, there was economic liberalization in many African countries, there was a rush to invest on higher education. Consequently, the number of private higher education institutions has increased. But, the African experience also depicts a scenario in which some private universities were there only in name to such an extent that they were referred to as 'briefcase' universities. Prof. Paul Vitta of the Regional Director of UNESCO cautions, "...as we liberalize the field of higher education, we must have the wherewithal to ensure quality. Private universities often encounter the

danger of disproportionate growth of the number of students on one hand, compared to resources on the other. Compromise on quality becomes the price that is paid’ .

But one has to note that it is not only in the higher education area that the expansion of private sector has been observed over the last few years. It is also important to consider the expansion of private sector higher education institutions as part and parcel of private sector expansion over the period.

As profound changes are taking place in the private sector higher education, the public sector has also been going through a number of fundamental changes. It is no more the case that admission to higher education institutions should be limited to few thousands a year. In fact, if all goes well, the Ministry of Education has a plan of ensuring that each university (and there are already eight of them) will have an enrolment capacity of 10,000 each year. Postgraduate enrolment alone is expected to rise beyond 6000 a year. Besides the colleges and institutes that offer diploma programs enroll hundreds of thousands every year. In addition, it is no more the case that government guarantees instant employment of all graduates of public higher education institutions, a fact that characterized the status quo until the early 1990s. This will have implication for higher education provision in the private sector – it influences the demand, supply, product quality and competitiveness and development of the private sector higher education institutions.

This paper attempts to present a framework for productive public-private partnerships for an effective provision of higher education in Ethiopia. It first outlines the major points of departure that guides the arguments in the paper, charts out a general framework that defines collaborative engagement, and identifies what the government and the private higher education providers need to address to achieve the vision and goal of higher education in Ethiopia.

2. Points of Departure

The following points would serve as points of departure for the subsequent arguments. The list, however, is by no means exhaustive.

- i. Education in general and higher education in particular is the scarcest service in Ethiopia. The present state of backwardness could apparently be explained by the lack of it. The country's competitiveness in the global market place is going to be determined by the extent to which this situation is changed. Hence, any effort that contributes towards opening and expanding educational opportunities at all levels must be encouraged.

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- ii. The traditional approach of providing higher education has its drawbacks. Public provision of higher education for free is neither sustainable nor equitable. Higher education is costly and it cannot be sustained; this could explain some of the reasons as to why access to higher education opportunity remained low in Ethiopia. Moreover, it has private returns that may exceed social returns; hence it is increasingly getting difficult to justify financing private benefits through taxpayer's money (public resources).
- iii. Charging fees for providing higher education to learners is no more the exclusive domain of private providers. Of course evening programs offered by public higher education institutions have always been fee-based. More recently, public higher education institutions are introducing fees (in terms of cost sharing and/or income generating ventures). However, such a move is externally induced. A Proclamation is issued to that effect setting the stage for effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability of provision of services and resource utilization. Private HEIs have a lot of experience to share with public HEIs in this regard.
- iv. Quality of higher education in Ethiopia has been on the decline in general. It could be explained in terms of inputs, processes, the external environment, outputs, etc. A robust system of quality assurance has been lacking. The existing system of accreditation has a number of problems. Issues of quality and relevance of higher education should not be viewed in isolation from expansion of access. In fact, I would argue, expansion of access should not be pursued at the expense of quality and relevance. Otherwise, the whole project loses meaning and purpose.
- v. Although private higher education institutions are 'private' in terms of ownership, their product is for 'public consumption'. Private higher education institutions are thus playing a big role of social responsibility and accountability. This needs to be appropriately articulated by both the public and private sectors. The Higher Education Proclamation № 351/2003 has the following to say in its Preamble. "Whereas, it has become necessary to lay down a system and issue requirements that enable higher education to produce quality and skilled human power adequately to meet the needs of the country; ... to create appropriate legal framework so that research conducted by higher education shall be problem solving and directed towards the utilization of the potential resources of the country; ... to determine by law the directions of the private higher education institutions in order to promote their contribution in expanding education and conducting research..." To this effect, private HEIs are accountable to the Ministry of Education for their performance as an institution of education.
- vi. There are synergies to be harnessed by promoting public-private partnerships that work. Such partnerships could take on a number of forms (e.g., private HEIs could forge partnerships with the government, with public HEIs, and even with the private sector, etc.). The foundation upon which such a partnership is based should be

on convergent vision and mutual trust and understanding. Creating, clarifying and sharing that vision is a challenge for both the public and private operators.

- vii. Provision of quality higher education between public and private operators should be based on the principle of competitive cooperation. Competition enhances quality, it doesn't necessarily lead to zero-sum game solutions; there is always the 'third alternative' to win-win solutions. Cooperation enhances capacity both to enlarge the entire pie as well as the share of each partaker.

3. Some Outstanding Issues

3.1. Expansion of Access and Assurance of Quality & Relevance

One way of looking at these would be as if access and quality were either not inter-related or are mutually exclusive. Such a presumption holds that since quality assurance takes time as well as a significant amount of investment, there is an impending risk of losing the market share that exists now. One should wait until minimum quality is maintained and try to reach as many learners as possible in the short-term as a preferred strategy. In this case, though desirable, quality is an objective that is hard to be achieved in the short-term because there is a danger of losing the market share now and/or there is lack of necessary capacity to address it now. This approach may succeed in enrolling large numbers in the short-term. However, it also runs in the direction of jeopardizing its long-term prospects. Soon, the public will realize the apparent differences in quality among providers of higher education and possibly abandon those institutions that rush student registration and bend on handing out diplomas. Hence, such an approach is a short-sighted one and could actually be suicidal.

Quality of higher education provision is not an agenda that can be relegated to some future date. We must understand that in most cases the primary reason for opting to private higher education is because potential learners don't have access to public universities and colleges which don't cost much financially, but their credibility is already established, etc. Hence, a certain level of credibility adds to desirability. But, once that choice is made, why would students go to certain private higher education institutions and not to others? Again credibility is an important criterion, which at the moment is being served through the MOE accreditation mechanism. However, the existing system of accreditation has a long way to go to appropriately assure quality of higher education provision. The single most important reason as to why government accreditation is so desired both by the students as well as by the higher education provision providers in the private sector is that civil service regulations by design focus on the production of the academic credentials, accredited by the Ministry of Education, rather than on actual performance of the person for such important entitlements as employment, promotion, etc. The second reason could be affordability since the general background is poverty. As long as programs are accredited by the Ministry of Education (no matter how they actually rate on quality scale since there is no mechanism to know that), people

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would prefer those institutions charging less fees for the same programs. Accessibility in terms of geographical proximity is another reason since it reduces costs. Those who started early might have certain comparative advantages. Peer pressure (keeping up with the Joneses) could be another factor, etc.

A second way of looking at it is taking hold of quality at the center of it all from the very beginning no matter how small initial demand looks like. This approach presumes that demonstrated quality provision generates its own demand in the medium-long term. Such institutions take their work rather seriously (student enrolment, investment on facilities, human resources management and development, customer care and handling, etc.) In effect, what the first group of institutions might actually be doing is promotion work for the second group and hence in effect lose their market share to the latter on a permanent basis.

The Ethiopian private higher education sector has tendencies along the continuum of both types. On one hand, there are some who tend to make little distinction between settings up of a make-shift kiosk, putting up a cocktail of items on the shelf and try to lure education hungry customers by cosmetic means and that of provision of higher education as a serious business. On the other hand, there are others who take the responsibility and the challenges quite seriously and in some few cases have actually succeeded to demonstrate their competitiveness nationally as well as internationally, through exporting skilled labor for example.

3.2. Sustainability

Sustainability is an important aspect of higher education provision. It is linked with social responsibility, quality of services, and viability of the institution. In fact, it could be shown that sustainability is an outcome of a balanced pursuit of quality objectives with expansion of market share. Quality can neither be conceived nor achieved without some minimum size of market share. Pursuing quality objective alone without a minimum enrolment expansion objective might compromise institutional viability (quadrant A & B in fig 1). Quality assurance by its very nature is investment intensive (both human and capital) - profits need to be realized however small they might be at the beginning. Similarly, larger market share cannot be sustained for long without ensuring a certain minimum level of quality standards. Hence, chasing an enrolment (and profit) objective without maintaining quality is not sustainable; it backfires on the very objective of expanding market share and on institutional viability (quadrants A & C in fig 1). Quality helps to expand the market envelope in the medium-long term. Similarly, increased market share helps to enhance quality since it reduces unit cost of provision of the service and therefore the competitiveness of the institution. Both objectives should be viewed as complementary to each other in the long-term if sustainability is to be achieved (Quadrant D in Figure 1).

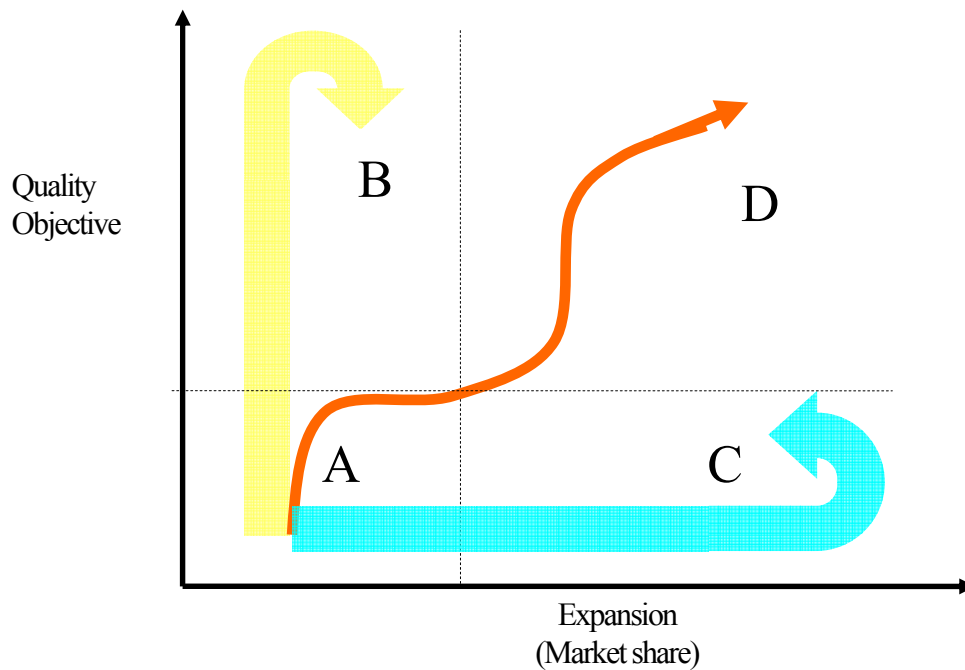


Fig. 1: Striking a Balance between 'Quality' and 'Expansion'

A number of factors determine sustainability. Some of these are demand side factors such as the market share, image, fees, etc. Others are supply related such as institutional capacity, cost of provision, quality, facilities, etc. Government can influence both demand and supply, hence the sustainability of private sector higher education provision through its policies, support programs, etc. Government affects the demand, efficiency and equity of private education through, for example, funding, entry provisions, regulations (e.g. non-profit), indirect barriers to entry (e.g. red tape). Public-Private partnership should be aimed at enhancing the sustainability of higher education so as to achieve the stated national higher education goals.

4. A Framework for Productive Public-Private Partnership

4.1. Divergent Perspectives

Our perspectives are the lenses through which we look at the world. And, the way we look at the world determine our attitude as well as our behavior in our daily encounters. There are divergent perspectives around the role and functions of private institutions of higher learning. In this regard there are important questions to be asked that need proper addressing: a moment of reflection and perhaps self awareness and appraisal might be useful in this regard:

- What is the dominant perspective regarding the role, function, etc. of higher education by the :
 - private sector operators themselves?
 - public institutions of higher learning?
 - government?
 - public in general?

<i>Agreement on:</i>	<i>Perspectives about Private HEIs by</i>				
	<i>Private HEIs</i>	<i>Public HEIs</i>	<i>Private sector</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Society</i>
Expansion	?	?	?	?	?
Quality	?	?	?	?	?
Credibility	?	?	?	?	?
Profitability	?	?	?	?	?
Accountability	?	?	?	?	?
Governance	?	?	?	?	?
Capacity	?	?	?	?	?
Competitiveness	?	?	?	?	?
Partnership	?	?	?	?	?
etc.	?	?	?	?	?

The reason that the writer of this paper raises these questions is because perspectives are important for guiding our behavior and actions individually or when we want to act in an interdependent environment. For example, since effective partnership should be built on shared goals and on mutual trust, these different perspectives have a lot of implications for building and strengthening partnerships among the private HEIs themselves, between private and public HEIs, and between private HEIs and the government, etc. Two perspectives could be identified in this respect.

The first is what could be called a ‘Conservative Perspective’ that posit the argument that private higher education institutions are business entities, and they strive for maximization of self/private interest not public interest. The ABC of business principle is maximizing profit and the end justifies the means – in this case, there is little difference between operating a restaurant and a college. Business firms continue to operate (their managers decide so), at least in the short-run, only as long as they don't make loss, or lose less by operating the firm rather than by closing it. There is no guarantee for the public if a certain private operator decides to close its provision of education merely on business criteria. On the other hand, this ‘Conservative Perspective’ holds that by contrast public higher education institutions would not care about profits, etc. For example, some of the complaints advanced look like the following:

- They charge high amount of money in tuition fees;
- They are risky: if a private institution goes bankrupt, what is going to happen to students who are in the middle of their programs;

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- They have low quality education and fewer fields of study (often quick fixes);
- Research and scholarships are not encouraged in private institutions;
- They will take away faculty from public universities, most of whom are understaffed already. The result is loss in quality in both public and private institutions;
- The government will use private universities as an excuse to neglect the public system; i.e., government can put less energy into that system because there will not be an alternative; and
- There are concerns over good governance (academic freedom, etc.); i.e., some institutions grapple with requirements of their owners (business motives), who often interfere with governance, recruitment of personnel, and academic progress.

Such a perspective leads to a highly restrictive environment (for instance, there are governments that insist that private HEIs should operate as a non-profit entity, offer no diploma unless affiliated with public universities, etc.).

The second perspective is what could be termed as a 'liberal perspective' and sees a number of advantages of private provision of higher education. Some of the arguments include:

- They offer choices to learners (e.g., public universities are mainly academic not skill based). Students want private universities, so it is their decision;
- They reduce overcrowding in public universities; hence reduce the pressure on the latter;
- They won't need any public money – hence reduce the budgetary pressure on government;
- They will create healthy competition between different kinds of higher education providers include public HEIs; and
- They will provide quality education and keep students from leaving the regions and the country for universities situated in central urban centers or overseas.

A behavior and action informed by such a 'liberal perspective' is not only different from that of a 'conservative perspective' but also arrives at a different and higher partnership solution altogether.

Taken in isolation, some of these could be over exaggerations, or extremes. A good way of looking at is as a continuum. For example, the issues aren't the case of either or (e.g., either there is quality or not; either profit or not,

etc.) HEIs are located on certain points along the continuum and continually change (improve or deteriorate) their position.

4.2. The Importance of Context

One importance of situating the issue in a specific context is that it makes the arguments concrete. It is a universal knowledge that education is key to development. For Ethiopia, it explains the reasons as to why the door to development has been locked - because this key was hidden for long. Capacity of the public as well as the private sector, etc., to bring about the intended results could be constrained unless investment in education (both in quality and expansion of access) is taken on board. The opportunity cost of waiting until government makes that a reality in sufficient scale could be quite high; that is even when it is possible to argue that the government has a comparative advantage to provide higher education at the moment. At the same time, it is important to understand that provision of education, including higher education, using the private route could be cost-effective including for government, and if managed properly could bring about the intended impact relatively quickly. Most importantly, the task of provision of higher education by the government and the private sector should be viewed not as mutually exclusive, but as mutually reinforcing and collaborative endeavor. The country is poor (in terms of every indicator and by many standards); hence, it must be in a position to tap all the available resources.

Over the last decade or so what has been observed as a general global and local tendency is for the government to concentrate its resources and energy on the kind of things that it does better. That is why there has been privatization of public enterprises, deregulation of the market, etc. Public universities are increasingly demanded to behave 'business-like'. The legal framework providing for the necessary administrative and financial autonomy has already been enacted. The issue is not so much on whether public universities have or have not been faring enough with respect to the issues that really matter (e.g., quality, access, etc.); it is also not so much a question of preferring private HEIs to the public ones. It is rather a question of unleashing the hidden potentials in both.

4.3. The Building Blocks: bridging the gaps

Our perspectives should center on the vision we have for higher education in the country as well as the mission and roles of higher education providers including public, private, and NGOs operators towards realizing that vision. If sufficient clarity is achieved at that level, the public-private dichotomy in effect becomes a matter of convenience. If on the other hand we lose this fundamental grip, then not only public-private dichotomy in provision of higher education becomes obstructive to public-private partnership, but actually the gap would grow from 'gully' to 'valley'.

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Effective partnership requires not just a perception of common vision but also clarity of mandates and responsibilities. Naturally the parties to the partnership should discharge their respective responsibilities in a manner that lives up to (even surpasses) expectations. Also, each party needs to understand and effectively respond to the needs of the other partner within the purview of the convergent vision. That is how interdependencies can be built on the basis of mutual trust.

Considering education as a “public good”, government may formulate policies that regulate private institutions. Formulating the right regulatory mix and implementing consistently and efficiently using innovative instruments that enhance the development of good quality private higher education institutions is necessary. Government policies are central to the growth of private higher education institutions and affect them in different ways.

What Can the Government Do?

- There are important initiatives that are aimed at fundamentally changing the attitude and performance of the public sector and its relationship with the private sector. Some of these include, the Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP), private sector capacity development, etc. There is a realization that whatever the government does to the development of the private sector is not just to help the sector but to improve the country’s competitiveness in the global market. Education is the cutting edge! By enhancing higher education, the country’s competitiveness on global market increases (both directly as in the case of exporting education [or import substituting] and indirectly by making the country more attractive to foreign investment). Hence, the government can enhance investment in private higher education through making it attractive financially and less cumbersome procedurally.
- Directly induce the demand for private higher education through, for example, providing fellowships to students, outsourcing educational service delivery to the private sector providers, etc. For example, the Ministry of Capacity Building wants the active involvement of those higher education institutions (both public and private) having management development training and consultancy programs in the implementation of the CSRP. Some of the expectations would include that these institutions redesign (or develop) their curriculum to suit and meet the specific needs of the reform program, existence of demonstrable consulting capacities, etc.
- Directly influence supply of private higher education by increasing staff availability through, for example, allowing joint appointment of professors, lecturers and researchers between public sector employees and private sector HEIs and also assisting the public higher education sector; enhancing management

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capabilities, staff development ventures, etc., for the private higher education institutions; as well as through policies on tax, access to land, loans, etc.

- Influence quality and equity of higher education provision in the private sector through using several policy instruments such as discriminatory treatment of HEIs against meeting certain standards. This can be done through the introduction of a demand side financing that funds students who get admission to certain institutions that demonstrate certain level of quality and relevance.

What Can the Private Institutions Do?

Again considering that provision of higher education is a 'public good' even when it has to be provided by private operators (and this perspective is the cornerstone for effective public-private partnerships), and private HEIs which have a number of issues to address.

The highly contested issue is that of quality to which the other issues are attached (credibility, sustainability, etc.). Hence, some degree of de-emphasizing the business motive in favor of a social motive would be necessary.

- They need to demonstrate that they have a stake in quality higher education. Formulation of an inbuilt regulatory mechanism for quality assurance will be necessary. They need to discourage some 'brief-case' colleges from their delusive stances that apparently damage the images of those institutions that have credible programs and efforts (handing out of diplomas is not necessarily provision of higher education). In this regard, lessons could be drawn from experiences elsewhere as well as from successful professional associations that strictly and rigorously regulate quality products and services based on membership codes of conduct. Most prestigious universities in the world are not necessarily public universities – so, quality education is not necessarily a problem of private providers. Quality assurance is also not necessarily the function of governments. But, the context is different here. In Israel for example, no college (public or private) can issue diplomas unless it is affiliated with universities. The Council of Higher Education exercises a lot of regulatory mechanism on quality and funds. Similar practical experiences could be cited from other countries.
- Organized response is necessary. They must demonstrate that what they aim to achieve is consistent with and supportive of the country's vision for higher education.
- Liaise with public universities based on mutual benefits in terms of joint programs as well as with the private industry for their practical attachment programs. This helps them in the long run demonstrating that their products are competitive and highly demanded, not only by the private sector but also by the public sector. It is also important to remember that still the public sector is the big employer in the country.

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For example, *Amhara* Regional Government is considering employing people who have diplomas not just based on their diplomas but also based on exams – an indication that not all diplomas are necessarily equal. The implication of implementing such a practice in a consistent and larger scale is that diplomas from certain institutions might just become worthless pieces of paper – significantly eroding public trust in the institutions. At the moment producing diplomas (Ministry of Education accredited ones) would lead to certain set of entitlements; this is partly the reason why thousands of civil servants are enrolled in the various programs of private colleges. However, with a change in the system of valuation of credentials (e.g., result-based performance management system), this would induce changes in the quality and value of the certificates issued by higher education institutions both public and private. Hence, private higher education institutions must be prepared for this.

5. Concluding Remarks

It is essential to reiterate the importance of considering higher education as a social good even when it has to be provided through private means. It is also significant to highlight the importance of considering quality assurance and expansion of market share as mutually reinforcing objectives in the medium-long term. Promoting the development of quality higher education provision is instrumental not only just for boosting the national implementation capacity but also for enhancing the country's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Productive public-private partnership and engagement based on that convergent vision provides a framework for enhancing the capacity of the sector, and the position of the country at large. Finally, it is crucial to underscore the fact that the attitude, behavior, and actions of the private higher education sub-sector determine the outcomes.

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Promoting Quality in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This paper is based on evidence collected from visits to eight public sector and three private sector higher education institutions visited on behalf of the *Higher Education Systems Overhaul Report of the Higher Education Strategy Overhaul Committee of Inquiry into Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopia's Higher Education System Overhaul* (HESO) study and a further two visits to private sector institutions on behalf of the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA) and the Ethiopian Higher Education Strategy Institute (EHESI) and the analysis undertaken by the HESO study. It suggests that private higher education institutions (HEIs) should focus on improving their quality systems in order to:

- provide students and their families with quality information to ensure market share and a return on educational investments;
- develop quality systems to assure Government that an investment in the private sector would yield appropriate returns in terms of development goals;
- influence the processes developed by the QRAA for accreditation and subject assessment; and
- raise the profile and esteem of the private higher education sector amongst stakeholders.

The paper describes a variety of methods that might be used to assure quality and standards. These include benchmarking, performance indicators, quality audit and quality assessment. It then outlines some foci suggested by the World Bank that might usefully be employed in quality assessment or audit before considering the need to critically assess the accountability burden and the nature of evidence within whatever quality assurance systems that are developed.

1. Introduction

In March 2004, the Ministry of Education decided to undertake a higher education system overhaul (HESO) focused on improving the governance, management and leadership of the Ethiopian higher education system in order to achieve the objectives of the higher education reforms signalled by the Higher Education Proclamation, Number 315/2003 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2003). To this end, it set up a committee of enquiry (the HESO team) to undertake a study and make recommendations for action. This paper is partly based on the report of the HESO team (Ashcroft 2004) and focuses on the role of quality enhancement and assurance in enabling private higher education institutions to contribute to the necessary expansion of higher education and the economic and social development goals for higher education.

In 2002/3 those Private HEIs accredited by the Ministry of Education accounted for 35,402 students or 24% of student enrolments (Saint 2004). Dr. Teshome, speaking on 20th May 2004 at the HESO Consultative meeting at the Ministry of Education, predicted that in 3 to 5 years time private HEIs would account for between 40-50% of HE student enrolments. This expansion of market share would be happening at the same time as total student numbers within the combined private and public sectors are set to double. If the projected expansion came to pass, the combined effect of the projected growth in total student numbers and the increase in the private sector's share would be a quadrupling of the enrolments of students in private HEIs over the next five years.

Ethiopian higher education institutions generally rely on the individual action, competence and ethics of each instructor to ensure the quality of their programs and teaching. Massification of higher education in Ethiopia has already exacerbated the problem of a lack of quality assurance systems. The present arrangements cannot be valid in a mass system, where there must be more checks and balances built in and less reliance on individual effort and knowledge.

The Higher Education Institutions may wish to consider the purposes that underlie monitoring and evaluation information. South Africa's Council on Higher Education (2004) identifies three purposes or motivations for monitoring (using qualitative and quantitative data) and evaluation: to shed light on national policy goals and identify and explain success, deviation and failure; to create data that may be utilized by stakeholders and HEIs to improve their performance, and to discern trends over time and so inform HEI and national policy and strategy. Thus, monitoring information including quality information has utility for Government, its agencies, HEIs and other stakeholders.

2. Research Methodology

This study draws on evidence collected for the HESO report. The methodology is discussed in detail in another paper presented at this conference (Rayner and Ashcroft 2004). It included visits to eight public sector institutions during which 34 meetings with various internal stakeholders took place, tours of sites were conducted and discussions with individual faculty managers occurred. It also draws on extensive discussions with the HESO team drawn from eight public and private sector HEIs and the Ministry of Education; extensive readings by the team and a consultation meeting at which written and oral feedback on the HESO report was received from the heads (or their representatives) of 26 HEIs.

The paper also draws on various visits by the authors to HEIs (not included in the HESO study), including the Mass Media Training Institute, Unity University College and St Mary's College.

3. Results and Discussions

The World Bank suggests that the function of quality assurance is to “hold institutions ultimately accountable for their performance in teaching and research, and provide learners with a guarantee that they will receive a certain standard of education in return for their investment of time and resources” (World Bank 2004:xv). We found that there appears to be no fully functional nationally established system of quality assurance in Ethiopia that would serve this purpose. We also noted that there seems to be no systematic quality assurance tradition or practice within individual institutions, public or private and although there was evidence of some good practice, this was largely ad hoc and uncoordinated. This is a particularly critical lack in the private sector, which, if it is to continue to expand, fulfil the role that the Government has for it and maximise the returns it is able to achieve from its educational endeavour, and will need to offer guarantees to its various stakeholders regarding the availability of appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities to students. At present, not only stakeholders, most particularly students and their families but also including employers and others, must take such measures on trust in a context where there is considerable mistrust of the motives and practices of the private sector.

In our visits, we were not able to ascertain any adequate system of monitoring or endorsement that ensures that the outputs of an HEI, either public or private, meet the development needs of the country. The private sector, in the feedback meeting on the HESO report held on 20 May 2004, made it clear that expansion of the system would be greatly enhanced by the support of Government by way of making of ‘soft’ loans, accessible to free training for staff, preferential access to land, tax relief and easing of import restrictions. As we have noted in another paper at this conference (Rayner and Ashcroft 2004), it is most unlikely that the Government will agree to this kind of investment unless it sees an equivalent return in terms of the private sector’s contribution to development goals. Such a contribution can best be evidenced through systematic and quality focused assurance systems.

The Higher Education Proclamation set up the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA). This body will accredit private institution; review the performance of both public and private higher education institutions and safeguard comparable standards of quality for degree programs in both public and private higher education. As yet it has made no progress towards thinking through how it might go about quality and relevance assessment and how it might modify its accreditation process. There exists, therefore, a window of opportunity for the private higher education institutions to use their association to discuss, develop within their own institutions and bring forward to the QRAA new methods of quality assurance and appropriate criteria for assessing quality and relevance. Such proactive thinking could enable the best of the private HEIs to create a market advantage over the public sector and to differentiate themselves from less worthy private HEIs.

In the paper below, we consider each of these incentives for the development of quality assurance processes in more detail:

- The need to provide students and their families with quality information to ensure market share and a return on educational investments;
- The desirability of developing quality systems to assure the Government that an investment in the private sector would yield appropriate returns in terms of development goals;
- The opportunity to influence the processes developed by the QRAA for accreditation and subject assessment; and
- Raise the profile and esteem of the private higher education sector amongst stakeholders.

Providing Stakeholders with Quality Information

A particular problem facing the private sector is reassuring stakeholders that private HEIs offer a quality education and that it is equivalent to, or exceeds, what is offered by the public HEIs. These stakeholders include, most obviously the fee-paying public (not only the students themselves but also in many cases their families who share in the financial sacrifices necessary for a son or daughter/brother or sister to go to college), employers and both private and state-run organisations such as regional educational boards and other local authority organizations that might be potential employers of graduates from private institutions as well as the Government and donors who might promote and offer incentives to the private sector.

Without this reassurance and confidence in the private sector, the potential for growth that the expansion of HE in Ethiopia offers private HEIs may not take place. We need to remember that the growth in higher education as a whole demanded by the Ministry of Education, as recognised in the *Education Sector Development Program II (ESDP II)* (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2002) cannot be met solely through the expansion of the public sector, ‘Non-Government organizations and the private sector have also a great role to play in the provision of education at all levels of education’ (ESDP-II 2002: 35). It is, therefore, in the interest of the country, its growth and development that private HEIs are able to reassure their clients and able to recruit students.

In determining how to reassure stakeholders, it may be useful for private HEIs and the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions to consider a range of questions: What do we currently know about the state of provision in private HEIs? (We know that some have been ‘approved’ or accredited by the Ministry of Education, but does the public know what the criteria is for this approval and how rigorous it is or what it covers?). The quality

of many of the private HEIs may be good but how can the public find out which ones? Who should tell the public: will they believe the institutions themselves? (In the UK, the more prestigious private schools have their own quality audit systems and central provision of quality and other objective information about each of the schools within their association.) How can potential students and their supporters identify those private institutions that offer ‘value for money’? How do students choose between public and private institutions? (Is it merely a case of those who cannot get into public institutions opt then for private, suggesting that private is seen as second-best, somehow inferior?)

There are various positive aspects that the private sector can promote, for example, students can choose the subject and to a large extent, the location where they study. Does the private sector, for example, offer ‘value-added’ in terms of greater individual support perhaps through smaller class-sizes or more one-to-one tutorials? Are the private institutions better resourced in terms of their libraries or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities? The provision of objective and comparable data about such matters will greatly assist private HEIs to make their case. They can of course, through their Association, collect and disseminate such data themselves, but this does not allow comparison (hopefully favourable) with the public sector. To achieve this, the private sector should encourage the QRAA to make the collection of such data one of the ways that it assesses quality.

Many of these questions cannot easily be answered. If the institutions themselves cannot answer them, how does the public make its decisions? Currently, there is little check to ensure minimum standards of processes and output: accreditation presently focuses almost entirely on inputs. This is reinforced through the provisions of the HE Proclamation (Articles 62 and 66).

Private sector HEIs need to find ways of providing all stakeholders with clear information about courses and qualifications to match their needs. They may need to be much more explicit about what skills, qualities and knowledge will be developed; how practical experience of the workplace will be integrated; how student feedback will be used to improve the quality of instruction, and facilities; and how students will be monitored and supported during their studies and, at the end, how they will be provided with assistance in applying for jobs and meeting employers (for example, through an employers’ fair, similar to the UK Universities ‘milk round’, possibly sponsored by the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions). Information on quality and standards of learning and teaching will need to be made available by each higher learning institution so that potential customers can make informed decisions about what individual HEIs offer. Such information may include progression and qualification rates, the results of employer and student surveys, external examiners’ reports and so on. Quality

assurance is also required to ensure value for money and best value in terms of the financial investment made by students and their families. A couple of good proxies for this are the employment rates of graduates in each subject and the graduation rates of students with different intake scores.

The protection of diversity must be a key issue within any quality system that emerges. In the Ethiopian context, the World Bank (2003) has recommended that diversity of funding (public and private provision) and mission (research, graduate and undergraduate) and scale (small and large) of HEIs should be encouraged. One of the strengths of the private sector HEIs is the specialisation of many colleges (nursing, computing, technology, etc.) that helps provide a clear focus and vision for their activities. Private HEIs, therefore, need to develop their own quality assurance mechanisms, not only in order to guarantee quality service to their stakeholders, but also to identify and publish their individual distinctions and strengths. This may be done by establishing and publicising clear aims, objectives, goals and targets for their institution and for each program. Quality assurance development at institutional level will need to take into account the differential missions of institutions and their relationship with the labor market. Institutions should consider developing a 'Student Charter' specifying the services they will receive, for example, in terms of tutor contact time, access to resources, speed of return of marked work, employment advice and study skills support and training.

Quality Systems to Encourage Government Investment in Private HEIs

The Government is increasingly concerned to secure particular outcomes. It has realised that providing resources (inputs) for certain specified activities (processes) may not necessarily lead to desirable change and development (outcomes). It is our experience that quality assurance in Ethiopia currently focuses very much on the quality of certain inputs (curriculum design, staff qualification and so on). Some HEIs assess to a lesser extent the quality of processes (e.g. instruction and curriculum coverage), but few have a systematic approach for assuring themselves of the quality and standards of outcomes (e.g. comparable grading systems, assessment of the employability of graduates and so on). We suggest that the quality and standards of academic outcomes is the most important feature of higher education institutions and so this lack is a crucial flaw in any argument that the private sector may wish to bring forward, that the Government should invest in the sector. It is no longer enough to argue that, if Government wishes to achieve a quality system, it must invest on it. As an example, it would be more convincing to argue that, 75% of employers are happy with private HEI graduates, but many say they wish to see more IT competence: the private sector could then argue that with tax relief on or soft loans for technological products, the sector would aim to improve the employer satisfaction ratings by at least 10%. It would be more convincing still, if such 'perks' were requested only for HEIs that had been objectively assessed by the QRAA as reaching a quality

threshold. This argument implies that the private sector must be proactive in developing quality and relevant data and systems based on outcomes. It is also the case that other Government organisations and donors may be more inclined to provide (financial) incentives to the private sector if it is proved to be offering a quality product.

Influencing the Direction of the QRAA

The QRAA is expected to create transparency in the education system to ensure independent quality assessment and to allow international comparison between degree programs. How the QRAA will function is yet unclear, however, it is likely to act either as an inspection or as an auditing body.

The second model (audit) provides institutions with more autonomy to follow their individual mission and to define quality processes for themselves according to their circumstances (provided that these assure certain outcomes). It is more likely to lead to quality enhancement. For these reasons it seems to us that audit is likely to be preferred by the institutions over an inspection model. However, audit depends upon higher education institutions developing their own robust systems. It also requires them to have addressed in academic policy matters of relevance, and to have systems of monitoring how these policies are implemented, not only in narrow academic terms, but also in broader societal terms: for instance, in relation to the challenge of HIV/AIDS and its reflection in curricula and teaching and learning methods.

The QRAA will eventually become fully functional although it may take some years before its systems are fully operational and in a position to provide public reassurance regarding the quality of education provided in Ethiopia's public and private HEIs. This provides private HEIs with the opportunity to devise a transparent, equitable and efficient accreditation system and subject assessment process and criteria.

Below, we suggest some methods and models that the private sector might wish to explore to achieve the goals of providing quality information to students and their families; providing evidence to the Government that they should invest in private HEIs; and influencing the criteria and processes that the QRAA will use to assess quality and relevance; as well as raising the profile and esteem of the private higher education sector amongst stakeholders.

Methods of Quality Assessment

The development of quality assurance mechanisms requires institutional systems and oversight of its implementation. It requires HEIs to develop policies, plans and the means to operationalize them. Some approaches are outlined below.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking involves measuring aspects of performance or criteria so that comparisons can be made with other institutions, minimum standards set and improvements identified. Jackson and Lind (2002) indicate that measurements may be qualitative or quantitative; collaboratively or independently generated; internally or externally generated; focused on the whole or parts of an organisation; or related to inputs, outputs or processes (Jackson 2001).

In the UK, the Higher Education Funding Council has created sophisticated benchmark data of institutional performance in areas such as student access, retention and employability that take into account the subject mix within the institution, its geographical location and so on. Nevertheless, Yorke (2001) found other parameters to influence performance so that benchmarks must be carefully interpreted. In addition, benchmarks must be based on good quality and sufficient data that do not appear to be available in Ethiopia as yet. Nevertheless, benchmarking may prove useful in the HEI's internal consideration of quality issues.

Performance Indicators

Performance indicators (PIs) may include the numbers of students recruited, qualifying and finding employment and so on. They tend to be simple and numerical in order that comparisons between HEIs can be made. Drennan (2001) suggests that performance indicators should be focused on outcomes. They need to be considered in context, since they are greatly simplified version of the full 'quality picture' within the HEI. The problem in the Ethiopian context is that they need reliable data to operate appropriately, although this data may be simpler than that required for benchmarking. If PIs are to be credible, they need to be seen to be objectively produced or else the public will quickly learn to distrust or dismiss them. The QRAA may be a potential source of amassing and publicising sector-wide PIs but again this will probably not happen for some time. The Educational Statistics Annual Abstract produced by the Ministry of Education has some of this information but is largely incomprehensible even to the most informed. One source of semi-objective PIs and of appropriate interpretation of the Ministry's statistics might be the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions that could produce its own, more reader-friendly, annual report and review.

Quality Audit

Brown (2001) advocates audit as the answer to quality assessment of all higher education processes. It is a method that involves an HEI setting up its own system for assuring itself of the quality, standards and relevance of its programs. These can then be tested by 'audit trials' to determine their robustness. For example, if an institution says

that it has developed systems for ensuring that all new instructors receive pedagogic training (an input measure), for ensuring that curriculum described in the course outline approved by the Senate is covered (a process measure) and external examiners are employed for ensuring that its students reach comparable standards to other HEIs (an outcome measure), the auditing team may ask to look at committee papers and so on to determine how thoroughly these systems have been monitored and what action the HEI takes where there is a problem revealed by its monitoring.

The private HEIs (perhaps through their Association) may wish to discuss with the QRAA what sort of quality assurance systems and processes that they would expect to find. They might wish to suggest some other models. In the period that the QRAA is being set up, the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions might agree that HEI staff visit each others' institutions to look at quality assurance systems as they presently exist, and even to do mini mock-audits, so that when subject assessment, for example, becomes a reality, they have shared and developed good practice.

External Assessment

Private HEIs in Ethiopia might wish to develop a variety of external involvement within their internal quality processes. One way of doing this is through peer visiting and mock-audits of quality systems. Another form of external assessment is the external examination system, where examiners from other institutions assess a range of marked work and write a report that, amongst other criteria, assures the HEI that the standards students achieve are comparable with those of other institutions; tutors within the HEI mark consistently according to clear criteria; and the written feedback tutors give students on their work is sufficiently detailed and concrete to enable students to learn from their strengths and mistakes.

If they do not already have one, the private HEIs might also introduce a system of external membership on programme review and validation panels. Thus, when a course is designed and when it is reviewed, employers and academics from other institutions might sit on the course design panel and when the program goes to the appropriate committee for final approval other external members may be invited for the event.

It is common practice elsewhere in the world for there to be external membership on institutional and departmental committees. For instance, one of the authors was an external member on several Oxford University Department of Educational Studies Committees. In this capacity, she was able to provide the committee with insights and experiences gained from other contexts and bring the learning she gained of Oxford University processes back to

her own institution. In this way, both institutions learned new and better ways of doing things, and so quality was improved.

Another external assessment process is subject review. Such reviews generally involve a team of external academics entering the subject department and assessing its provision against a range of criteria such as the learning resources available, the quality of curriculum design, the standards evidenced in students' assessed work and so on. Various researchers, such as Knight and Trowler (2000) suggest that external assessment can result in an erosion of trust within HEIs as the institution becomes more 'managerial' and paperwork and other bureaucracy increases (in order to 'prove' the learning and teaching matches the quality criteria) without commensurate educational benefits. On the other hand, where such assessments have been introduced, there has been a steady improvement in the resulting scores and in measures such as student retention and graduation.

We have suggested that private HEIs may need to develop a system of institutional audit to support accreditation and subject review to ensure quality and relevance. If so, it is recommended that such systems are based on peer review against institutional and departmental objectives and outcome, rather than 'inspection' against an externally imposed standard. Thernouth (2002) suggests a number of principles that might be applied to any external assessment process that emerges for enterprise activity in higher education. These principles include:

- institutional diversity should be valued;
- the assessment process should encourage HEIs to play to their strengths; and
- criteria should be developed for identifying good practice.

We would add the protection of institutional autonomy and academic freedom to this list.

Subject Review

The World Bank (2004) offers a possible template for programme reviews. Such a template might be usefully used as a basis for quality assessment and audit which is summarized below:

The World Bank suggests academic program review provides an opportunity for an institution to review an academic unit's mission and goals and evaluate the quality of its academic programs, faculty, staff, and students . This in turn will enable it to determine priorities, for example, in relation to changes to the curriculum, investments in resources or the development of systems.

Academic review generally starts from a self assessment by the subject team of its strengths, weaknesses and areas it feels it should develop. The review is generally conducted with the participation of other academics with a knowledge of the subject from outside the institution. These academics read self-evaluation documents, meet students and staff, and may observe classes, other processes and facilities.

According to the World Bank the foci for the review may include:

- Curriculum quality: goals, their standards and how they are set;
- Staffing, facilities and resources: student/staff ratios, laboratory space, libraries, ICT;
- Qualifications of student intake;
- Qualifications of staff ;
- Achievement levels and standards of graduates;
- Employment rates of graduates and employer feedback of their quality;
- Progression and qualification rates of students (including disadvantaged students);
- Quality review procedures;
- Peer and students evaluation of teaching quality;
- Research output; and
- Services provided to the HEI, region, country and other bodies.

There are a number of aspects that are relevant to the Ethiopian context that appear to be missing from this list: for instance, there is no specific mention of the relevance of the curriculum or research in relation to the HIV/AIDS challenge. Neither does it look at consultancy and knowledge transfer as areas with which HEI quality systems should be concerned. The issue of relevance is largely missing. There is focus on curriculum, but not on teaching and learning processes, skill development and so on.

Conclusion

Within any quality assurance system there is always the danger that the accountability processes may become overly burdensome. PA Consulting (2000), in a study for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), found that in general the UK educational system has been overburdened by accountability processes, especially those relating to quality. These unnecessary burdens resulted from lack of communication amongst stakeholders; a multiplicity of accountability arrangements; misunderstandings between stakeholders and HEIs; and a decrease in trust among stakeholders in processes leading to a demand for more robust arrangements. The study pointed to a need for collaboration amongst the stakeholders and a greater reliance and trust in HEIs own systems. This implies that private HEIs should work through their association, and collaborate with the public

sector, so that the HEI association, will ensure that the system that is finally developed by the QRAA is sufficiently robust to reassure all its stakeholders, but not to detract unduly from the resources and management energy that support teaching and learning itself.

Whatever quality processes are designed, it is important that the validity and reliability of evidence is considered as an issue. There has been a tendency to value reliability over validity. This has led in turn to a focus on numerical indicators of quality at the expense of quality enhancement. In the Ethiopian context, the analysis above implies that decisions about what 'counts' as evidence of quality taking into account institutional mission should also reflect stakeholder expectations and perceptions. One way of ensuring this is to expect HEIs to conduct surveys of stakeholder satisfaction. However, such surveys cannot provide the whole picture and the evidence that emerges needs careful interpretation. Lessons may be learned from existing studies of the validity of such material: for example, Harvey (2001) found that employer surveys of employability are difficult to interpret since employers do not always think rationally. Similarly, Kwan (1999) in looking at student satisfaction surveys found that non-teaching variables, such as the academic discipline and class size, influence ratings. This is not to suggest that such surveys have no place in a quality system, but rather that other means of assessing the levels and quality of service provided need to be developed alongside them.

Private HEIs are responsible for ensuring that students receive value for money, that they learn and are properly prepared for the world of work and can make an appropriate contribution to society. In the present context, this requirement goes beyond imparting purely academic skills to include the development of ethical values and behaviour and a focus on the development challenges that Ethiopia faces (for example, HIV/AIDS and their social responsibilities as individuals and future employers and managers) and fulfilling the role and promise that private education offers.

The next stage in the process must be to have a broader debate about the issues, outcomes and processes that might be assessed or measured in private HEIs and about what should be the nature of the 'goods' that emerge from such a system. In the end, HEIs need to ensure that whatever system or systems they adopt protects and maintains the central values and purposes of the university, but also meets the legitimate needs of other stakeholders. This means that the definition of quality must relate to higher order moral and educational questions as well as to technical ones.

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Appendix

1. Workforce criteria:
 - student/staff ratios
 - student FTE per laboratory
 - library requirements
 - IT expectations and requirements
2. Budgetary criteria:
 - Resources per teaching staff FTE
 - Resources per student
3. Input criteria
 - a. Quality of students admitted
 - b. Quality of faculty
4. Output criteria
 - Expected quality of students graduated
 - Actual quality of students graduated
 - Employment data on graduates
 - Satisfaction of employers with graduates employed
5. Efficiency criteria
 - a. Pass through rates
 - b. First year failure rates
 - c. Success rate of disadvantaged students
 - d. Ongoing quality review procedures
6. Teaching quality and output:
 - a. Peer evaluation of teaching quality
 - b. Student evaluations of teaching quality
 - c. Other indications of teaching quality such as performance and success of graduates
7. Research output:
 - a. Quality of faculty research
 - b. Publications by faculty members
 - c. Contributions of the research
 - d. Presentations and other external acknowledgements of the quality of research.
8. Service output and contribution
 - a. Faculty service to the department, faculty, and university
 - b. Service to the country, region, or area.
 - c. Other recognition of service such as appointment to international committees, UNESCO service, regional service.

The Role of Research in Promoting the Quality of Education in PHEIs

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Abstract

The primary aims or missions of higher education institutions whether they are public or private, are teaching and conducting research. In the context of higher education these aims are inseparable. These aims are often stated in university and college catalogues and departmental programme brochures. However, the mission of conducting research is too often set aside, as faculty become preoccupied with teaching and administrative matters, and remain merely as a statement in the catalogue and never takes off the ground. This can be regarded as a serious problem that can severely affect the quality of education in institutions of higher learning. This is because one of the indicators of the quality of education in higher education institutions is a thriving research culture.

The main objective of this paper was to look into the state of research in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) with particular focus on those found in Addis Ababa. The paper is by and large descriptive and analytic. Data were collected from four PHEIs through interviews and surveys. Documents like the Higher Education Proclamation were examined. Moreover, a check list of the manifestations of a thriving research culture (Sunderland 1998) was used to assess the current state of research culture in PHEIs. Preliminary findings indicate that the output of research in PHEIs at present is quite scanty.

1. Introduction

The world has entered the phase of mass higher education, which follows closely upon the emergence of mass elementary and mass secondary education. In the words of Mackenzie et al (1986: 11), all these three phases of education are expressions of one phenomenon: "a hunger for knowledge and skills." Ethiopia is not an exception in this regard. The remarkable increase and development in higher education in general and private higher education in particular in Ethiopia over the last seven or eight years is also a result of this mass hunger for knowledge and skills. Commenting on this Wondwosen (2003: 1) observes:

In the last five years, the Ethiopian higher education system has witnessed a remarkable change unprecedented in its history in the form of the unanticipated emergence and expansion of private higher education institutions (PHEIs).

In this wave of expansion, it becomes imperative to consider the primary aims and missions of higher education institutions whether they are public or private. According to Higher Education Proclamation No. 351/2003 pp 1 and 4, "higher education means education offered to students who attend diploma, first degree, second degree or medical specialty and doctoral degree programmes."

The three concepts at the heart of this topic are higher education, research, and quality of education. The term research can be defined in various ways. For Molly (1983: 5) "Research is a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and investigation of data." For Clifford (1980: 4) "Research is a systematic way of asking questions, a systematic method of enquiry." For Ary et al (1985: 21): Research may be defined as "the application of the scientific approach to the study of a problem." According to Jones (1985: 3), "Research is a structured inquiry which utilizes acceptable methodology to solve a problem and create new generally applicable knowledge." The 15th century English philosopher, Francis Bacon offered probably the most telling observation about the process of research. He states: "Research is a power of suspending judgment with patience, of meditating with pleasure, of asserting with caution, of correcting with readiness, and of arranging thought with scrupulous pain" (in Sukia *et al* 1983: 1).

By way of a brief review of literature, it would be appropriate to look into the role of research in the human quest for knowledge and skills and in the effort of finding answers to questions.

In a general sense, the history of research is as old as humanity itself. This is because research is a way of finding answers to questions and throughout history human beings have sought answers to their questions. In the quest for finding answers to their questions human beings have used six main sources of knowledge. These are experience, authority, custom and tradition, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning and the scientific approach.

Experience is a corpus of personal knowledge that is immediately at hand as a means of solving problems. For those things that are difficult or impossible to know by personal experience, we usually turn to authority. In the absence of authority, we also resort to custom and tradition as a source of knowledge. How was it done in the past? Perhaps the first significant and systematic approach to finding answers to questions was deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning was introduced by Aristotle and his followers. Another source of knowledge that has been used as a means of finding answers to questions is inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning was developed by the 16th century English philosopher called Francis Bacon. In this approach general conclusions are established on the basis of facts gathered through direct observation. Yet another source of knowledge used for finding answers to questions is the scientific method. This method was first applied by Charles Darwin in his theory of evolution. In this method the most important aspects of the inductive and deductive methods are integrated in order to find solutions to problems. This is clearly projected through the following observation of Darwin:

My first notebook on evolution was opened in July 1837. I worked on true Baconian principles, and without any theory collected facts on a wholesale scale, more especially with respect to domesticated productions, by printed enquire, by conversation with skilful breeders and gardeners, and by extensive reading. When I see the list of books of all kinds which I read and abstracted, including whole series of journals and transactions, I am surprised at my industry. I soon perceived that selection was the keystone of man's success in making useful races or animals and plants. But how selection would be applied to organisms living in a state of nature remained for some time a mystery to me.

In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic enquiry, I happened to read for amusement "Malthus on Population", and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species. Here then I had at last got a theory by which to work (1899: 68).

If we consider higher education as a means of finding solutions to societal problems, this age-old tradition of quest for finding answers to questions should be given important place in the function of HEIs. PHEIs should thus be places where new knowledge is seriously pursued and existing knowledge is conscientiously transmitted. This is to say that although teaching and learning are central functions of any college or university, these functions cannot be meaningfully realized without developing a thriving research culture.

According to various documents obtained from PHEIs and Higher Education Proclamation, the primary aims or missions of higher education institutions are teaching and conducting research. These aims are often boldly stated in college and university catalogues and vision and mission documents of institutions of higher learning. However, the mission of conducting research is too often marginalized in practice as faculty become preoccupied with teaching and administrative matters. Since the missions of teaching and research are inseparable in the context of higher education, such marginalization of research can be regarded as a serious problem that can severely affect the quality of education in institutions of higher learning. This is because one of the indicators of the quality of education in higher education institutions is a thriving research culture. The main objective of this paper is to look into the state of research in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) with particular focus on those in Addis Ababa.

2. Research Methodology

Two basic methods have been used in writing this paper. These are analysis and descriptive survey. Theoretical literature on the concept of research has been examined. Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation and the founding documents of PHEIs have been investigated. Moreover, a 15-item questionnaire survey has been conducted with 120 academic staff in PHEIs in Addis Ababa to obtain information on the state of research in these institutions. The questionnaire has been designed on the basis of Sunderland (1998:5) categories for assessing the research culture in institutions of higher learning. Some of the categories have been developed from the Higher Education Proclamation No. 351/2003. The questionnaire was conducted in 7 selected PHEIs in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa was selected as a context of this research for two basic reasons. First, most PHEIs are in Addis Ababa. Secondly, the greatest concentration of academic staff of PHEIs is also in Addis Ababa.

The question that arises at this point is: what is the state of the primary aim of research at PHEIs? This is the central question of this paper. The subsequent section will attempt to answer this question.

Procedure

A 15-item questionnaire was distributed to 7 private higher education institutions to elicit information on the research culture in the institutions. The institutions are St. Mary's College, Unity University College, Africa Beza College, Admas College, Zegha Business College, Royal College, and Atlanta College. A total of 120 academic staff, over 25% from each PHEI, were expected to fill in the questionnaire. However, only academic staff in the PHEIs duly filled in the questionnaire. In spite of the unstinted efforts of the researcher, it was absolutely impossible to get back the questionnaire distributed to Atlanta, Royal, and Admas Colleges.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The following are the findings of the questionnaire survey on the state of research in PHEIs covered by this study.

Table 1: Reaction of PHEIs about the Importance of Research in Promoting Quality of Education

<i>Level of Importance</i>	<i>How would you rate the importance of research in promoting the quality of education at your college/university?</i>							
	<i>St. Mary's College</i>		<i>Unity University College</i>		<i>Africa Beza College</i>		<i>Zegha Business College</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Extremely Important</i>	20	62.5	27	60	2	40	3	75
<i>Very Important</i>	8	25.0	12	26.7	2	40	1	25
<i>Important</i>	2	6.25	6	13.3	1	20	0	0
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Not Important</i>	2	6.25	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	32	100	45	100	5	100	4	100

Remarks: *f* stands for frequency and % indicates percentage values

Table 2: The State of Research in PHEIs

Ser. No	Items	Name of Private Colleges															
		St. Mary's College				Unity University College				Africa Beza College				Zegha Business College			
		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	Are there departmental research seminars at your college?	12	40	18	60	14	31	31	68.9	1	20	4	80	1	25	3	75
2	Are there college or faculty level research seminars at your college?	18	60	12	40	21	46.6	11	13.3	1	20	5	40			4	100
3	Are there publications at your college?	30	100			32	71			2	40	3	60	2	50	1	25
4	As a staff member do you get research grants from your college or other sources?	19	63.3	11	36.7	13	28.9	22	26.7			5	100			4	100
5	Do you think the academic staff at your college are actively engaged in research?	10	33.3	20	66.6	11	24.4	25	55.6			5	100	1	25	2	50
6	Are there famous actual researchers at your college/ university?	21	70	12	40	18	40	15	33.3			3	60	2	50		
7	Are there famous potential researchers at your college?	30	100			37	82.2			2	40			3	75	1	25
8	Are there research groups in your department?	20	66.6	10	33.3	20	44.5	25	55.6			5	100			4	100

3.2 Discussion

In this section the state of research in the selected PHEIs will be discussed in the light of the questions and categories adopted for assessing the research culture in institutions of higher learning.

As can be seen from the findings of the survey, out of 84 respondents 52 (65.4%) rated the role of research in promoting the quality of education in higher learning as extremely important. Similarly, 23 respondents (27.3%) rated the role of research as very important. In other words, 92.3% of the academic staff in the institutions where the survey was conducted considered research as highly valuable for promoting the quality of education at PHEIs. The findings also show that talks or public lectures happen sometimes or rarely. Out of 84 respondents 34 (41%) said that talks or public lectures happened only sometimes and 22 respondents said that such academic events happen rarely. The survey also revealed that 56 (70.3%) of the respondents said that there are no departmental seminars at their institutions of higher learning. In the survey 32 (38%), of the respondents indicated that there are no college or faculty level seminars at their colleges. This study also showed that 66 (79.8%) of the respondents said that there are publications at their institutions of higher education.

On the other hand, in relation to publication, 52 (61.9%) of the respondents indicated that the publications are by and large teaching materials or handouts. In the survey 42 (50%) of the respondents said that there is no research grant scheme at their colleges. However, 32 (38%), of the respondents indicated that there is a research grant scheme at their institutions of higher learning. In the survey, 52 (64.2%) of the respondents revealed that the academic staff at their institutions of higher education are not actively engaged in research. The main reasons given in the study for this situation are too much teaching load, lack of incentives for researchers, lack of research grants, lack of research experience, lack of interest, and lack of time due to additional part-time jobs. However, the survey showed that 72 (75.7%) of the respondents believe that there are potential researchers at their colleges. The findings of the survey also indicated that 44 (44.5%) of the respondents said that there are no research groups in their departments. The situation seems to be diverse as 40 (40%) of the respondents indicated that there are research groups in their departments. Concerning the amount of time they devote to research, 72 (75.5%) of the respondents indicated that they devote either none of their time or only 10% of their time to research.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The primary aim of this paper has been to investigate the state of research in private higher education institutions. The findings of the study revealed that although the academic staff in private institutions of higher education have a firm conviction about the role of research in promoting the quality of education in their institutions, the state of research is very unsatisfactory. Most of the manifestations of a thriving research culture that should characterize institutions of higher learning such as talks or public lectures, research grants, research seminars, research groups and publications of journals are not in place in many of the PHEIs, with the exception of St. Mary's College and Unity University College. Moreover, although the findings show that there are a good number of potential researchers in private higher education institutions, these academic staff are not actively engaged in research. Likewise, although the Higher Education Proclamation stipulates that academic staff in institutions of higher education should devote 25% of their time to research (see definition number 7 of the Proclamation), the study revealed that in the current state of affairs, academic staff in PHEIs devote either none of their time or only 10% of their time to research.

4.2 Recommendations

In order to alleviate this problem and to inculcate a thriving research culture in PHEIs, the following recommendations can be made. First and foremost, the institutions should create conducive atmosphere for public lectures, regular departmental and faculty or college level research seminars. Secondly, in order to engage actual and potential researchers in research, the PHEIs should develop research grant schemes and incentives, and should encourage publications in reputable journals. Thirdly, the teaching load of academic staff should be carefully considered in order to engage them in research. On the whole, in order to make higher education a problem solving activity and to create a vibrant teaching-learning situation in PHEIs, the two aims of higher education, namely teaching and research should go hand in hand.

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Quality of Education in Private and Public Higher Education Institutions: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Since the introduction of modern education in the Ethiopian education system, education has undergone new changes along with the political changes. To begin with, during the regime of Haile Selassie, education aimed at producing various personnel for the state machinery. During the military regime, the education system was in confusion due to the attempt made to establish a socialist education system (MOE, 1996). Moreover, the new education system followed by the current government of the country is also criticized by different scholars (Seyoum, 1996; Amare, 1986 and Tekeste, 1996). To make a long story short, Amare (1986) has strongly argued that the Ethiopian education curriculum has always been deficient in cultural content and intent, the major factor for development. One potential reason for this may be the continuing change of the curriculum along with the change of the government. In connection to this, Zewdu (2001) stated that change in almost all sectors have been taking place due to the change of the political system.

Since the new education policy has become functional, various public and private higher institutions have emerged because the demand for higher education has been rising from time to time. This unplanned expansion of higher education is potentially dangerous for the quality of education. Hence, this paper attempts to assess the level of quality of education as per the standards set in the Education and Training Policy of the Country.

To achieve the stated objective, primary data were obtained from students and instructors. Accordingly, analyses were done through employing Chi-square test, paired t-test and simple descriptive statistics. The result showed that there are statistically significant variations between private and government colleges in terms of facilities like the number of computer, the number of instructors and quality, classroom facilities and extent of staff turnover that are determinant factors of quality of education. In addition, there are variations in the above parameters among the private colleges studied. From the result, it was possible to conclude that both private and government colleges should do harder to bring about the desired outcome. Besides, it is hardly possible to make generalizations as to which category of the higher learning institutions deliver better quality of education.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The development of Ethiopian education system was rooted in religious education of which Christianity and Islam were the two main streams (MOE 1996). Since the introduction of modern education in Ethiopia, the education system has undergone new changes along with the political changes. To begin with, during the regime of HaileSelassie, education aimed at producing various personnel for the state machinery and after 1974 take over by the military regime, the education system was in confusion due to the attempt made to establish a socialist education system (MOE 1996). Moreover, the new education system being used now is also criticized by different scholars (Seyoum 1996; Amare 1986 and Tekeste 1996 in Seleshi 2001). To make a long story short, Amare (1986) has strongly argued that the Ethiopian education curriculum has always been deficient in cultural content and intent, the major factor for development. One potential reason for this may be the continuing change of the curriculum along with the change of government. In connection to this, Zewdu (2001) stated that change in almost all sectors have been taking place due to the change of the political system.

Since the new education policy has become functional, various public and private higher institutions have emerged because the demand for higher education has been rising from time to time. This unplanned expansion of higher education is potentially dangerous for the quality of education.

In view of the above facts, the education system of Ethiopia cannot help the country fight with the age-old backwardness. Since public higher education is restricted in size, the emergence of private higher institutions is complementing the government's plan of expanding higher education of the country by providing access to more students.

Despite this expansion, Ethiopia's education system is at a crossroads since the quality of education rendered in both public and private higher institutions is open to question. Amare and Temechew (2002) stated that there is now full consensus among Ethiopian educators that education has failed to play a developmental role in areas such as family planning, health, employment, etc. They further commented that the profile of graduates from the different educational programs has also been under attack by employers and researchers and hence problem solving graduates were rarely observed in the Ethiopian context (Ibid). Esayas (2001) pinpointed

that the university produces graduates who lack confidence in their skills and knowledge; the result disheartens and shatters one's hope for progress and development. Furthermore, Seleshi (2001) concluded that education policymaking and implementation is still in crisis; policies are short of attaining intended results. All these show that Ethiopia's education system is at risk and it needs actions for correction. Hence, this paper attempts to assess the level of quality of education as per the standards set in the Education and Training Policy of the Country.

1.2. Objectives

The study attempts to investigate issues surrounding quality of education with specific reference to public and private higher institutions in Addis Ababa. In light of this central theme, this study aims to:

1. assess the level of quality education delivered by private and public higher education institutions; and
2. compare quality of education between public and private higher education institutions.

1.3. Conceptual Framework: Definition and Determinants of Quality of Education

To construct a conceptual framework for this study, rigorous literature review was done on the determinants of quality of education and adapted for the purpose.

The standard of education is deteriorating in Ethiopia (Esayas 2001); the causes may be debatable, but, most scholars and researchers have addressed lack of quality issue as a major factor for its decline. If this is so, what does quality of education really mean? Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993 in Girmay 2001) define quality as the determination of standards, appropriate methods and requirements by an expert body to examine the extent to which practice meets these standards. Although quality is not a unitary assumption, educational quality is properly defined by the performance of students (Richard and Bude 1989 in Girmay 2001). Concerning its role, Brandt (1992) stated that educational quality control is an ever-growing system that guides the direction of development.

The setting up of quality higher education is the responsibility of both the institution and the concerned supervisory body. In doing so, there are two major approaches to quality improvementss-quality assurance and quality enhancement which are directly concerned with adding values, improving quality and implementing transformational changes (Laurie 2003).

In the process of improving quality, quality assessment outline should come at the forefront line. According to Smeenk and Teelxen (2003), there are four quality assessment outlines; these are input, process, output and results.

- ↳ **Input** includes student intake, staff, information supply, capital building, facilities and other supplies, etc.
- ↳ **Process** comprises necessary organizational conditions, learning environment, education methods, etc.
- ↳ **Output** includes study progress, average length of study, first year performance, etc.
- ↳ **Result** includes optional function in society, individual development, development of professional practice, etc.

This paper tries to address the input and process elements of the assessment criteria. Since poor quality education is the main area of concern for *Quality Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia*, the new education policy document regards poor quality of education in terms of inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers, shortage of books and other teaching materials (MOE 1994). In this regard, empirical works done in the field identified various reasons that contribute to the decline in quality of education. The following are some of the investigations.

1.3.1. Staff Profile

Teaching is seen as a science and an art, both necessary for the provision of the conditions for effective learning; it is a hybrid, an art with a scientific basis or a science with overtones of artistic impression (Lurzon 1993). In other words, the existence of innate, unimprovable qualities of the teacher and the work of teacher-training institutions are the major agenda of the foregoing concept. Either of them alone downgrades or devalues the quality of education.

College staff consist of individuals who should have much belief about teaching. Shann (1992) asserted that if you want to work in a certain way, it comes from the heart. What is important is the teacher's own identity. What you should do, should come from inside you. It should be genuine. As far as an institution's reputation is concerned, the quality of teaching and the way higher institution teachers discharge their responsibility is the heightened concern for the quality of the graduates. However, most teachers are uninterested in their position apart from the cash value. For

those, the primary motive of teaching lies in the cash value that they possess. Tros (1967) explained that the majority of higher institution teachers are certainly not interested primarily in teaching; except for a minority of dedicated teachers, so the problem of quality of education gets bad to worse.

Furthermore, higher institution teachers do lack methodological concepts of teaching and they should be given opportunities to get acquainted with teaching methodology. Shann (1992) stated that new staff members should take a special program of preparation for teaching in higher education; educators who have completed their BA, MA or Ph.D should not be assumed to teach that discipline to others.

The qualification and number of full time staff employed by an institution is another factor that affects the quality of education. Although all higher institutions rely on expatriate staff to different degrees, many higher institution do not have enough qualified staff (Shann 1992). Thus the absence of adequately qualified and motivated teachers is the problem found in developing countries. (Corron and Chau 1996 in Girmay 2001). Basically, it does not require great wisdom to understand the importance of qualified staff profile for the enhancement of quality education. Despite this truth, many private higher institutions employ staff below the standard set by MOE. Zewdu (2001) asserted that the mix of staff of Unity and Microlink Colleges is below the qualifications set in the accreditation directive. Most private higher institutions employ intensive use of part time staff (Derbessa 2004). And this attempt to achieve significant effectiveness by reducing costs may damage the quality of education.

Furthermore, the competence of the staff is another variable that impedes quality of education. Yalokwu (2004) showed that the quality of teaching and research works have declined due to the shortage of skilled manpower, which is prevalent in teaching and in other professions as well.

1.3.2. Governance

The deficiency in managerial and analytical capacities of managers is one of the major problems that quality of education is suffering from. Seyoum (1996) went on explaining that unless a radical reform and a newer approach takes place, the existing management in education is not promising enough to make much difference in quality.

Moreover, quality problem is attached with unprofessional education managers. Sharing Egyptian experiences, Shann (1992) stated that university administrators in Egypt, as in much of the world, have not been trained in modern management technique.

Educational management is quite different from any managerial skills. Bush and others in Ayalew (1991) explained that educational management is unique in the tasks of defining and measuring objectives, moulding human beings, managing the teachers, etc. Ayalew (1991) further stated that unless educational managers understand this uniqueness clearly, they could not bring much difference in quality. In addition, Brandt (1992) revealed that educational managers should own a profound knowledge of system theory, statistical concepts and psychology about what motivates people in organizations in order to help lead the way to higher quality in and out of schools.

Germay (2001) concluded that leadership ineffectiveness-*inadequate inspiring vision*, lack of commitment - *absence of inviting working environment* and managerial incompetence - *their inability* are the main challenges for quality management. Despite the fact that some of the top universities in Latin America and USA are private, many private institutions increasingly dominate the bottom of the system (Altbah 1998). This is due to the fact that providers of PHEIs look into the institutions as business center instead of considering the institution as center of academic excellence. In discussing about the quality of PHEIs, Wondwosen (2003) stated that traditional argument against PHEIs with regard to quality includes issues attached with the opportunistic behaviour on the part of profit - seeking providers.

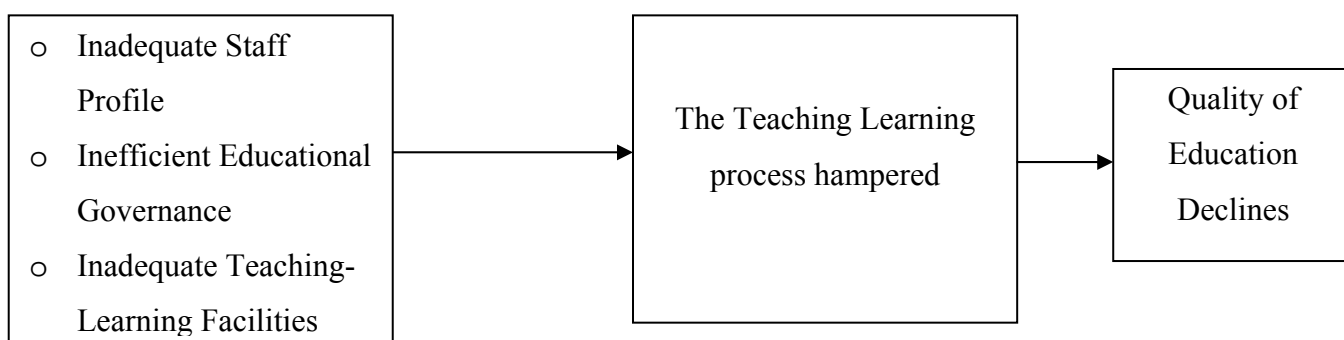
1.3.3. Facilities

Although quality of education has become a more global agenda, expansions of education system is marked by concerns of quality decline (Germay 2001). In developing countries like Ethiopia, quality problem is associated with inadequate teaching learning materials, poorly trained teachers, unprofessional educational managers, irrelevance of curriculum, etc (Baum and Tolbert 1995; Carron and Chao 1996 and Fuller 1985).

Due to huge number of students demanding further education, higher institutions enrol more than their capacities they are designed to accommodate. This in turn gives rise to having poorly equipped facilities: unavailability of adequate computer facilities insufficient equipment in laboratories, limited libraries, teaching materials, etc. Shann (1992) explained that limited

educational facilities and absence of advanced mediated learning environment contributed further to the sub standard quality of academic programs. Concerning computer facilities, in Ethiopian context, Zewdu (2001) concluded that a significant number of PHEIs students in Unity and Microlink Colleges say the computer facilities of their colleges are poor. On the basis of the above empirical investigations, the following conceptual framework is developed for studying the level of quality of education in selected private and public higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Studying Quality of Education



Source: Adapted from the Empirical Findings Discussed above

2. Research Methodology

Quality of education is a wide area of study that encompasses many variables. As a result, its analysis could be done at several levels like at institutional, beneficiaries (student and/or community), academic staff, administrative staff and the like. This particular study focused on the analysis of quality education delivery by private and government owned colleges by taking students and instructors as a unit of analysis. Initially, it was planned to include institutions as a unit of analysis. But, because of lack of responses from the study unit for the required data, the institutional level analysis was removed from the analysis. Among the private colleges that are mushrooming in Ethiopia, *St. Mary's College*, *Africa Beza College*, and *Queen's College* were considered. From the government owned colleges, *Kotebe College of Teacher Education* was considered for data collection and analysis. The selection of the private colleges is done by considering their levels of establishments and that of the government owned college is done purposively so as to allow comparison between the two types of colleges. Structured and semi-structured questionnaires prepared for the study were administered on a total of 158 randomly selected students both from private colleges and a Government College (117 from Private Colleges and 41 from a Government College). Again, questionnaires were prepared and filled in by 23 instructors from Private Colleges and 11 instructors from a Government College. The data were

entered into SPSS version 10.0 and analyzed through employing different statistical tools like percentages, frequencies, range, Chi-Square and parried t-test techniques.

3. Results and Discussions

1. College Facilities

Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis of Reaction of Students about Adequacy of Computers Available in Private and Government Colleges

Type of the College	Percentage and Frequency Values	How Do You Rate Computers Available in the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
Private	Frequency	1	24	37	34	21	117
	%	0.9%	20.5%	31.6%	29.1%	17.9%	100%
Government	Frequency	0	3	3	8	27	41
	%	0%	7.3%	7.3%	19.5%	65.9%	100%
Total	Frequency	1	27	40	42	48	158
	%	0.6%	17.1%	25.3%	26.6%	30.4%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	34.5	0.000		34.080	0.000		

Table 1 indicates that, in terms of the availability of computers, private colleges are in a better position than Government Colleges, and this is statistically significant at 1% significance level both in Pearson chi-square and Likelihood Ratio criteria ($P < 0.01$). However, the analysis revealed that there is no statistical difference in terms of the adequacy of classrooms in private and government owned colleges (see Table 2). However, this finding is contrary to the conclusion, that Zewudu (2001) made, which stated that a significant number of PHEIs' students said that the computer facilities of their colleges are poor.

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of Reaction of Students about Adequacy of Number of Classrooms Available in Private and Government Colleges

Type of the College	Percentage and Frequency Values	How Do You Rate Classrooms Available in the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
Private	Frequency	24	60	18	13	2	117
	%	20.5%	51.3%	15.4%	11.1%	1.7%	100%
Government	Frequency	3	18	12	7	1	41
	%	7.3%	43.9%	29.3%	17.1%	2.4%	100%
Total	Frequency	27	78	30	20	3	158
	%	17.1%	49.4%	19.0%	12.7%	1.9%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	7.5	0.114		7.7	0.103		

In terms of the area of classrooms between private and government colleges, there is statistically significant variation between them ($P < 0.05$) with private colleges having wider class size compared to the number of students they are teaching. This reveals that government colleges are more congested than private colleges, which is one parameter for quality education delivery.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis of Reaction of Students about Adequacy of Area of Classrooms Available in Private and Government Colleges

Type of the College	Percentage and Frequency Values	How Do You Rate Classrooms Area of the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
Private	Frequency	31	55	18	10	3	117
	%	26.5%	47.0%	15.4%	8.5%	2.6%	100%
Government	Frequency	3	22	12	2	2	41
	%	7.3%	53.7%	29.3%	4.9%	4.9%	100%
Total	Frequency	34	77	30	12	5	158
	%	21.5%	48.7%	19.0%	7.6%	3.2%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	9.599	0.04		10.567	0.032		

2. Staff Profile

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of Reaction of Students about Adequacy of Number Instructors Available in Private and Government Colleges

Type of the College	Percentage & Frequency Values	How Do You Rate Instructors Number of the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
Private	Frequency	7	52	29	23	6	117
	%	6.0%	44.4%	24.8%	19.7%	5.1%	100%
Government	Frequency	0	15	15	7	4	41
	%	0%	36.6%	36.6%	17.1%	9.8%	100%
Total	Frequency	7	67	44	30	10	158
	%	4.4%	42.4%	27.8%	19.0%	6.3%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	5.547	0.236		7.140	0.129		

Results of the Chi-square analysis, to see whether there is variation in the availability of adequate number of instructors, revealed that the variation in the number of instructors between private and government colleges seems to be statistically insignificant. However, results of the Chi-square analysis presented under Table 5 indicates that there is variation in the availability of qualified instructors that is statistically significant ($P < 0.1$) variation in private and government colleges with the latter rated to have more qualified instructors than the former. This finding is in line with the empirical findings and theoretical underpinnings stated in the literature review. For example,

Zewudu (2001) asserted that the mix of staff of Unity University and Microlink Colleges is lower than the qualifications set in the accreditation directive. Furthermore, a World Bank Report (2002) revealed that lack of full time qualified teachers is an important contributor to poor quality of education in PHEIs in Ethiopia.

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis of Reaction of Students about Adequacy of Quality of Instructors Available in Private and Government Colleges

Type of the College	Percentage and Frequency Values	How do you rate instructors' quality of the college?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
Private	Frequency	18	49	28	12	10	117
	%	15.4%	41.9%	23.9%	10.3%	8.5%	100%
Government	Frequency	7	26	5	2	1	41
	%	17.1%	63.4%	12.2%	4.9%	2.4%	100%
Total	Frequency	25	75	33	14	11	158
	%	15.8%	47.5%	20.9%	8.9%	7.0%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	7.641	0.10		8.210	0.084		

The workload of instructors working in private and government owned colleges were also analyzed. The result indicates that the average number of hours per week that instructors take over is 21 and 11 hours for private and government colleges respectively. The difference was also tested whether it is statistically significant or not. Result of the t-test analysis revealed that the workload in the two types of colleges is found to be statistically significant at 10% level.

Table 6: Workload of Instructors for Private and Government Colleges

Type of College	Minimum Workload	Maximum Workload	Mean Workload	Std. Deviation
Government Owned Colleges	4.00	12.00	10.9091	2.4680
Private Owned Colleges	4.00	37.00	21.2174	7.8390

3. Extent of Staff Turnover and College Administration

Table 7: Reaction of Private College and Government College Instructors to the Rate of Staff Turnover of Academic Staff

Rating Scale	Private Colleges		Government Colleges	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
To a very great extent	9	39.1	1	9.1
To a great extent	2	8.7	3	27.3
To some extent	6	26.1	5	45.5
To a limited extent	4	17.4	2	18.2
Not at all	2	8.7	-	-
Total	23	100.0	11	100.0

Large workload of instructors could affect adequate preparation and continuous assessment of students, and may deter instructors from their active participation in material production, research activities and some extra-curricular activities that are equally important for improved quality education delivery. Students were asked to what extent the colleges encourage students to participate in extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, 50%, 32% and 18% of the students explained that private colleges “never encourage”, “give modest encouragements” or “encourage to some extent” students to participate in extra-curricular activities respectively. On the other hand, 32%, 24% and 37% of the students rated government colleges to have level of encouragement of “very great extent”, “great extent”, and “modest” with the remaining rating to have no encouragement at all respectively. In this regard, government colleges are in a better position than private colleges. But, instructors were also asked why they are not engaged in research and material production activities. Accordingly, 78.3% private college instructors respectively revealed that there is no incentive mechanism put in place by the colleges for such endeavours.

Instructors of private and government colleges were also asked to rate the staff turnover of the colleges they are working with. About 48% of them rated the turnover of the academic staff to fall under the range of “great extent” to “a very great extent”. Most of the respondents (44%) associated the reasons for high turnover of the academic staff to the problem of college management followed by the low level of salary as opposed to the availability of better opportunities in other areas. Regarding management, the Colleges 47.7% of the instructors revealed that the staff-management relationship of the colleges to be either poor or very poor, 26% of them rated the relationship to be medium and the rest of them rated the relationship to be good. In connection to this, the World Bank Report (2002) indicated that academic leaders are rarely trained in the management of large and complex institutions. This situation might lead to “selling of college diplomas” to students without giving them sufficient training. Sharing the experience of Kenya, the World Bank Report (2002) further stated that Kenyan authorities claimed to have broken up a ring within the Ministry of Education that had been producing and selling bogus university diplomas, polytechnic certificates, exam results, academic transcripts and even counterfeit identification documents such as passports. Further, Laurie (2003) asserted that once appropriate postgraduate study and reflection have improved teaching quality, it is necessary to

maintain and sustain these improvements in order to foster and embed a quality culture. Government and institutions' commitment to development and support of staff will be essential.

Table8: Reasons for Staff Turnover in Private Colleges

<i>Ser. No.</i>	<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	Poor Management	10	43.5
2	Low Level of Salary and Availability of Better Prospects in Other Areas	9	40.1
3	Low Level of Salary & Facilities	3	13.0
4	Absence of Adequate Facilities	1	4.4
	Total	23	100.0

In government owned colleges, the extent of academic staff turnover was also investigated. The result indicates that, compared to that of private colleges, only 36.4% of them rated the extent of academic staff turnover to fall under the range of “great extent” to “a very great extent”. The majority of the respondents associated the cause of staff turnover to the limited prospect for promotion and to the low levels of salary that government owned colleges deliver (See Table below). In relation to this Stone (2001) revealed that an effectively integrated set of arrangements that will encourage, foster and require continuing professional development from all teachers is recommended as essential underpinning for the pursuit of increasing quality. Referring to salary, World Bank Report (2002) further made a remark that low paid instructors at public institutions seek second and third jobs in extramural positions as teaching at better paying private colleges.

Table9: Reasons for Staff Turnover in Government Colleges

<i>Ser. No.</i>	<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	Poor Management	2	18.2
2	Limited Prospect for Promotion and Low Level of Salary	7	63.6
3	Low Level of Salary and Poor Management	2	18.2
4	Total	11	100.0

It was also tried to get the views of students whether they believe that they are getting the required quality of education both in private and government colleges. The result shows that in both cases, students rated the level of quality of education delivery to have similar levels (see Table below).

Table10: Views of Students about the Efforts of the Colleges towards Delivering Quality of Education

Ser. No.	Rating Scales	Private Colleges		Government Colleges	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Very high	13	11.1	6	14.6
2	High	33	28.2	11	26.8
3	Medium	43	36.8	13	31.7
4	Low	21	18.0	8	19.5
5	Very low	7	6.0	3	7.3
6	Total	117	100.0	41	100.0

By disaggregating the data, efforts were made to see whether there are variations among the colleges that are studied with regard to the criteria examined. Accordingly, the following explanations give the points.

The Table below depicts that in terms of the adequacy of computers available at each college, there is significant variation ($P=0.000$) among them. For instance, 33.3% and 65.9% of the students rated the adequacy of computer number available at College 4 and College 5 respectively to be “very low”. Whereas, 33.3% and 38.5% of students labelled the adequacy of computers number available at College 2 to be just “enough” and “moderate” respectively. On the other hand, only at one college (College 2) that very few number of students (2.6%) said the available computers are “more than enough” indicating that despite variations among the colleges, there are still considerable gaps to be filled by each college.

Table11: Chi-Square Analysis of Adequacy of Computers Availability at the Different Colleges

College Names	Frequency and Percentage Values	How do you rate Computers Available in the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
College1*	Frequency	0	11	11	13	7	42
	%	0	26.2%	26.2%	31.0%	16.7%	100%
College 2*	Frequency	1	13	15	8	2	39
	%	2.6%	33.3%	38.5%	20.5%	5.1%	100%
College 3*	Frequency	0	0	11	13	12	36
	%	0	0	30.6%	36.1%	33.3%	100%
College 4**	Frequency	0	3	3	8	27	41
	%	0	7.3%	7.3%	19.5%	65.9%	100%
Total	Frequency	1	27	40	42	48	158
	%	0.6%	17.1%	25.3%	26.6%	30.4%	100%
Test of Significance	Pearson χ^2 Test			Likelihood Ratio Test			
	Value	Level of Sig.		Value	Level of Sig.		
	58.579	0.000		65.769	0.000		

* and ** indicate private and public colleges respectively

Although the comparative analysis made between private and government colleges indicated that there is no significant variation in the number of classrooms available at private and government colleges, the disaggregated analysis revealed that there are significant variations among the examined colleges ($P < 0.01$). From Table 11, the problem seems more critical for College 2 and College 5 than the others where 20.5% and 17.1% of the students respectively labelled them to have low number of classrooms for the teaching-learning process. On the other hand, only at College 4, large number of students (36.1%) indicated the available number of classrooms at the college to be “more than enough”. This indicates that there is still the need to increase the number of classrooms at the different colleges so as to improve the situation.

Table12: Chi-Square Analysis of Number of Classrooms Available at the Different

College Names	Frequency and Percentage Values	How do you rate Classrooms Available in the Colleges?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
College 1*	Frequency	7	30	4	1		42
	%	16.7%	71.4%	9.5%	2.4%		100%
College 2*	Frequency	4	19	6	8	2	39
	%	10.3%	48.7%	15.4%	20.5%	5.1%	100%
College 3*	Frequency	13	11	8	4		36
	%	36.1%	30.6%	22.2%	11.1%		100%
College 4**	Frequency	3	18	12	7	1	41
	%	7.3%	43.9%	29.3%	17.1%	2.4%	100%
Total	Frequency	27	78	30	20	3	158
	%	17.1%	49.4%	19.0%	12.7%	1.9%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>				<i>Value</i>	
	32.476	0.001		33.675		0.001	

* and ** indicate private and public colleges respectively

The views of students towards the adequacy of instructors at the different colleges were also examined in a disaggregated manner. The result, as indicated below, reveals that the variations in the parameter among the colleges to be statistically significant both by Pearson Chi-Square criteria and Likelihood Ratio Test.

Table 13: Chi-Square Analysis of Number of Instructors Available at the Different Colleges

College Names	Frequency and Percentage Values	How do you rate the number of instructor in the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
	Frequency	4	24	9	5		42
College 1*	%	9.5%	57.1%	21.4%	11.9%		100%
	Frequency	1	8	12	13	5	39
College 2*	%	2.6%	20.5%	30.8%	33.3%	12.8%	100%
	Frequency	2	20	8	5	1	36
College 3*	%	5.6%	55.6%	22.2%	13.9%	2.8%	100%
	Frequency	0	15	15	7	4	41
College 4**	%	0.0	36.6%	36.6%	17.1%	9.8%	100%
Total	Frequency	7	67	44	30	10	158
	%	4.4%	42.4%	27.8%	19.0%	6.3%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	27.956	0.006		31.485	0.002		

* and ** indicate private and public colleges respectively

Again with regard to the adequacy of the level of qualification of instructors working in the different colleges, the chi-square analysis shows the presence of statistically significant variations. As indicated in the Table below, although most of the students in each college, described that the levels of qualifications of their instructors to be “enough”, at College 2, there are considerable number of students (20.5%) who explain that the level of qualifications of their instructors is “very low”.

Table 14: Chi-Square Analysis of Number of Instructors Available at the Different Colleges

College Names	Frequency and Percentage Values	How do you rate instructors' quality of the College?					Total
		More than Enough	Enough	Moderate	Low	Very Low	
College 1*	Frequency	9	20	9	3	1	42
	%	21.4%	47.6%	21.4%	7.1%	2.4%	100%
College 2*	Frequency	1	15	9	6	8	39
	%	2.6%	38.5%	23.1%	15.4%	20.5%	100%
College 3*	Frequency	8	14	10	3	1	36
	%	22.2%	38.9%	27.8%	8.3%	2.8%	100%
College 4**	Frequency	7	26	5	2	1	41
	%	17.1%	63.4%	12.2%	4.9%	2.4%	100%
Total	Frequency	25	75	33	14	11	158
	%	15.8%	47.5%	20.9%	8.9%	7.0%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	28.378	0.005		27.971	0.006		

* and ** indicate private and public colleges respectively

The rate of response of the management body of the different colleges towards students' claim about the different issues of the teaching-learning process was also analyzed to see whether there are variations among the colleges. As presented below, the statistical test revealed that there are significant variations among the colleges with regard to giving prompt response to their students' problems. Although there are variations, the general picture of the rate of response of the management body of all the colleges examined is found to be very poor (see Table below).

Table 15: Chi-Square Analysis of Rate of Response of College Administration to Solve Students' Problems

College Name	Frequency and Percentage Values	Response of College Administration to Solve Students Problems					Total
		To a very Great Extent	To a Great Extent	In a medium way	Poor	Very poor	
College 1*	Frequency	9	4	11	4	14	42
	%	21.4%	9.5%	26.2%	9.5%	33.3%	100%
College 2*	Frequency	1	6	7	3	22	39
	%	2.6%	15.4%	17.9%	7.7%	56.4%	100%
College 3*	Frequency	0	4	2	4	26	36
	%	0.0	11.1%	5.6%	11.1%	72.2%	100%
College 4**	Frequency	4	5	6	1	25	41
	%	9.8%	12.2%	14.6%	2.4%	61.0%	100%
Total	Frequency	14	19	26	12	87	158
	%	8.9%	12.0%	16.5%	7.6%	55.1%	100%
Test of Significance	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Level of Sig.</i>		
	26.250	0.010		29.346	0.003		

4. Conclusions and Recommendation

Study on assessment of quality of education is an important tool for quality assurance endeavor. However, the area of study, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia, where there is individual's and institution's perception on the provision of data as something getting into some sort of competition with other institutions, exhausting the issue becomes very difficult. Nevertheless, this study attempted to give a stepping stone for further studies by considering the input and process aspects of quality of education determinants by analyzing at students/beneficiaries and instructors level.

The results of the study showed that there are significant variations between private and government colleges in terms of the available number of facilities, academic staff qualifications and number, credit loads of academic staff, and college governance. Although, the general attitude of the public towards private colleges, as indicated by Wondwosen (2003), is to perceive them as “diploma mills” and “certificate shops”, from this study it is found that the perception is mere of

idea rather than reality as there are aspects where private colleges even exceed that of government ones. The study revealed that there are areas of deficiency in both cases that need improvement. This is especially true with regard to the issue of college administration in terms of giving prompt responses to students' query. In addition, it is found out that there are variations in size of classrooms available at private and government colleges with the latter in a better position. This could be attributed to the fact that most private colleges use rental houses, and the cost implication becomes a challenge for them. Hence, concerned government bodies need to facilitate the acquisition of lands by these private colleges so as to have their own buildings. On the other hand, credit load of instructors working at private colleges is found to be significantly higher than that of government colleges to the extent that could deter them from engagement in some research, extra-curricular and material production activities. Since such aspects are very important for assuring quality of education, instructors should shoulder only modest credit loads and a mechanism of raising their salary level and giving them promotion and incentives on the basis of their participation in such activities has to be sought.

Last but not least, both private and government colleges should indulge into a sort of healthy competition so as to narrow down the variations that exist in the different parameters considered and found to be significant to ensure quality of education delivered by them.

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Patterns of GPA in Higher Institutions of Ethiopia: Towards the Development of Standardized Quality Parameter

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Abstract

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is one of the quality parameters routinely employed to set the students' performance in higher institutions. It has long been used as a yardstick in various competition types and enrolment at higher educational institutions. Recently, several institutions (Public and Private) had phenomenally mushroomed where a wide spectrum of grading schemes is expected. Variations in grading system could be reflected on the CGPA scored by graduates: either from similar departments of different institutions, or from different batches of the same institutions. The observed heterogeneity has induced scepticism from stakeholders on the efficacy and objectivity of CGPA, which eventually call for systematic standardization tool.

This study has attempted to (1) identify the patterns of grade inflation across institutions and through time; and (2) generate a standardization technique, which enables across-college and across-batch objectification. CGPA of sample graduates from business-oriented departments of Public and Private institutions were collected and interpreted. Besides, pertinent data were collected from college instructors and employing organization through structured questionnaire.

Results of the study showed that there is a trend of grade inflation (1) as one moves from the Public to Private owned institutions, (2) within different Public colleges, and (3) across years within Public-owned departments. In a bid to standardize the quality of graduates across institutions, this study developed a

Normalized Index (computed as $\frac{CGPA - ESLCE}{CGPA + ESLCE}$), which took into account CGPA and ESLCE (Ethiopian

School Leaving Certificate Examination) scores. An equation $ACGPA = CGPA \pm NI$ was derived to calculate the Adjusted CGPA. A Look up Table was prepared for all grading scenarios, which enables a user-friendly adjustment to the CGPA of college graduates. This study recommends that ACGPA should be fine-tuned to take into account other variables and needs to be validated on un-sampled institutions.

1. Introduction

CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) is one of the major parameters employed to evaluate students across different performance categories (outstanding, medium, low) in higher institutions. It has long been used as a yardstick in competitions for securing new job, getting lack of parallelis in career, winning scholarship, enrolling at higher educational institutions at advanced standing and graduate levels, etc.

Nowadays, higher education in Ethiopia is undergoing an extraordinary transformation. Several Public and Private Institutions have phenomenally mushroomed in Ethiopia. This opportunity has brought a noteworthy diversity both in their location and field of specializations. The phenomenon undoubtedly exhibits a wide spectrum of grading system in the evaluation process. The variation in grading system could be reflected on CGPA attained by graduates, either from different batches of the same institution, or of the same department but graduated from different institutions.

Currently, it is widely believed by various individuals, institutions, and employers that sheer CGPA is skeptical for the intended objective. Numerous employers and educational institutions have begun to show hesitation on the CGPA inscribed on the transcript per se. For instance, the prominent business-oriented Public College, Addis Ababa Commercial College, recently upgraded all its departments from diploma to degree program with a limited enrolment capacity at an advanced standing level. Amazingly, several thousand applicants who had graduated from the various public and private institutions (more than 20 folds) submitted applications to the college. Due to the striking diversities of the applicants' CGPA, the college was obliged to adapt a screening device, which bestowed heavy weight to the GPA scored during ESLCE than the CGPA obtained during college studies. Such heterogeneity in the grading system is the major impetus that underpins the need to look for designing an acceptable mode of appraisal system across colleges and through batches. This vivid problem demands an alternative evaluation system/standard, which ultimately calls for scientific exploration.

The quality of students' outcome could be ensured by different methods. Some of them include double marking, assessment criteria, peer evaluation, external examination, benchmarking, employer survey, graduate survey, etc (Gittoes 2003 and Smith *et al* 1999). Despite the usefulness of these methods, the following drawbacks make them to be difficult, if not impossible, to execute it in the present Ethiopian condition:

- They are open to subjectivity (results could vary across space and time);

- They demand periodic monitoring scheme, which ultimately consumes budget, time and expertise; and
- The interpretation of their outcome is difficult due to its unfriendliness to users.

In general, a cursory review of local studies demonstrates that there is no available literature pertaining to the grade inflation issues in Ethiopia. However, there are some studies, which are marginally related. Graduate students of Addis Ababa University have mainly conducted such investigations.

Many of the existing studies assessed the association between scores of ESLCE and college performances (Fentaw 1991, Kebede 1991, Mekonen 1987, Melaku 1975). On the other hand, Daniel (1992) investigated the relationship between undergraduate GPA and Graduate School success. The study conducted by Eshetu (1998) is the exception where an academic performance of teacher and non-teacher stream science faculty graduates was conducted. He identified no significant difference between the two groups by the time the students graduated. In response to the foregoing problems and research gap, the following specific objectives were set in this study to:

- identify (if any) the patterns of grade inflation across departments of Public and Private institutes;
- identify (if any) patterns of grade inflation at departments of Public institutes through time (old vs. recent batches of similar departments); and
- generate a new standardization technique which enables cross-college and cross-batch objectification.

2. Research Methodology

Records (CGPA) of sample college graduates for the last three consecutive years (2004, 2003, and 2002) were collected both from Private [St. Mary's (SM) & Micro-Link Information Technology (MLIT)] and Public (AAC) colleges. The purpose of this sample is to compute the spatial patterns of grade inflation. The three business-oriented departments chosen for the study include Accounting (ACT), Marketing Management (MKT) and Secretarial Science and Office Management (SSOM). One sample section, on average consisting 40 students, was randomly selected for each department and for each stated academic year. This made a total data set of CGPAs from 1080 college graduates.

To assess the temporal pattern of grades, only AAC was considered. This was due to the availability of long track of data for private colleges. In this regard, the CGPA of graduates for the above-mentioned business-oriented sample departments were obtained for over a decade long, viz., 2003, 2002, 2001, 1997, 1995, and 1992.

To compute grade differentials of the current academic year, assessment was made for various colleges of Addis Ababa University (AAU). A random collection of grades (*of 2004, II semester*) was made from the notice boards of respective institutions. Such data were collected from AAC [5 departments, 183 students], Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) [6 departments, 241 students], and Science Faculty (FS) [3 departments, 109 students], which make total scores of 533 students from 14 courses. In this regard, a total count was conducted on the number of A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's.

To assess grade inflation, a structured questionnaire was also prepared and administered to two groups of respondents, viz., college instructors and employers. About 36 college instructors responded out of the 70 questionnaires. Instructors of AAC, SM, MLIT, Unity University College (UUC), and Admas (AD) colleges were involved. Since financial institutes often employ graduates from business-oriented colleges, 8 major employers (mainly banks and insurances) were chosen for employer survey. However, only Wegagen Bank, S.C., has willingly participated in responding to the questionnaire.

Descriptive statistical analyses were employed using the statistical software (SPSS, version 10.01) to obtain the spatial and temporal aspects of grade inflation. Besides, different graph types were employed during the analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Spatial Patterns of Grade Inflation

Observation of the posted grades, which was conducted among different colleges of AAU, shows a diversified distribution pattern (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Grades are found to be systematically inflated across SF → FBE → AAC colleges. The grade variation was not only across colleges but also within the different courses of a specific college.

The grade patterns between two private colleges showed almost similar distribution pattern (Figures 4 and 5). However, the assessment of grade differential across separate courses showed a slight variation. There is a small tendency of grade increment in the SSOM Department of MLIT

than SM College. On the contrary, the scores of Accounting Department are inflated more in SM than MLIT College. However, most often than not, such aggregated data or institutional averages do obscure subtle but real differences between institutions (Smith et al. 1999).

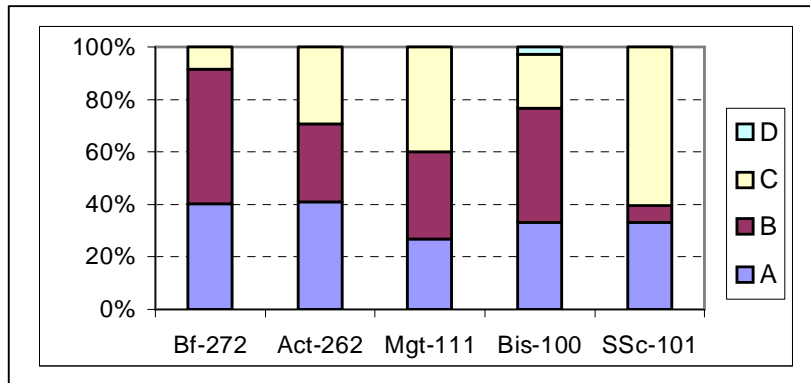


Figure 1: Patterns of Randomly Collected Grades within AAC (II Semester, 2004)

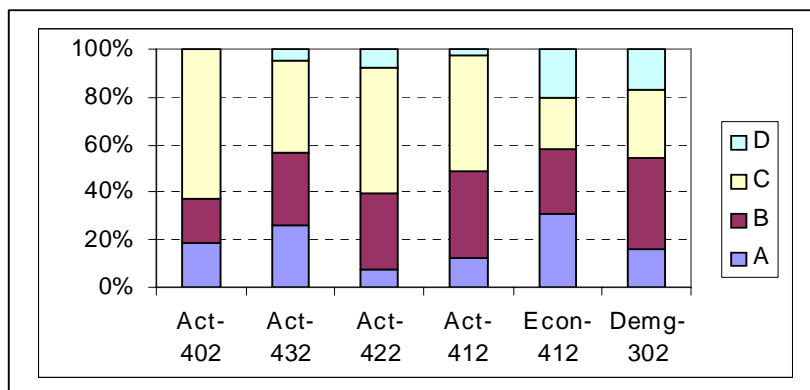


Figure 2: Patterns of Randomly Collected Grades within, FBE (II Semester, 2004)

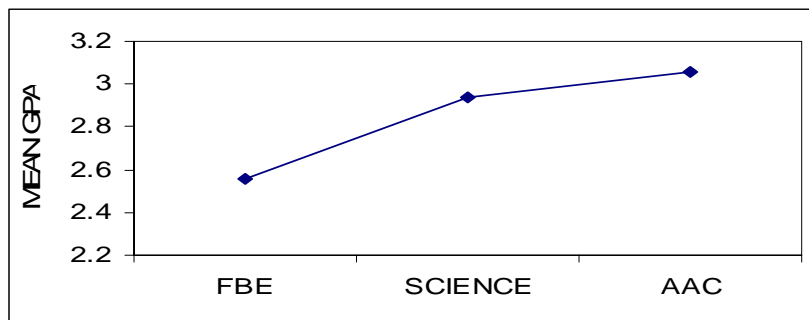


Figure 3: Spatial Patterns of Randomly Collected Grades across Public Colleges (II Semester, 2004)

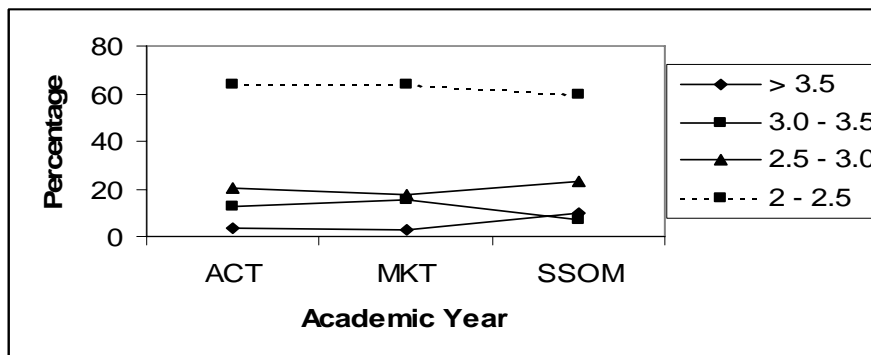


Figure 4: Trends of Average CGPA in MLIT College (2001-2003)

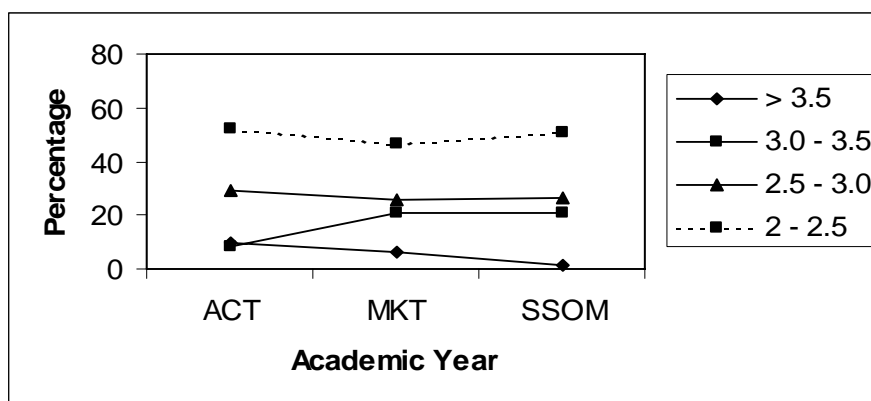


Figure 5: Trends of Average CGPA in SM College (2001-2003)

From responses of instructors obtained through questionnaire, it was found out that 64% of them acknowledged the variations of grading between Public and Private Colleges. 75% of the respondents replied, “grades are inflated more at Private than Public colleges”. Response from the employer also showed a similar stance. Those responses were obtained from instructors where nearly 50% of them had worked both at Public and Private Colleges.

About 72% of the respondents witnessed the difficulty of scoring higher grades during the past than present. However, only 33% of the respondents had attributed the growing availability of books to current higher grades in various colleges.

The employer, Wegagen Bank responded that it recruits candidates both from public and private colleges but the majority of applicants are from public colleges. During competitions, CGPA is considered as primary criteria, which account for about 75%, irrespective of the college type. The highest CGPA encountered during competition were mainly from Private colleges. In competitions, graduates of public colleges score better than their counterparts. In the Bank’s opinion, CGPA alone is not enough to qualify candidates for job and it showed the need for a standardized CGPA at national level.

3.2 Temporal Patterns of Grade Inflation

Analysis of grade pattern in AAC for the three Departments (ACT, MKT, SSOM) clearly shows that, there had been grade inflation demonstrated in the preceding decade (Figures 6, 7, and 8). In all departments, there is a growing trend of higher CGPA belonging to the category of “great distinction” (> 3.5 CGPA). Likewise, the proportion of lower CGPA category had shown somewhat a declining tendency in the corresponding period.

While the sample employer couldn’t discern such a temporal trend of grade inflation, about 50% of college instructors confirmed that there has been a time-to-time inflation of grades even at public colleges. About 81% of the respondents have the opinion that currently many younger teaching staff are available in higher institutions in Ethiopia. Of respondents, 86% of them witnessed that private colleges are staffed more by younger instructors than public colleges. When asked if younger staff are more generous in grading, 58% of the college instructors hesitated to associate grade inflation with the rising proportion of young staff in colleges. About 67% of the respondents have the opinion that the growing culture of academic transparency in colleges has favoured students to score better grade at present time than before.

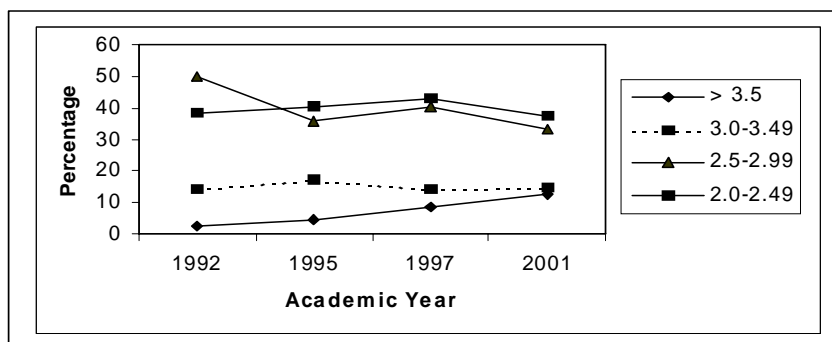


Figure 6: Temporal Pattern of Overall CGPA, Accounting Department (AAC)

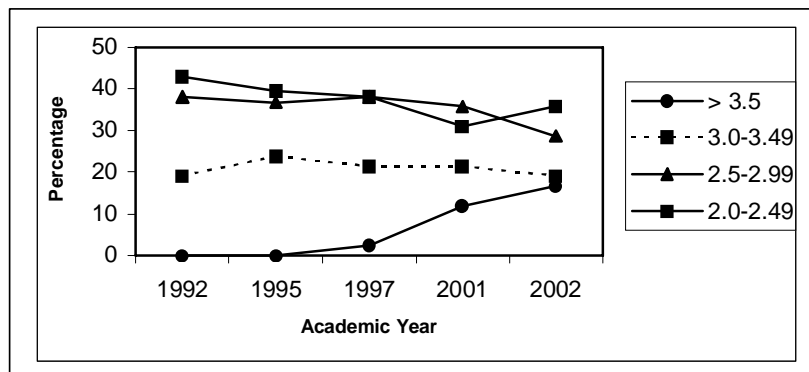


Figure 7: Temporal Patterns of Overall CGPA, Marketing Department (AAC)

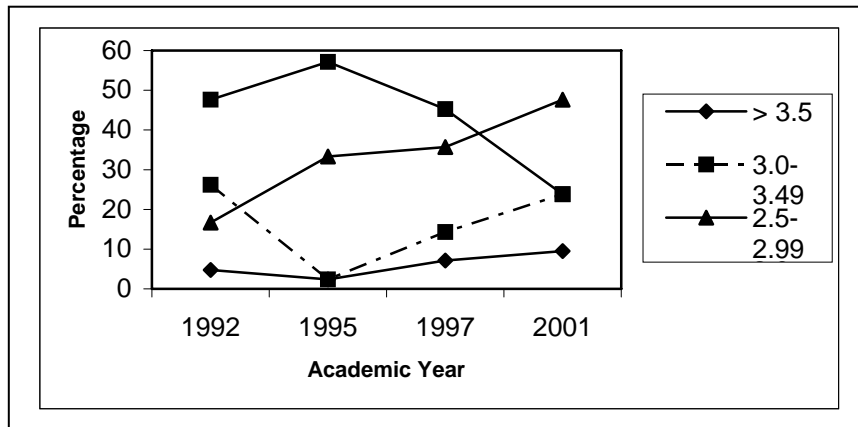


Figure 8: Temporal Pattern of Overall CGPA, Secretary Science Department (AAC)

In order to cope with the problem of disparity in grade pattern, respondents of college instructors suggested various solutions, where the following are the most common ones:

The need to employ:

1. overall academic criteria. This is through entrance examination which might compose practical, analytical, reasoning, aptitude and performance criteria;
2. extra-academic criteria like morality, ethics, and personality;
3. an assessment by external body, such as accreditation of candidates by professional associations, or setting a regulatory organ to oversee exams in different colleges or, in some instances, to take into account instructors' recommendation on the students' performance; and
4. letter grades; it is better to use percentages.

3.3 Index Development

Various studies demonstrated that college CGPA has a strong correlation with the ESLCE performance. An ESLCE score of 2.00 GPA is believed to meet the enrolment criteria to join higher institutions. However, it is only those who scored above 3.00 GPA who are getting the benefit of enrolment in Public colleges (Figure 9). Those who score below 3.00 GPA usually enrol in Private colleges. Due to this reason, there is a marked variation in the quality of enrolling students among public and private colleges.

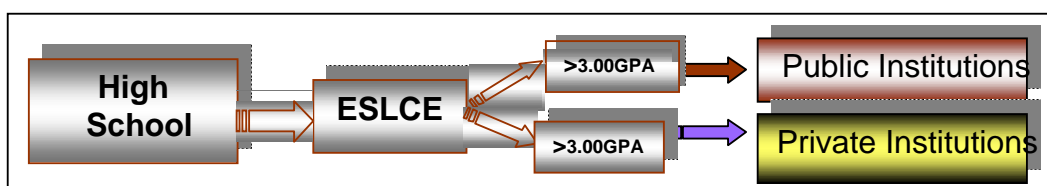


Figure 9: ESLCE-based Placement Patterns of Students in Ethiopia

Once students are enrolled, they are subjected to pursue under similar academic syllabus (Figure 10). However, there are unavoidable differences, which might positively or negatively contribute to the CGPA scored by college students. The students in private colleges, enjoy the benefit of choosing their field of specialization, and the competition is taking place among them. In such academic setting, those who had scored relatively higher in ESLCE are probable to score excellent grades of CGPA (Figure 10).

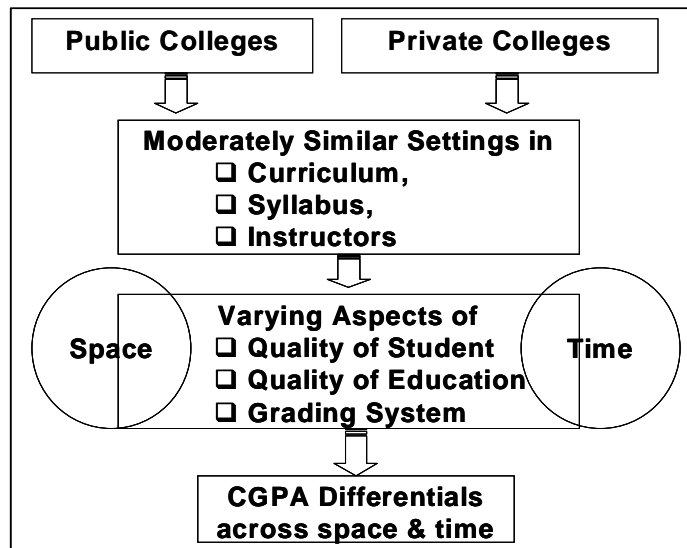


Figure 10: Overview of Grade Differential across Space and Time

However, those who scored higher in ESLCE and join public colleges are further assigned to several colleges of preferences based primarily on their ESLCE result than their personal interest. The most qualified scorers of ESLCE would join the “high competitive” field of specialization and hence are subjected to harvest grades ranging from “excellent” to “poor”. Those who are placed in “less-competitive” departments are competing among themselves, and among them those who had better ESLCE result would have a probability to be “excellent scorer” by the time they graduate. This scenario leads to the conclusion that the CGPA obtained by any graduate is the interplay of personal caliber, competitiveness of the students in the department, type of college, and type of grading system.

Currently, there are two methods of scales at the disposal of public and private colleges (Table 1). Relative Scale is employed by many public and private colleges. This scale enables to share grades (A to F) to any group of students, based on relative performance. Its disadvantage is that even though the majority of students are weaker or stronger, it usually apportions those grades to each batch. Hence, the batch itself matters the obtainable grade at a significant scale.

Table 1: Scales Employed in Public and Private Colleges of Ethiopia

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Relative Scale (% Of students)</i>	<i>Absolute Scale (Marks in %)</i>
A	0-15	≥ 85
B	10 – 20	70 – 74
C	30 – 65	50 – 69
D	0 – 10	40 – 49
F	0 – 10	≤ 40

Absolute Scale is being employed at UUC College. This grading system has been criticized due to the inflated grades it bestows. Currently, further modification is employed where a 5% plus-minus rating is used to regulate the grade proportion. Apart from master grades (A, B, C, D, F), plus (+) and minus (-) are currently used at UU College to give a little more room for modification of such grading system.

The exposure of college students to varying competition ground (Figure 11) is one of the prime factors, which tarnishes the trustworthiness of the acquired CGPA. In this regard, Middlehurst (1996), cited in Smith et al (1999), recognized specific areas to be addressed if academic standards in a wider sense are to be assured. These include: conduct of academic staff (both input and processes); the educational background, ability motivation and learning approaches of students; curriculum design and content; learning activities; the assessment regime; the institutional context that provides a framework for articulation, assurance, maintenance and enhancement of standards.

A very good testimony of grade differential in higher institutions of Ethiopia is the study made by Eshetu (1998). Students of two groups at the Science Faculty of the AAU had different GPA during a placement in teaching (with less GPA) and non-teaching (with high GPA) streams. His study demonstrated that, at the time of graduation, the two groups showed no significant difference in grade, which clearly implies that the teaching stream had benefited from grade inflation than the non-teacher stream.

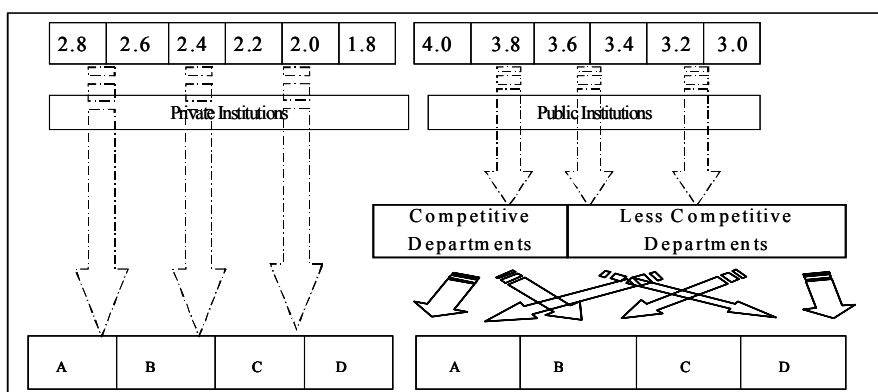


Figure 11: Determinants of Graduates' CGPA

There are two cardinal GPAs (ESLCE and CGPA), which are frequently used for various competitions. Due to the foregoing evidences in the spatial and temporal variation of CGPA, this study proposes the need to benchmark CGPA with ESLCE. In this regard, three scenarios of ESLCE-CGPA pattern could be distinguished (Figure 12).

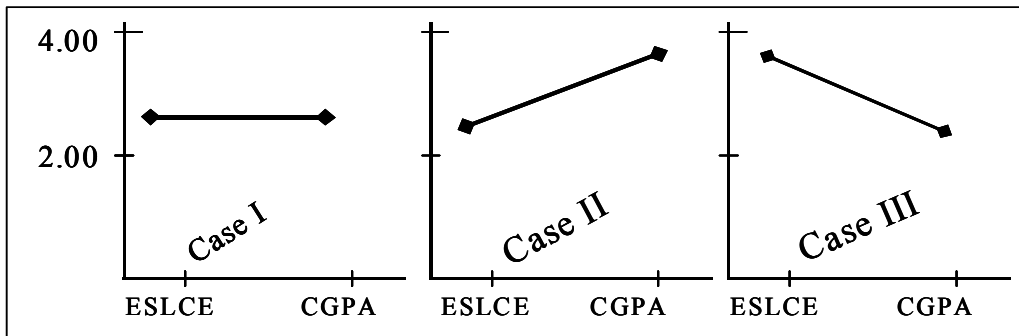


Figure 12: Scenario of CGPA-ESLCE Pattern

Neither ESLCE nor CGPA are sufficient to be a sole yardstick. Therefore, a Normalized Index (NI) which is incorporating ESLCE and CGPA, would yield better yardstick:

$$NI = \frac{CGPA - ESLCE}{CGPA + ESLCE} \quad (\text{Equation 1}).$$

Where

- NI ranges from -1 to 1,
- -1 refers to extremely deflated CGPA
- 0 refers to no change
- + 1 refers to extremely inflated CGPA

Corollary to the three ESLCE-CGPA patterns, computation of Adjusted CGPA (ACGPA) could be made in three scenarios:

1. Case I: “Steady-State” Scenario

There is no change between results of ESLCE and CGPA. The value would be 0 (CGPA ⇔ ACGPA)

2. Case II: “Waxing” Scenario

NI would have a positive value, hence, $ACGPA = CGPA - NI$ (Equation 2)

3. Case III. “Waning” Scenario

NI would have negative value, hence $ACGPA = CGPA + NI$ (Equation 3)

Therefore, the general formula of Adjusted CGPA would be:

$$ACGPA = CGPA \pm NI \quad (\text{Equation 4}).$$

To compute Equation 4, the NI values could be easily obtained from the look up table, which is prepared for easy reference. While NI with – sign is an indicator of deflation, the + sign signifies the presence of inflation.

Upon the implementation of ACGPA, the following advantages could be attained:

1. Giving due credit to the efforts (performance) paid to ESLCE which demonstrates the performance of pre-college study;
2. Being user-friendly due to easy computation and interpretation possibility;
3. Allowing comparison of candidates across departments, colleges, and batches;
4. Enabling institutions to benchmark their own performance; and
5. Contributing to the public accountability of higher education.

Table 2: Calculated Look-Up Table for Normalized Index

		CGPA										
		2.00	2.20	2.40	2.60	2.80	3.00	3.20	3.40	3.60	3.80	4.00
ESLCE	1.40	0.18	0.22	0.26	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.39	0.42	0.44	0.46	0.48
	1.60	0.11	0.16	0.20	0.24	0.27	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.38	0.41	0.43
	1.80	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.18	0.22	0.25	0.28	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.38
	2.00	0.00	0.05	0.09	0.13	0.17	0.20	0.23	0.26	0.29	0.31	0.33
	2.20	-0.05	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.12	0.15	0.19	0.21	0.24	0.27	0.29
	2.40	-0.09	-0.04	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.11	0.14	0.17	0.20	0.23	0.25
	2.60	-0.13	-0.08	-0.04	0.00	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.13	0.16	0.19	0.21
	2.80	-0.17	-0.12	-0.08	-0.04	0.00	0.03	0.07	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.18
	3.00	-0.20	-0.15	-0.11	-0.07	-0.03	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.12	0.14
	3.20	-0.23	-0.19	-0.14	-0.10	-0.07	-0.03	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.11
	3.40	-0.26	-0.21	-0.17	-0.13	-0.10	-0.06	-0.03	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.08
	3.60	-0.29	-0.24	-0.20	-0.16	-0.13	-0.09	-0.06	-0.03	0.00	0.03	0.05
	3.80	-0.31	-0.27	-0.23	-0.19	-0.15	-0.12	-0.09	-0.06	-0.03	0.00	0.03
	4.00	-0.33	-0.29	-0.25	-0.21	-0.18	-0.14	-0.11	-0.08	-0.05	-0.03	0.00

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a clear government and public concern for "quality" of higher education in Ethiopia. Quality is a complex matter where its objective assessment is a requisite for comparative judgment. CGPA is one of the vital parameters, which is strongly linked to the quality of institution and graduates. However, it is exhibiting a noticeable heterogeneity through time and space, which ultimately made it possess a benefit of doubt. This is because the CGPA harvested by

any college graduate is a combined result of personal brilliance and endeavour, competitive nature of the department, type of college, type of grading system he/she was exposed to, etc.

In this study two important findings were obtained:

1. CGPA is found out to systematically vary both across colleges (space) and through batches (time), which implies that CGPA is a space-time dependent; and
2. A normalized index (NI) was generated, which takes ESLCE and CGPA into account. The obtained general formula was $ACGPA = CGPA \pm NI$.

The newly developed ACGPA ultimately creates an enabling medium for cross department competition within Public colleges, and competition of candidates from different colleges. Figure 13 summarizes the computation and implementation of CGPA.

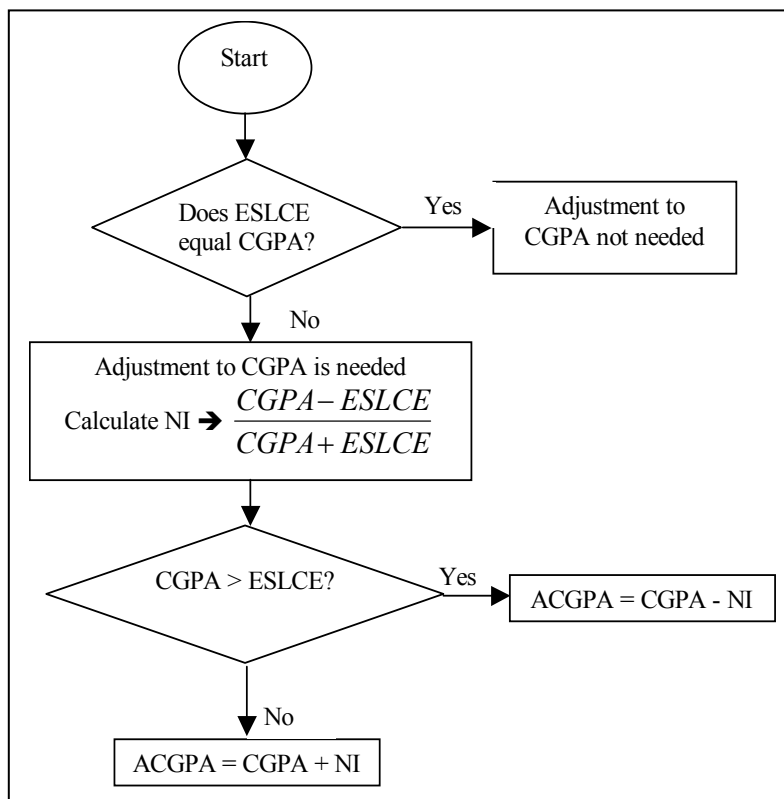


Figure 13: Decision Rule for the Computation of Adjusted CGPA

Finally, this study recommends that the

- (1) CGPA with differential should be assessed across different departments of different colleges both at private and public institutions, and
- (2) ACGPA should be further fine-tuned to address other parameters, which take into account unincorporated variables.

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Determinants of Students' Performance in Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The performance of students in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) can be affected by a wide variety of factors. These factors include social, economic, academic and institutional aspects directly or indirectly influencing the teaching learning process. One or more of these factors or in combination can contribute to increment or decrement in academic performance of students.

The general objective of the study is to find out the academic, social, and institutional variables which can predict the difference between PHEI students with increasing academic performance and those with decreasing academic performance. The study will also assess gender differences affecting academic performance of students in private institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia.

The study population consists of the list of accredited private higher learning institutions in Addis Ababa. Sample size of the study was 200 students selected randomly from five accredited PHEIs located in Addis Ababa. Primary data were collected using pre-tested questionnaire. Binary logistic regression model was used to predict the determinants of students' increased and decreased academic performance. The same model was fit to identify the factors affecting the academic performances of male and female students. The findings indicated that learning motivation, class participation, starting time of study in semester and living condition of students have statistically significant effect in predicting students' academic performance.

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Higher education is vital in the betterment of the quality of life, recognition of drawbacks and hindrances in the actual process of development and in the formulation of various types of remedies for social and economic problems existing in Ethiopia. Higher institutions of learning are seen by the society as role models of innovation and change at large and are expected to play a critical role in promoting sustainable cultural, social and economic development (UNESCO 1998). Higher Educational Institutions in Ethiopia are established with the specific objectives of training and producing qualified humanpower required for economic development, conducting research and disseminating results (Eyuaem 2004). PHEIs are also established with more or less of the same objectives mentioned while being profitable in order to keep their survival in the competitive atmosphere of private investment.

Since 1998 more than 18 PHEIs have been accredited in Ethiopia. PHEIs are sharing the contributions made to society by public higher learning institutions in producing manpower that currently fills positions in government, industry, public and private sectors. PHEIs in Ethiopia have created opportunities for thousands of students who did not have chance to join public higher institutions because of the stiff competition for the limited spaces available (Wondwosen 2003).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In light of these facts, this study tried to identify the major determinants which can affect students' academic performances in PHEIs in Ethiopia. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are to identify the:

1. academic, institutional and social factors predicting the difference between students with increasing academic performance and decreasing academic performance in PHEIs; and
2. gender differentials vis-à-vis academic performance of students in PHEIs.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 The Data

Primary data were used as a major input for analysis in the study. In order to sort out the would-be factors affecting students' academic performance, exploratory research was done on selected group of PHEI students. The information generated from the exploratory research was used to prepare the questionnaire used for the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested and was administered using the local language of the students. Secondary data were also used in order to facilitate interpretation of results.

2.2 Sampling Method

Two stage simple random sampling technique was used to select students for the study. In the first stage, five PHEIs were selected randomly from the list of accredited PHEIs found in Addis Ababa. In the second stage, a total of two hundred students were selected; forty students from each college, using simple random sampling technique.

2.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression models were used as analytical tools in the study. According to Wright (1995), the binary logistic model can be used to predict the difference between two groups when the dependent or response variable has a binary nature. In this study, the binary logistic regression model was used to find out the factors that discriminate PHEI students to have increased and decreased academic performances. The same type of regression model was used to see whether there is gender differentials with regard to academic performance of students in PHEIs.

2.3.1 Specification of Variables

Acaperfo: is the dependent variable in the first logistic regression model and represents students' academic performance; 0 if students' academic performances decreased, and 1 if increased.

Sex of student: is the dependent variable in the second logistic regression model; 0, if the sex of the student is female and 1, if otherwise.

The explanatory variables hypothesized to affect student performance are:

Livcon : represents living condition of students; 1if students live with family, 2 if students live with relatives, and 3 if students live alone. Students living with family were expected to have increased academic performance due to continuous follow-up from their parents on their day-to-day college activities.

Timesem: represents study starting time during a semester; 1 if students start studying at the beginning of a semester, 2 if students start studying at the middle of a semester and 3 if students start studying at the end of a semester. Students that start studying early in the semester are expected to have increased academic performance as it gives them the opportunity to cover their subjects before final exams.

Clactiv: represents tendency of instructors to encourage class participation; 0 if instructors don't have the tendency to encourage class participation and 1, if otherwise. The higher the tendency of instructors in encouraging class participation, the better would be the academic performance of students.

Askqst: represents students' inclination to ask questions during lecture hours; 0 if a student asks questions and 1, if otherwise. Asking questions during lecture hours helps the student to clearly understand classroom discussions that increases the opportunity of having increased academic performance.

Lecnote: represents students' frequency of taking lecture notes; 1 if a student never takes lecture notes, 2 if a student sometimes takes lecture notes and 3 if a student takes lecture notes on a regular basis. Students who frequently and actively take lecture notes are expected to have increased academic performances.

Speaski: English language speaking skill of students; 1, if students' English language speaking skill is very poor, 2 if it is poor, 3 if it is good, 4 if it is very good and 5 if it is excellent. English language speaking skill helps to enhance the communication process in the teaching learning process, and hence, it is expected to affect students' academic performances positively.

Listski: English language listening skill; 1, if students English language listening skill is very poor, 2 if it is poor, 3 if it is good, 4 if it is very good and 5 if it is excellent. English language listening skill helps to enhance the communication process in the teaching learning process, and hence expected to affect students' academic performances positively.

Futedu: intention of a student for further education after completion; 0, if a student has no intention to continue his/her education after completion and 1, if otherwise. If a student has the intention to pursue further education, then the student is expected to have better motivation to study that could contribute to have increased academic performance.

Recre: attitude of student about his/her college recreational facilities; 1, if it is perceived as very poor, 2 if it is perceived as poor 3, if it is perceived as good, and 4 if it is perceived as very good. If a student is satisfied with existing recreational facility of his/her college, he/she could have better or increased academic performance.

Lernmo: students' motivation to learn; 1, if a student's motivation is very low, 2, if it is low, 3 if it is high and 4 if it is very high. The higher the motivation of a student to learn, the better would be his/her academic performance.

Preve: experience of students in looking at previous exams before sitting for exams; 0, if a student has no experience of looking at past exams and 1, if otherwise. If a student has the experience of looking at previous exams, s/he can come across repeated questions and would score better result than those students who do not have such experiences.

Jobpro: prospect of getting job after graduation; 0, if a student believes that s/he has no prospect of getting job after graduation and 1, if otherwise. If a student thinks that there is high probability of employment after completing his/her studies, his/her motivation to learn increases that will positively contribute to increased academic performance.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Characteristics of Sample PHEI Students

3.1.1 Program of Study

From the total sample of PHEIs students, two percent were certificate students, eighty-two percent were diploma program students and sixteen percent were degree program students (see Table 1).

Table1: Cross Tabulation of Students' Academic Performances with their Program of Study

Program of Study	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased		Frequency	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Certificate	-	-	3	2.1	3	1.5
Diploma	52	88.1	112	79.4	164	82
Degree	7	11.1	26	18.4	33	16.5
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.1.2 Year Level of Students

With regard to year level, the sample respondents included were first year, second year and third year students. Nineteen percent of the total samples of students were first year, nearly sixty-four percent were second year and seventeen percent were third year students. Since the data were collected in June, it was assumed that the first year students would not be in trouble for evaluating their academic performance on the basis of their two semester’s results. From the sample of PHEI students with decreased academic performance, nine percent were first year students, eighty-three percent were second year students and the remaining nine percent were third year students. On the other hand, twenty-three percent of the first year students, fifty-five percent of second year and twenty-one percent of third year students responded that their academic performance showed increasing trend during the same period (see Table 2).

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Academic Performances with Their Year Level

Level	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
First Year	5	8.5	33	23.4	38	19
Second Year	49	83	78	55.3	127	63.5
Third Year	5	8.5	30	21.3	35	17.5
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.1.3 Class Attendance

Frequent absenteeism and late coming of students can adversely affect their academic performance. Out of the total number of students covered in the survey, seventy-one percent stated that they are punctual in attending classes. Twenty-seven percent of students that their performances showed increasing trend responded attend classes coming sometimes late or don’t attend at all while thirty-two percent of them that their performances showed decreasing trend responded the same (see Table 3).

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Academic Performances with Class Attendance

Class Attendance	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Sometimes late	10	17	22	15.7	32	16
Sometimes absent	9	15	17	12	26	13
Punctual	40	68	102	72.3	142	71
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.2 Study Habits of Students

3.2.1 Study Places

PHEI students covered in the study used their college libraries, unoccupied classrooms and their home as places of study. From the total number of students that their performances showed increasing trend, fifty percent of them reported that they used to study in the college’s library. Fourteen and thirty-six percent of them reported to have used empty classrooms and their homes as their frequent locations for studying respectively. From the total of fifty-nine students that their performances showed decreasing trend, forty-four percent of them responded that they used to study in the college’s library. Nine and forty-eight percent of them responded to have used unoccupied classrooms and their home as frequent places for studying respectively.

The libraries are the major places of study preferred by both categories of students. In this regard, the respondents have mentioned several problems related to the libraries of PHEIs. Noise disturbance is the major problem stated by the students in all the five private colleges covered in the study. In some colleges, the library and typing rooms are found adjacent to each other. In others, the libraries are situated next to construction site with lots of incoming sound from outside. Group work inside libraries and lack of discipline are the other major complaint raised by the respondents. Absence of ventilation facility and lack of adequate seats/space, especially during exam times were also stated as problems. Regarding books, many of the libraries were described to have large number of similar types of books with very poor quality (reduced font size and dark photocopied materials), which are very difficult to ease reading.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Academic Performances of Students’ with Study Place

Study Place	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Library	26	44.1	71	50.4	97	48.5
Unoccupied classroom	5	8.5	19	13.5	24	12.0
Home	28	47.5	51	36.1	79	39.5
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.2.2 Study Time during a Semester

Both categories of students were asked in which time of the semester they habitually start studying or start preparing for examination. From the total of two hundred students, thirty-five percent stated they start studying at the beginning of the semester, fifty percent stated they start studying at the middle and the remaining fifteen percent responded that they start studying at about the end of a semester.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Academic Performances with Starting Time of Study

Starting Time of Study	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased		Frequency	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
At the Beginning of a Semester	12	20.3	58	41.2	70	35
At the Middle of a Semester	31	52.6	69	48.9	100	50
At the End of a Semester	16	27.1	14	9.9	30	15
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

Out of one hundred forty one students with increased academic performance, forty-one percent stated that they start studying at the beginning of a semester, whereas only twenty percent of the students with decreased academic performance did the same. On the contrary, twenty seven percent of the students with decreased academic performance responded that they start studying at about the end of a semester while only ten percent of the students with increased academic performance stated the same (see Table 5).

3.2.3 Note Taking Habits

Reading skill is one of the skills that makes a student more competent in his/her college performance. Taking short notes while reading can help students quickly summarize during times of examination. From the total sample students, nearly forty-one percent stated that they always take down notes while reading, and around fifty five percent stated that they sometimes take notes while reading.

Table 6: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Performances with their Frequency of Note Taking while Reading

Frequency of Note Taking while Reading	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased		Frequency	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Always	16	27	65	46	81	40.5
Sometimes	39	66	70	50	109	54.5
Never	4	7	6	4	10	5
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

On the other hand, from the cross tabulation table presented above, forty-six percent of the students with decreased academic performance responded that they always take note while reading. Sixty-six percent of students with decreased academic performance reported to have the experience of note taking only “Sometimes”. However, fifty percent those students whose performances showed increasing trend reported to have the experience of note taking only “Sometimes” (see Table 6).

3.3 Other Characteristics

3.3.1 Job Opportunity

Students included in the study had overall positive expectation with respect to job opportunity after completion of their studies. As it is clearly shown in table 7, eighty-nine percent of the total sample of respondents stated that they expect to be employed after completion of their studies. Ninety-four percent of students with increased academic performance and seventy-eight percent of students with decreased academic performance responded that they would get employment opportunity after graduation (see Table 7).

Table 7: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Performances with their Prospect of Getting Jobs after Graduation

Prospect of Getting Job after Graduation	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	78	132	93.6	178	89
No	13	22	9	6.4	22	11
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.3.2 Further Education

Students with an inclination to continue their education after completion of current studies are expected to have higher motivation to work hard and improve their performance as compared with students who have no desire to pursue further education after completing their current program. Results of the study showed that ninety-three percent of the respondents stated that they want to continue their education after completing their current studies. Out of one hundred forty-one students who have increased academic performance, ninety-five percent showed interest to continue their education while eighty-eight percent of students who have decreased academic performance reported that they have the interest of pursuing their education after completion of current program (see Table 8).

Table 8: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Performances with their Desire for Further Education

Do You Have the Desire to Continue Further Education?	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	88	134	95	186	93
No	7	12	7	5	14	7
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.3.3 Living Condition of Students

From the age distribution of the students, ninety percent of them are below 25 years old implying that close family follow up is required to improve their academic performance. Out of the total number of students whose academic performance showed increasing trend, seventy-eight percent were living with their families; nine percent of them were found to live with relatives and thirteen percent of them were found to live alone in rented houses. From the total of fifty nine students

whose academic performances showed decreasing trend, nearly sixty percent were found to live with their families/parents; twenty percent of them were found to live with relatives and the remaining twenty percent of them were found to live independently in rented houses (see Table 9).

Table 9: Cross Tabulation of Students’ Academic Performances with their Living Condition

Living condition of students	Academic Performance of Students				Total	
	Decreased		Increased			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
With family	35	59.4	110	78	145	72.5
With relatives	12	20.3	13	9.2	25	12.5
Independently	12	20.3	18	12.8	30	15.0
Total	59	100	141	100	200	100

3.4 Gender versus Academic Performance in PHEIs

To see whether there are differences in the academic performances between male and female students, the data were also analyzed through the binary logistic regression model. In order to find out the discrimination between male students with high academic performance and female students with high academic performance, cases with increased academic performance were selected and included in the binary logistic regression model.

The Model Chi-square value was significant at less than five percent level showing that knowing the independents makes a difference in predicting the difference between male and female students with increased academic performance. The classification table result also showed that 86.3 percent of male students and 41.3 percent of female students have been classified correctly. The overall classification rate of the model was found to be 71.6 percent, which is good for cross sectional data (see Table 10).

Table 10: Results of the Binomial Logit Model for the Gender Desegregated Data

(Dependent variable: Academic performances of Female and Male Students; 0 if the sex of the student is female and 1, if otherwise)

Variables	B	S.E	Exp (B)
Livcon	0.559	0.276	1.75**
Timesem	0.198	0.346	1.23
Clactiv	0.344	0.629	1.41
Askqst	0.884	0.489	2.42***
Lecnote	-0.918	0.468	0.40**
Speaski	0.316	0.292	1.37
Lernmo	-0.825	0.347	0.44**
Recre	-0.309	0.216	0.73
Prevex	0.472	0.429	1.60
Futedu	-0.085	0.942	0.92
Jobpro	1.503	0.896	4.49***
Constant	1.335	1.870	3.80

⁸ Sig. at 1%, ** Sig. at 5% and *** Sig. at 10%
 -2 Log Likelihood=149.906; Overall Model Prediction= 71.65 and Model chi-square Value=28.17*

Living condition, asking questions in class, taking lecture notes, learning motivation and job prospect of students were found to be the significant predictor variables between male students of increased academic performance and female students of increased academic performance. Living condition of students was found to be significant at less than five percent level and bears a positive sign. It means that if a student with increased academic performance lives independently or away from the family, the odds that the student who falls into the male category are high. Accordingly, male students score high academic performance when they live independently rather than with their families.

Tendency of students to ask questions in classroom was also found significant at less than one percent level and with a positive sign. Students with higher academic performance who ask questions in classroom discussion hours belong to the group of male students. This implies that even if both male and female students considered in the analysis are those whose academic performances showed increasing trend, female students are not accustomed to asking questions in class lecture hours. This could be attributed to fear and shyness which is common to female students. Most of the female students reported that they rely on family members and their classmates to get additional assistance in understanding their subjects.

Frequency of taking lecture notes was found to be statistically significant at five percent level. In this respect, male students take lecture notes less frequently contrary to their counterparts. This might be attributed to the fact that female students rarely ask questions during lecture hours. Consequently, they try to catch up with the discussion by taking as much lecture note as possible.

Learning motivation of students was found to be statistically significant at less than five percent level and bears a negative impact. As the learning motivation of student increases, the odds that the student belongs to the group of female students with high academic performance increases. In other words, one can say female students with increased academic performance have higher motivation to learn than their male counterparts. For the male students, even if they are from the group of increased academic performance, motivation alone might not be the sole factor contributing towards their better academic performance.

Finally, the prospect of getting job was found to be statistically significant at less than one percent level and bears a positive sign. Thus, male students with increased academic performance had greater anticipation of getting employed after graduation as compared to female students with increased academic performance.

3.5 Major Determinants of Academic Performance of Students in PHEIs in Ethiopia

Binary logistic regression model was used to predict the explanatory variables discriminating between students whose academic performance showed increasing trends with those students whose academic performance showed decreasing trends.

The Model chi-square value was found to be significant at less than one percent level showing that the predicting power of the model is strong. Again, based on the model classification statistics, 77.4 percent of the cases were classified correctly.

Table 11: Results of the Binomial Logit Model for Predicting Students' Academic Performance
(Dependent Variable: Academic Performance of students with binary values of 0= Decreased and 1=Increased).

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>Exp (B)</i>
Livcon	-0.537	0.229	59**
Timesem	-0.775	0.292	0.46*
Clactiv	0.071	0.476	1.07
Askqst	0.669	0.377	1.95***
Lecnot	-0.376	0.380	0.68
Speaski	0.330	0.261	1.39
Listski	0.256	0.250	1.29
Recre	0.170	0.185	1.19
Futedu	0.658	0.684	1.93
Lernmo	0.551	0.276	1.74**
Prevex	0.054	0.366	1.06
Jobpro	-0.808	0.545	0.45
constant	-0.589	1.493	0.56
* <i>Sig. at 1%</i> ** <i>Sig. at 5%</i> *** <i>Sig. at 10%</i> Overall Model Prediction=77.4%; -2 log likelihood=196.4 and Model chi-square Value=43.8*			

Living condition of students, starting time of study in a semester, class participation and learning motivation were found to be the statistically significant predictors of the odds for belonging to students with increased academic performance or students with decreased academic performance (see Table 11). Living condition of students was found to be significant at less than five percent level and bears a negative sign showing that PHEI students living with their families belong to group of increased academic performance. Whereas if a student lives away from his/her family, the odds are that having higher academic performance decreases. Those students who live with their parents/ families get close follow up and supervision on their day-to-day activities than those living with relatives or alone in rented facility. As a result, their academic performances are found to be improved. Consequently, it may be inferred that close family follow up can have a constructive role in boosting the academic performance of students.

Starting time of study during the semester was found to be significant at less than five percent and has negative sign. This means if a student starts studying late in the semester, the odds that he/she

belongs to the group of students with increased academic performance decreases. It has been mentioned in earlier sections that the majority of the sample of PHEI students with increased academic performance responded that they start studying at the beginning of the semester and most of them stated at middle of the semester. Accordingly, early start of studying can be considered as one major determinant which can increase the academic performance of students in private higher learning institutions.

Asking questions during classroom lecture hours was found to be significant at less than ten percent level and bears a positive sign. This implies that if a student asks questions or participates in classroom discussions, the odds that he/she would belong to the group of students with increased academic performance increases. In other words, asking questions during lecture hours has a positive impact on improving academic performance of students. This indicates the need to encourage class participation and motivation of students to raise questions either during or after the lecture before winding up their session.

Lastly, learning motivation was found to be significant at less than five percent level and has a positive sign. This is interpreted as as the learning motivation of a student increases, the odds that he/she belongs to the group of students with increased academic performance increases. Motivation is expected to influence students' class attendance and study behaviour, which in turn contributes to the improvement of students' academic performance. Hence, the drive to learn can be one of the key determinants affecting academic performance of students in private higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The gender differences with respect to academic performance were reflected in terms of class participation, frequency of taking lecture notes, learning motivation and job prospect. It was shown earlier that male students with increased academic performance have better class participation status while the female students with increased academic performance had higher inclination to take lecture notes as compared to their male counterparts. Female students with increased academic performance had higher motivation to learn as compared to the male students. With regard to job prospect, male students have shown to have greater anticipation of getting jobs after completion of their academic careers.

The major determinants of academic performance as predicted by the binary logistic model included living condition, starting time of study during semester, class participation and learning

motivation of student. Students with increased academic performance mostly live with their parents /families, start studying either at the beginning or mid of semester, participate in classroom discussion by asking questions and have a high motivation as compared to students with decreased academic performance. In light of the foregoing discussion, the following points are worth considering by PHEIs in order to help their students with decreasing academic performances. PHEIs need to:

- ❖ encourage female students and students at risk to be active participants in classroom discussion;
- ❖ create awareness for female students on how they can get employed upon completion on equal basis with their male counterparts;
- ❖ provide counseling service for students living away from their families as it has been shown to be one of the major factors impacting academic performance;
- ❖ make sure that their instructors are evaluating students on a progressive basis since this can pressurize students to start studying earlier in the semester, which, in turn, improves academic performance of students; and
- ❖ facilitate forums and discussions with their students which aim towards improving the motivation of students in their college career.

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An Analysis of Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Private and Public College Students: Implications for Effective Teaching Strategy

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Abstract

Ethiopia is among the world's poorest nations in terms of Human Development Index (HDI), which is 0.244 compared to 0.380 for Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 1998). Education, being one of the most important components of HDI, is considered to be an important means of bringing about development of a country. Quality of education is one of the most important indicators for the success of any educational institution. Although students' academic performance is not the only indicator, it is one parameter for the quality of education. This study is, therefore, designed to identify the factors that affect the academic performance of College students and thereby suggest possible solutions.

The study was conducted at St. Mary's and Addis Ababa Commercial Colleges by considering the 2004 prospective graduating classes of Accounting Department students as samples. Since there was a possibility of getting students' CGPA from St. Mary's College, sample size was determined statistically and at 10% error term, 108 students were found to be representatives. But, no-response was received from five students. Only 103 of them were considered in the study. The size of sample taken from each stratum was decided on the basis of proportional sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was employed and a structured interview prepared for the purpose was used to collect the data. From Addis Ababa Commercial College, 100 students were randomly selected so as to conduct the questionnaire survey. But due to low response rate, it was possible to get only 40 respondents. The data were analyzed through paired T-test and levels regression model. The preliminary findings revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in male and female students' academic performances at St. Mary's College. In addition, factors like studying program, starting time of study, study style, financial problems, use of reference materials, and the number of days of being absent from class are found to affect students' academic performances.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Ethiopia, with a per capita income of \$115, is positioned at 170 out of 175 countries (World Bank, 1999). The country is among the world's poorest nations in terms of Human Development Index (HDI) which is 0.244 compared to 0.380 for Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 1998). Education, being

one of the most important components of HDI, is considered to be an important means of bringing about development of a country. It helps to improve the quality of labor force that can enhance the social, economic and cultural development of a society. Therefore, Human Resources Development (HRD) has been taken as one of the most important objectives of the Government of Ethiopia though the capacity of the country keeps limiting what can be done. The government has been encouraging investment on various sectors including education by private investors. As a result, certain achievements were and are being recorded. There are now many private colleges that offer training in different fields of studies. Although this is an encouraging sign of improvement, this cannot itself be taken as the best measurement. The quality of manpower that private colleges produce should be studied and evaluated. Hence, the need for initiating research becomes an agenda for the day.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Quality of manpower that comes from private colleges depends, among other things, on the academic competence of the students during their stay at colleges. The academic performance of students is affected by a multitude of factors. A study by Fantaw (1991) indicated that academic performance of students at tertiary level in Addis Ababa University is found to be influenced by factors like high school rank, degree of support, sex, type of school attended, English grade, length of study time, and their academic background. On the other hand, Habte (1988) found out ESLCE and freshman GPA of students as the most important factors that bring difference in academic performances of students at tertiary level. King and King (1970) also identified factors like ESLCE, GPA and English language result to be valid predictors of students' first year academic performance. Another study by Assefa B. and J, U. Cakiroglu (2002) on gender difference in science achievement indicated that there were gender differences in science achievements favoring male students. To this end, the study of Seleshi (2001) can also be taken as another example. There are also studies that associate differences in academic performance to environmental factors, which can be broadly categorized into social, economic, cultural and the teaching-learning system. All these evidences show the existence of different variables that affect the academic performance of students. These factors vary from place to place and from time to time. This study is particularly designed to closely examine the variables that determine the academic performance of private and public college students.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this paper is to identify the factors that affect the academic performance of private and public College students and thereby suggest possible solutions. Hence, it will have the following specific objectives to:

1. see whether there is gender difference in students' performance;
2. identify most important factors that affect the performance of students of private and government Colleges;
3. suggest possible solutions for the improvement of quality of education at the Colleges.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Sampling Techniques and Method of Data Collection

The study was conducted at St. Mary's and Addis Ababa Commercial Colleges by considering the 2004 prospective graduating classes of Accounting Department students. Since departments vary in the nature of subjects, the Accounting Department with large number of students was selected for analysis. Since there was a possibility of getting students' CGPA from St. Mary's College, sample size for the College was determined statistically. Accordingly, at 10% error term, 108 students were found to be representatives. But, due to no response from five students, only 103 respondents were considered. The size of sample to be taken from each stratum was decided on the basis of proportional sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was employed and a structured interview prepared for the purpose was used. From Addis Ababa Commercial College, 100 students were randomly selected so as to conduct the questionnaire survey. But, due to low response rate, it was possible to get only 40 respondents and a similar questionnaire survey was used.

2.2 Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed through employing different statistical techniques ranging from simple descriptive statistics to regression techniques. From the descriptive techniques, percentages, chi-square analysis and mean values were used. To identify the gender difference and the factors that affect students' performances, paired t-test and levels regression technique were used respectively. Because of the small number of sample size, it was not possible to run levels regression with regard to students from Addis Ababa Commercial College.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Factors Affecting Students' Performance in Private Colleges: With regard to St. Mary's College

The greater number of students in the department studied are found to be female accounting for 51.5%. From the sample distribution, 53 female and 50 male students were interviewed (see Annex 2). To see whether there is significant variation in CGPA of students due to variation in the sex of students, paired sample t-test was computed. The result of the analysis revealed that performances of female students are not significantly different from that of the male students when considered in terms of their Cumulative Grade Point Averages (CG.P.A) (Table 1). But the same computation was not done for Addis Ababa Commercial College students for reason of lack of data on students' CGPA.

Table 1: Results of the Paired Samples T-Test for Comparing CGPA of Male and Female Students

<i>Comparisons</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Sig. Level (2-tailed)</i>
Cumulative GPA of Female Accounting Students	2.533	0.511	6.838		
Cumulative GPA of Male Accounting Students	2.641	0.524	7.014		
Cumulative GPA of Female Accounting Students versus Cumulative GPA of Male Accounting Students	-0.107	0.725	9.698	-1.10*	0.27

*Not significant

Source: Survey data

In addition to the paired t-test analysis, efforts were made to identify the most important factors that would determine students' performance, which the following discussion dwells on.

Variable Definition and Research Hypothesis

CGPA: Dependent variable for the study. It represents the cumulative grade point average of students for three semesters.

AGE: Represent age of students. The expectation is those students who are older could have lower performance than those who are younger.

EDUCBAC: Dummy for educational background for students; 1 if students come from related background field like vocational and 0, if otherwise. The expectation is those students who come from related fields have better opportunity to earn good grades.

REFMAT: Dummy for students' utilization of reference materials; 1 if students use reference materials and 0, if otherwise. Those students who substantiate their classroom learning with additional reference materials would have higher chance of getting better grades.

- FINPROB: Dummy for financial problem of students; 1 if students frequently face financial problems to settle their tuition fees and to purchase educational materials and 0, if otherwise. The expectation is those students who have financial problems would have lower chance of earning good grades.
- STUDPROG: Dummy for students' studying program; 1 if students have study program and 0, if otherwise. Those students that have a study program would have better chance of earning good grades.
- TIMSTUDY: Dummy for time of starting studying; 1 if students start studying before exams approach and 0, if otherwise. Those students that start studying as early as classes begin would have higher chance of earning good grades.
- STDYWITH: Dummy for with whom students study; 1 if students study with friends and 0, if otherwise. Those students that study with friends would have higher chance of earning good grades.
- STUDSTY: Dummy for study style of students; 1 if students support their study by doing different exercises/worksheets and 0, if otherwise. The expectation is that those students who support their studies by doing several exercises would have better chance of earning good grades.
- FUTPLAN: Dummy for students' future plan; 1 if students have the plan to further their education and 0, if otherwise. The expectation is those students that have future plans to continue their first degree studies do stronger than those who don't have the plan to continue and earn better grades.
- ABSENTEE: Represent number of days that students are absent from class. The expectation is those students who have many number of absentees would have higher chance of earning lower grades.

To make the list of variables as exhaustive as possible, other variables like transportation problem of students, living place of students and students' preference of teaching styles were also included in the data collection list. But, they were not included in the levels regression model, either because of less variability among the sample students and hence less explaining power or because of multi-collinearity effect with other variables included in the model.

Table 2: Results of the Levels Regression Model for Identifying the Determinants of Students' Academic Performances at St. Mary's College (Dependent Variable: Cumulative GPA of Students)

<i>Ser. No.</i>	<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	(Constant)	2.202	0.149	14.753*	0.000
2	AGE	-0.004863	0.006	-0.867	0.388
3	EDUCBAC	0.001653	0.036	0.458	0.648
4	REFMAT	0.705	0.105	6.741*	0.000
5	FINPROB	-0.150	0.082	-1.834**	0.070
6	STUDPROG	0.351	0.077	4.580*	0.000
7	TIMSTUDY	0.007805	0.064	1.215**	0.1
8	STDYWITH	0.009747	0.069	1.406	0.163
9	FUTPLAN	-0.0043	0.058	-0.738	0.462
10	STUDSTY	0.002467	0.018	1.395**	0.1
11	ABSENTEE	-0.005	0.018	-2.777*	0.007
* and ** are significant at 1% and 10% respectively					
Overall Model fit Summary (F value 39.33 with significance level of 1% and adjusted R² value of 0.8)					

Source: Survey data

Results of the levels regression model revealed that variables like utilization of additional reference materials, financial problems, study program of students, studying style of students, and the number of days that students are absent from class are found to determine students' performance in a significant manner.

From the result, those students who used additional reference materials are found to earn better grade point averages, which is statistically significant at 1% level. This means that as the value for the variable shifts from zero to one, the CGPA of students increases by a factor of 0.7. This is so because using additional reference materials gives students the possibility of getting better understanding about the subject matter.

Again as can be seen from the levels regression result, the CGPA of students who are constrained by financial problems are found to be negatively affected in a statistically significant manner (at 10% level) by a factor of 0.15. This could be justified in various ways. In the first place, those students that have frequent financial problems could be mentally unstable, and daydreaming about their problems that deter their efficiency in the teaching learning process. Although the College's policy is to provide students with free photocopied materials, there are still some instructors who order their students to get a copy of the instructor's materials from their own pocket. Hence, those students with severe financial constraint would have lower opportunity to get additional photocopied materials that actually have a direct impact on the students' understanding of the subject matter. The result of the model also indicates that those students that study their subject matters by developing study programs are found to get additional grade point averages of 0.351,

which is statistically significant at 1% level. Studying by following their study schedule serves students to keep daily track of what has been taught in class and understood, and helps them to see their gaps for any possible clarity and assistance for matters that are not clear. In addition, it gives them adequate time to internalize the subject matter very well.

In addition, the time of starting study is also found to determine students' academic performances at 10% significant level. Those students who start studying their subject matters well before examinations approach are found to get additional grade points of 0.0078. This is because studying by starting as early as possible gives students to have adequate preparation and full coverage of the subject matter that has a direct impact on their performances in answering exam questions. On the other hand, students' studying style is also found to determine their performances during exam periods. Studying by doing different exercises is found to influence students' CGPA by a factor of 0.0024, which is significant at 10% level. Since the subjects for the study are Accounting Department students, doing different worksheets and examples gives students the opportunity for better understanding of the subject matter.

The other important variable which was found significant by the levels regression model is the number of days that students are absent from classes. Absenteeism from class was found to decrease students' cumulative grade point average by a factor of 0.005, which is statistically significant at 1% level. When students are absent from class, the opportunity for understanding of the subject matter decreases, which has a direct influence on their performances during exam times. However, variables like students' age, educational background, future plan, and studying with friends are not found to determine their performances in a statistically significant way.

3.2 Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performances in Government Colleges: The Case of Addis Ababa Commercial College

Table 3 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result with Number of Days They Have Become Absent

Trend of results of the students	Frequency and Percentage Values	No. of Days Students are Absent from Class			Total
		0-5 days	6-10 days	Over 10 days	
Increase	Frequency	4		2	6
	%	66.7%		33.3%	100%
Decrease	Frequency	21	8		29
	%	72.4%	27.6%		100%
No Change	Frequency	5			5
	%	100.0%			100%
Total	Frequency	30	8	2	40
	%	75.0%	20.0%	5.0%	100%
Test of Significance	Pearson χ^2 Test		Likelihood Ratio Test		
	Value	Sig. Level	Value	Sig. Level	
	14.866	.005	13.195	.010	

Source: Survey Data

The most important factors that were assumed to affect students' performance were considered using Chi-Square. One of these factors was the number of days during which students become absent from classes. From the analysis, it was found out that students who have registered many absentee days were found to show a decreasing trend in their overall results. This situation was statistically significant at 1% significance level (Table 3).

Table 4 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result with Students' Study Program

<i>Trend of results of the students</i>	<i>Frequency and Percentage Value</i>	<i>Do You Have Studying Program?</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
Increase	Frequency	3	3	6
	%	50.0%	50.0%	100%
Decrease	Frequency	10	19	29
	%	34.5%	65.5%	100%
No Change	Frequency	5	0	5
	%	100%	0.0	100%
Total	Frequency	18	22	40
	%	45.0%	55.0%	100%
<i>Test of Significance</i>	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>		<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>	
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>
	7.468	0.024	9.371	0.009

Source: Survey Data

For most of the students, developing a study program was found to be important to score better results. Those students who did not have study programs have shown a decreasing trend in their overall academic performance. Table 4 clearly illustrates this.

Table5 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result with Time of Starting One's Study

<i>Trend of Results of the Students</i>	<i>Frequency and Percentage Value</i>	<i>When Do You Start Studying?</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Right after Class Begins</i>	<i>When Examination Approaches</i>	<i>In the Middle of the Semester</i>	
Increase	Frequency	3	1	2	6
	%	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100%
Decrease	Frequency	8	14	7	29
	%	27.6%	48.3%	24.1%	100%
No Change	Frequency	4		1	5
	%	80.0%		20.0%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	15	15	10	40
	%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	100%
<i>Test of Significance</i>	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>		<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>		
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>	
	7.111	0.130	8.539	0.074	

Source: Survey Data

As any one may naturally inquire, the purpose of studying is fundamental to register better results and to acquire knowledge. Whether or not this worked in the study was analyzed. The result of the

analysis indicated that those students who started their study earlier were found to show increasing trends in their overall academic performance (Table 5).

Table 6 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result Versus With Whom They Study

<i>Trend of results of the students</i>	<i>Frequency and Percentage Value</i>	<i>With whom do you study?</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Alone</i>	<i>With a friend</i>	<i>As the situation allows me</i>	
Increase	Frequency		5	1	6
	%		83.3%	16.7%	100%
Decrease	Frequency	14	7	8	29
	%	48.3%	24.1%	27.6%	100%
No Change	Frequency	3	1	1	5
	%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100%
Total	Frequency	17	13	10	40
	%	42.5%	32.5%	25.0%	100%
<i>Test of Significance</i>	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>	
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>
	9.067	0.059		10.236	0.037

Source: Survey Data

Study style of students is found to be associated with the trend of students' CGPA at 5% and 10% level respectively based on Pearson Chi-Square criteria and Likelihood Ratio Test. This result is consistent with the case of St. Mary's College for the same obvious reasons (see Table 7).

Table 7 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result versus Study Style of Students

<i>Trend of results of the students</i>	<i>Frequency and Percentage Value</i>	<i>Study Style of Students</i>				<i>Total</i>
		<i>By Taking Short Notes</i>	<i>By Making Bold on the Exercise Book</i>	<i>By Doing Exercises while Studying</i>	<i>By Doing Exercises after Finishing Study</i>	
Increase	Frequency		3	2	1	6
	%		50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Decrease	Frequency	8	14		7	29
	%	27.6%	48.3%		24.1%	100.0%
No Change	Frequency	1	3		1	5
	%	20.0%	60.0%		20.0%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	9	20	2	9	40
	%	22.5%	50.0%	5.0%	22.5%	100.0%
<i>Test of Significance</i>	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>			<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>		
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>		<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>	
	13.287	0.039		10.873	0.092	

Source: Survey Data

The use of additional reference materials was also considered for analysis. The result indicated that although all of those who have reported increment in their result have used reference materials, the difference in their academic performance was not found to be statistically

significant. This indicates that the use of reference materials has nothing to do with students' academic performance. Several reasons could be forwarded to back up this argument. The most important, among which, is the fact that instructors might have provided their students with adequate notes and the exams might have been note-based. This situation does not require students to look for other reference materials if they opt for higher performances as far as their GPA is concerned (see Table 8).

Table 8 Chi-Square Analysis of Trend of Students' Result with Students' Use of Reference Materials

<i>Trend of Results of the Students</i>	<i>Frequency and Percentage Values</i>	<i>Have You used Reference Materials?</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
Increase	Frequency	6	0	0%
	%	100.0%		6
Decrease	Frequency	24	5	100.0%
	%	82.8%	17.2%	29
No Change	Frequency	5		100.0%
	%	100.0%		5
Total	Frequency	35	5	100.0%
	%	87.5%	12.5%	40
<i>Test of Significance</i>	<i>Pearson χ^2 Test</i>		<i>Likelihood Ratio Test</i>	
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Sig. Level</i>
	2.167	0.338	3.479	0.176

Source: Survey Data

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study indicated that except for some specialties, the determinants of students' academic performance are similar for Private and Government owned colleges. Financial constraint is found to influence students' academic performances in private Colleges but not in the case of Government Colleges like Addis Ababa Commercial College. This may be because of the fact that Addis Ababa Commercial College gives allowance/ pocket money for the students that could help them to solve their financial constraints. On the other hand, the use of reference materials was found to be a significant factor only in the case of St. Mary's College. This may indicate that the nature of examinations is perhaps based on classroom lecture notes in the case of Addis Ababa Commercial College.

From the results of the study, it is possible to draw the following specific recommendations.

1. Instructors should devise a mechanism of supporting their classroom teaching with some tutorial sessions so as to support students with different exercises and/or worksheets. This could help the students to have better understanding of the subject matter they are learning.

2. There should be a way of supporting students for free access to photocopied teaching materials, and advise them to substantiate their reading/study on classroom lecture notes with additional reference materials and handouts.
3. There is a need to advise students not to be absent from classes, to have study programs and to start their study as early as possible, probably through the Students' Affairs Offices of the Colleges.

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Annex 1: Different Option for Sample Size Determination

$Z_{\alpha/2}$	Population Variance (σ)	$(Z_{\alpha/2}) * (Z_{\alpha/2}) * (\sigma)^*$	Error term (E)	$(Error Term)^2$	Estimated Sample Size (n)
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	5%	0.0025	431.642176
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	10%	0.01	107.910544
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	8%	0.0064	168.610225
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	6%	0.0036	299.7515111
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	7%	0.0049	220.2256
1.96	0.53	1.07910544	9%	0.0081	133.2228938

Sample size is determined from the following statistical formula:

$$SampleSize (n) = \frac{\left(Z_{\alpha/2} \right) * \left(Z_{\alpha/2} \right) * (\sigma)^* (\sigma)}{\left(ErrorTerm \right)^2}$$

Annex 2: Frequency Distribution of Variables

<i>Description of Variables</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Sex of students	Female	53	51.5
	Male	50	48.5
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Educational Background of Students	Natural Science	68	66.0
	Social Science	22	21.4
	Vocational	12	11.7
	Others	1	1.0
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Have you used reference material?	Yes	94	91.3
	No	9	8.7
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Have you ever Purchased Reference Material?	Yes	47	45.6
	No	56	54.4
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Do You Have Studying Program?	Yes	77	74.8
	No	26	25.2
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Future Plan of the Students	Further Education and to get Employed	36	35.0
	To Further My Education	37	35.9
	Have no Plan	1	1.0
	To get Employed	29	28.2
<i>Total</i>		<i>103</i>	<i>100.0</i>
What is Your Study Style?	By Taking Notes	39	37.9
	By making Bold on the Exercise Book	10	9.7
	By Doing Exercises while I study	3	2.9
	By Doing Exercises after I finished Studying	46	44.6
	Any Combinations of the above	5	4.9

The Project Package for Middle-Level TVET Program: An Assessment of the Situation in PHEIs

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Abstract

The 1994 Education and Training Policy of the Government of FDRE not only identifies lack of middle-level human power as a serious impediment to economic development but also envisages that the middle-level TVET program would offer basic solution in developing a competent taskforce graduating with sufficient theoretical and practical orientation. To this end, apart from the in-school training, the program consists of an apprenticeship practices and a good number of major project packages.

There are good theoretical reasons to share this optimism based on the experiences of other countries though, in the Ethiopian situation, empirical evidence is yet to be sought. This paper attempts to take a close look at the major project packages launched in the middle-level TVET program in a bid to assess whether there are positive indications or not.

The study was based on both primary and published materials. In addition, interviews and extensive discussions with course instructors and Department Heads were conducted. Questionnaires have also been filled out by students who were selected randomly. Finally, the data were analyzed using percentages and ratios in SPSS.

The findings of the study indicated that there are serious gaps ranging from attitudinal to technical problems that need to be addressed to expect tangible results from the project packages launched though there are departmental differences. The most serious problems identified were lack of data, group conflict and lack of full cooperation from institutions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The very preamble of a revised recommendation adopted by UNESCO in November 1974 states, among other things, that technical and vocational education is a prerequisite for sustaining the complex structure of modern civilization and economic and social development. The recommendation asks that high priority should be placed on technical and vocational education in national development plans as well as in plans for educational reform. If priority has been given in Ethiopia as is requested by UNESCO, it has not been evident before the last few years. These days TVET is not only a priority but issue of discussion among scholars and the society at large. As the program has started recently, there is no way that total evaluation can be made.

The technical and vocational education Proclamation of the FDRE stipulates that it is found necessary to organize a technical and vocational education and training system that would assist the younger generation to be prepared psychologically, have discipline and the potential to work, become competent employees and creator of work. This is deemed necessary "to enable the country's production, trade and service rendering establishments to have a competitive and enduring organizational set up through the employment of trained manpower" (Proclamation No. 391, 2004).

The very objective of the TVET program is to provide citizens with basic training which prepares them to gain employment. With that goal in mind, the TVET program is envisaged to comprise 70% practical and 30% theoretical education. Project packages are part of the practical training. A student is expected to work on a project package for every major course.

As the TVET program unfolds, differing attitudes are being raised. There are both proponents and opponents to the new educational policy but both sides lack empirical evidence to substantiate their arguments. Though providing empirical evidence regarding the new education policy in general is yet a matter to be seen in due course, there is at least an urgent need to check the direction it is taking. One such exercise would be focusing on the project packages given to students at the completion of every major course in a bid to assess the reality in light of the expectations.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. have preliminary insight into the general direction that the TVET program is taking by looking into the handling of project packages provided under the program;
2. assess students' perception regarding the compulsory project works they undertake; and
3. identify problems encountered in connection with the project packages in the eyes of the students.

1.3. Significance of the study

The significance of the study can be seen from two angles. For one thing, the TVET program is still on the making. As it unfolds, confusions and uncertainties surrounding it have not yet been cleared. This paper is quite significant in that it provides at least a very rudimentary insight as to how the system is going. Secondly, there are proponents and opponents to the new curricula but both sides lack objective evidence to back up their argument. By providing practical experience in this context, this paper offers an evidence to argue either way.

1.4. Research Methodology

Even if there is an obvious need to empirically test the TVET program in general, that task is beyond the scope of this paper. The scope of this study is limited to assessing the overall working of project packages given to students at the end of each major course. To this end, the study is basically based on information obtained from primary sources. For the purpose of undertaking the study, 250 students from three different colleges were randomly selected. These were St. Mary's College, Admas College and Royal College. But, due to high non-response rate (43.2%), it was possible to get response only from 108 students. Open-and close-ended questionnaires were administered to collect the data. In addition, questions were forwarded to the instructors of the colleges. The data were analysed using the SPSS through employing percentages and ratios techniques.

2. Results and Discussions

2.1 General

It is with the objectives stated above in mind that a questionnaire and an interview were conducted to students and instructors currently involved in the TVET program. It is found out that all student respondents have worked out some projects for two courses on average. The respondents indicated that in most cases instructors choose topics for the projects. In the course of the actual project works, students get advice from their instructors. In fact, when asked about this, 64.1% of them replied that they have got some advice from their instructors while conducting project works. 72.2% of the respondents showed that the projects were more or less task-based. Students were also asked to explain as to how they have been working the project assignments. They indicated that the project works were undertaken either on group or individual basis or a combination of both. But when asked which one they would prefer, if given the chance, 66.3% of the respondents have preferred to go out for a project in groups. Only 15.7% of the respondents have preferred to work on individual basis. It was also possible to observe that groups were formed on compatibility basis in most of the cases. But, there were also indications of groups formed haphazardly. In the discussions to come, specific points regarding the perception of students and the problems observed in project undertakings are dealt with.

2.2. Perception of Student towards Project Works

The findings of this paper revealed that there were no marked differences of attitudes towards a project work among students. The respondents' attitudes towards project works were by and large positive. Nearly all respondents believed that project works are important. It is interesting to note that even if respondents have identified several problems in connection with project works (see

parts 2.3), a great majority of them (about 90.7%) still prefer working on projects if they were to decide whether or not to work. There is rudimentary evidence to argue that students have begun to appreciate the importance of projects. When asked whether they considered project works important for their future career, about 91.6% of the respondents replied positively. Most of the respondents indicated that project works they have been engaged in so far have given them the opportunity to acquire the skills of data collection, develop work habit, increase their level of confidence and observe the situation of the off-campus environment where they are going to work after completion of their studies. Most instructors also supported this. Only few of them indicated that students consider conducting a project as a burden.

The above analysis shows that there are no serious attitudinal problems among students regarding project works. This, however, is not the only part of the story as a good number of problems have been identified in this paper. These problems will be presented in the following section.

2.3 Major Problem Areas in Project Packages

As is stipulated in the TVET curriculum guide, the main objective of giving project works stems from the belief that practical project works would develop the problem-solving capacity and creativity among the trainees. Project packages are being launched with this expectation in mind.

The findings of this study showed that there are some critical problems that need to be rectified to realize these objectives. The major problems respondents were facing when undertaking project works in group are summarized below.

Table 2.1 Problems when Working in Groups

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Group conflict and cohesion problem	42	38.9%
Lack of participation by some students	42	38.9%
Lack of data	12	11.1%
Any other	3	2.8%
No response	9	8.3%
Total	108	100%

Source: Survey Data

As the above table shows, group conflict and cohesion problem, lack of participation by some of the students and lack of data were some of the major problems identified by respondents.

As indicated by most of the respondents, group conflict or lack of cohesion was found to be a serious impediment to the success of project works. It is to be noted that projects are meant to create opportunities that allow students to develop their creativity and enrich their problem-solving capacity if handled properly. However, as mentioned above, group conflict coupled with lack of

participation and carelessness by some students has created a situation where project works were being accomplished by few students without involving the large majority.

Unfortunately, the grading system does not offer any checking mechanism. Some instructors have also indicated this. And as group works are graded on group basis, the grading is the same for both the careless and the duty-bound students. So, this does not allow to develop the creativity and problem-solving capabilities of individual students. A UNESCO report argues, "although standards of performance should be upheld, evaluation of the student's work should be made on a total basis considering among others his/her class participation, interests and attitude, relative progress, and examinations and other tests" (1974 Page ?). It seems that the existing reality as far as evaluation is concerned does not tally with this requirement and individual capability is not being assessed. The fact that only 15.7% of respondents prefer to work projects individually might prove this conclusion (see Table 2.2).

Here, mention should be made of the way groups are formed. As Table 2.2 shows, groups were formed mostly on compatibility basis. True, that this kind of group formation has a number of benefits. It makes communication among students easier and creates a good team spirit. However, in the absence of other checking mechanisms, this kind of group formation might open room for negligence by some of the students as only few hard working students might do the projects in most of the cases.

Table 2.2 Reaction of Students Regarding Group Formation

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
On Compatibility basis	73	67.6
Alphabetical Order	20	18.5
Haphazardly	2	1.9
Any other	13	12
Total	108	100

Source: Survey Data

Another problem area relates to the way project titles are chosen. Only 3.7 percent of the respondents maintained that they choose the title of their projects by themselves. In most cases instructors choose the topics for the projects.

Lack of data was another major problem area. This problem was equally faced by students that worked on projects in group or on individual basis. Respondents have repeatedly mentioned lack of cooperation from institutions they visited for project works. Either due to lack of awareness, negligence or indifference, institutions visited by students have not shown full cooperation. But

still, significant number of students have preferred to work projects outside their college environment (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Where Do You Want to Work Projects?

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In their college	24	22.2%
Off campus	46	42.6%
Depending on the nature of the project	38	35.2%
Total	108	100%

Source: Survey Data

The above table indicates that 42.6% of the respondents preferred working projects outside the college where they are learning. When they were asked why, they replied that it would help them to get to know the working environment where they might get employment upon the completion of their studies. On the other hand, a good number of students have indicated the need for working on project in the college compound due to easy access to data, closeness of the instructors for help, easiness to get to communicate with the workers of the institutions for any possible support students might need. But it is questionable how much the academic institutions themselves cooperate. The danger of generalization, attitudinal problem is even noticeable in the academic institutions. The researchers recall their personal encounter in this regard. When conducting questionnaire or interview not only was the response rate minimal, but also the general attitude of people at the higher level of management was worrying to say the least. In general terms, doing projects in the college should not be something to be encouraged. This argument was also supported by instructors of the TVET program. They indicated that project works should be conducted outside the college compound so that students would be able to acquire the understanding as to how the business environment is working. However, they also indicated the need for creating awareness on the business society as far as the importance of providing information to the needy is concerned.

There were departmental differences observed as far as problems are concerned. For instance, in the Department of IT, working on projects individually was found to be a bit difficult. The major reason, according to the respondents, was shortage of computers and lack of access to other data sources. As a result, respondents from this department stressed the need for working in groups.

The attitude of instructors towards the new TVET program was also assessed. Eventually, it was found out that the program too laborious and demanding. They also indicated that some chapters of the courses are extremely large and some others are given less time. This has put a time limit on them so that they either fail to complete the course coverage or rush on them to finish in time.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Education is a lubricant; without it life would be full of discord and friction. Therefore, educating the youth is essential for any country if sustainable development is to be ensured. However, this is not only the task of government institutions. Private sectors are also equally concerned with producing skilled human power that can serve a useful purpose in devising strategies through which poverty can be reduced and economic transformation can be attained. This is possible only when the system of education is devised in a manner that would allow students to get acquainted with integrated analytical approaches to address the complexity involved in the socio-economic arena. In this regard, the project packages of the new TVET program are a good break through. “Theory and practice should form an integral whole: what is learned in the laboratory, workshops or in enterprises should be directly related to the mathematical and scientific foundations of particular operation or process, and conversely, technical theory, as well as the mathematics and science sustaining it, should be illustrated through their practical applications” (UNESCO 1974 Page ?).

However, these moves are not without problems. The most important *inter alia* are the reluctant nature of both government and private institutions to provide students with the required information, poor checking mechanisms put by instructors to identify 'who does what' and the limited capacity of the students themselves to write up projects up to the standard.

As a pointer for remedial actions, the writers recommend that the concerned bodies need to look into the mechanisms so as to create an enabling environment for the project packages to be a reality and thereby to keep the situation up to the expectations. Every institution, government or private, needs to be willing to help the needy at least through information provision. On the other hand, instructors should be aware of the need to establish a set of new problem-solving paradigms that can significantly help address the problems of the country at large for betterment of the future.

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The Role of Private Higher Education Institutions in Reducing Urban Youth Unemployment

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Abstract

Due to poor economic condition coupled with rapid population growth, inadequate Government and family support and lack of access to resources, the Ethiopian Youth is confronted with massive unemployment problem. In fact, this chronic problem is aggravated by the mismatch between the type of education/training on one hand, and the labour market on the other. Although, the magnitude and extent of unemployment is not fully known according to CSA (1999), unemployment seems to be more of an urban problem, where the rate is five times higher than that of the rural areas. The incidence of unemployment also differs between sexes. In urban areas a significant proportion of unemployed female population (34.0%) was reported as compared to males (18.3%). The above pattern also holds true for the rural areas where 8.6% of female and 2.4% of male population were reported to be unemployed.

In connection to this reality, the educational and training program rendered by Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in the country has greater role to empower and enable the youth to be self-supportive, capable of contributing their share of responsibility for the betterment of the society and productive citizens. In view of this, the study aimed at showing the linkage between education and employment, and more importantly, the role of PHEIs in mitigating urban youth unemployment. To achieve the stated objectives, data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through structured interview with 100 randomly selected students from St. Mary's College and from 10 employer organizations that are selected purposively. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics.

The preliminary findings of the study indicated that PHEIs in Ethiopia are playing great role in meeting the needs of educated manpower. They are also found to meet the educational needs of the youth, who are unable to join the public higher education institutions. The growth and expansion of PHEIs has also created employment opportunities for many young people looking for jobs.

Acronyms

AA	Addis Ababa
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program

GOs	Governmental Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
LDC	Less Developing Countries
NLFS	National Labour Force Survey
PHEIs	Private Higher Education Institutions
SSOM	Secretarial Science and office Management
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WBM	World Bank Mission

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Youth is defined by the United Nations as all persons within the age range of 15-24 years, constitutes a special target group in Ethiopia's socio-economic development. As it constitutes important human resources of the country, the development of its socio-economic potentials serves as a corner stone of the country's sustainable development.

The way Ethiopia handles young people at present would be decisive in the future economic, social, political and cultural development of the country. This is, of course, not only due to its enormous size but also the energy, power and potentials of the youth to play a dynamic role in the construction of better society. In other words, the provision of quality education and training to the youth by the concerned parties namely the Government, the Private Sector including the Private Higher Education Institutions and the society at large has a direct bearing on the future of the nation. In connection to this reality, the Educational and training programme rendered by the Private Higher Education Institutions in the country has greater role to empower and enable the youth to be self-supportive, capable of contributing their own share of responsibility for the betterment of their society and productive, and fostering the development of their nation.

Unfortunately, for many reasons largely due to poor economic condition and coupled with rapid population growth, inadequate Government and family support and lack of access to resources, the Ethiopian youth is confronted with massive unemployment problem which is a big challenge to the country. In fact, this chronic problem is aggravated by the mismatch between education/training on one hand, and the labour market on the other. Unemployment problem, in turn, leads the youth to be affected by different anti-social problems like delinquency, prostitution, beggary, crime, and drug and alcohol addiction.

Obviously, the solution to the unemployment problem and related issues of the Ethiopian youth is beyond the capacity of the government, and demands huge amount of resources both locally and globally. Thus, the contribution and collaboration of the Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) and other partners in the field of education/training and employment creation is indispensable.

It is in view of this that the researcher is interested to see the linkage between education and employment on one hand, and employment on the other with a particular reference to the role of PHEIs in reducing the problem of urban youth unemployment. Hence, the study is designed with the following specific objectives to:

1. identify the contribution of PHEIs in producing educated manpower particularly educated youth.
2. show the extent to which PHEIs educate/train youth that are potential employees or self-employed.
3. examine whether there is a missing link (if any) between PHEIs and employers.

1.2 Methodology

The study has used the following methods of research:

- Documentary Research: literature review on available research papers, and other related documents previously done on the area; and
- Structured interview with 100 students, and discussion with staff of St. Mary's College and 10 employer institutions. Sampling was done through purposive random sampling technique. In addition, personal observation was made.

2. Theoretical Background: Linkage between Education and Employment

2.1 Global and Regional Situation

According to the well-known economist Michael Todaro (1997), today many developing countries are plagued by a historically unique combination of massive population movement from rural to urban areas, stagnating in agricultural productivity, growing urban, rural unemployment and underemployment. Substantial unemployment in LDC economies is probably one of the most striking symptoms of their inadequate development.

In poor countries like Ethiopia, open unemployment, especially in urban areas is affecting 20%-30% of the labour force. The incidence of unemployment is much higher among the young people and increasingly so in the 15-24 age bracket, who have neither complementary resources nor opportunities to compete in the job market.

As the result of high rate of population growth, the African youth population has increased into a significant proportion of the African population over the years. This in turn, has increased the labour force in the continent.

According to a research paper prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 2000) in the year 2000, the African labour force was about 16 million and expected to increase to some 25 million by the year 2015. This new labour force entrant will be youth grappling with unemployment, which typically affects them more than any other group in the population.

Although the youth constitute an important human resource in all countries of Africa and its potential, power and energy is a cornerstone to Africa's sustainable development. Measures taken so far towards solving the problems of youth have been insufficient and have had little impact on the problems and needs of African youth. This, in fact, requires placing more emphasis and resources on the development of the human resource, and an investment on human capital, to develop the skills, potentials and capabilities of people that Africa has, in order to compete with the rest of the world.

In general, education is an important tool to fight against poverty, unemployment and a host of other social problems and promote social development for a country like ours. It is an investment on human capital, to develop the skills, potentials and capabilities of people to foster sustainable social development. That is why the importance of employment to the country in general and the youth in particular cannot be understood in isolation from the type and quality of education provided to them by each country.

In this regard, it is essential to understand first the actual needs, wants and culture of the people, including the absorbing capacity of the economy in order to maintain the quality of education as well as its proper linkage with employment.

As it was stated by UNESCO (1991), employment enables the youth to meet their financial and material needs for themselves and their families. More importantly, it strengthens self-esteem, self-confidence and the sense of belongingness to contribute to society in a meaningful way. On the contrary, unemployment denies individuals the independent satisfaction of their needs. At national level, it has detrimental effects on the growth of the economy since the inadequate use of human resources prevents the realization of the economy's potential. Socially, unemployment chips away at people's dignity, self-confidence and self-respect. It also alienates them from society, breeding frustration and desperation that could result in crime and violence (UNESCO).

When we see the situation of African countries, the educational and training system, whether formal or non-formal it just could not prepare the youth for their role as dynamic agents of change and development. In our globalized and technological world, schools and teachers still could not impart relevant education and knowledge to their students who cannot meet both the economic and socio-cultural needs of their countries.

Available data indicate that there is a noticeable irrelevance in Africa's educational systems seen against the continent's development needs and priorities. Course offerings are still heavily oriented towards the liberal arts while courses like science, engineering, agriculture, medicine and management etc. which are crucial to Africa's socio-economic development, are still given low priority.

In spite of the skill shortages in the crucial areas of development, increasingly more and more young people enter the labour market with skills and qualifications that cannot be fully and effectively utilized (ECA, 2000). Their education and training do not meet the skill demands of the job market and the requirements of existing job opportunities. That is why, African states could not even attain their self-sufficiency in food production.

In order to reduce this mismatch between the supply and demand for skilled labour, strong commitment and action is needed on the part of all governments to reform their educational systems, programmes and strategies to respond to the labour market requirements and produce job creators rather than job seekers.

2.2 Urban Youth Unemployment in Ethiopia: Causes, Magnitude and Consequences of the Problem

Ethiopia, like all other poor countries of Africa, is a country of young people. According to the 1994 National Population Census, its population is estimated to be 60 million, out of which the youth is 20 percent. Similarly, the population of Addis Ababa is estimated about 3 million out of which the youth is 28.8 percent. This tells us that the youth is the major source of the labour force and plays a pivotal role in the development of the country. Thus, given proper education and training, the Ethiopian youth can make a difference in creating better society. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the Ethiopian Youth in general and the youth of Addis Ababa in particular are facing serious unemployment problem.

Although the magnitude and extent of the unemployment is not fully known, according to the result of the National Labour Force Survey (NL FSCA 1999) unemployment seems to be more of urban problem, where the rates for urban areas were 26.4% that is, five times higher than that of the rural areas (5.1%).

The incidence of unemployment also differs between sexes. In urban areas a significant proportion of unemployed female population (34.0%) was reported as compared to males (18.3 %). The above pattern also holds true for the rural areas where 8.6% of female and 2.4 % of male population were reported to be unemployed. The unemployment problem in Ethiopia has also age pattern. The same survey indicated that unemployed are predominantly young men and women. The unemployment rate starts comparatively at lower level in the age group 10-14 years (7.2%), then it increases up to age group 20-24 years/ (2.7%) and then it starts declining (Ibid).

However, in urban areas the female population has higher unemployment rate at the age group 20-24 years (45.8 %) and continues to decline consistently with increasing age. On other hand, male population has higher rate of unemployment at the age group of 15-19 years (37.7 %) and declines up to the age group 45-49 years and start to rise up there after. But it should be noted that, in all age groups whether in urban or rural areas female population show higher rate of unemployment than their male counterparts.

Generally speaking, urban unemployment rate was substantially higher than the rural areas in all regions. Higher unemployment rates were reported for urban areas of Addis Ababa (38.1%) and Dire Dawa Administration (35.5%) followed by Harari (29.1%), Afar (23.2%), Amhara (22.5%) and Gambella (21.1%). Relatively lower unemployment rate was shown for urban areas of Tigray (19.8%), Oromiya (19.0%), Benishangul (18.8%) and SNNP (18.1%).

During the last five years unemployment rate appears to follow an increasing trend. According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census result, unemployment rate in urban Ethiopia was 22.0%. This has increased by 4.4% and reached 26.4%, as reported in the 1999 National Labour Force Survey (NLFS). On the basis of this fact, we can argue that, the majority of Ethiopian youth, who are looking for jobs after completion of secondary and tertiary education, have very few opportunities for employment. This is mainly due to the narrow base and weak structure of the national economy coupled with long years of civil war, drought, environmental degradation and poor governance.

There are 27 million Ethiopians who are absolutely poor in urban and rural areas, among which the youth holds the greater proportion. The poor quality of education and skill training, the low rate of participation of the youth in different skill development trainings, and the lack of proper linkage between education and employment are some of the major limitations of the Ethiopian

education and training system that contributed to the unemployment problem of the youth in the country (World Bank Mission Report 1992).

The extremely narrow job market is contributing to the decline in academic achievement. The increasing tendency to break school rules, drop out, and display anti social behaviour are vivid manifestations of youth's growing dissatisfaction with an educational system that neither enlightens nor prepares them for employable jobs in the labour market and responsible adulthood. For young people with their particular vulnerability, finding a job is of crucial significance since they are leaving the educational system without being sure about the relevance of their acquired knowledge, including its applicability to the requirements of the labour market.

Moreover, due to the impact of globalization and the on going Structural Adjustment Programme in the country, along with the introduction of new technology and new techniques of labour management, employers are more interested in looking for and recruiting young people with appropriate marketable skills or qualifications such as information science, medicine, engineering, marketing, business education, banking, etc.

Today, it is true that, many efforts are being made by the government of Ethiopia to improve the coverage and quality of education, and many changes are observed in line with the on-going education and training reform program in the country. But still much more efforts and commitment are required from the government and its partners including the PHEIs to improve quality of education and prepare the young people for the world of work and integrate them into working life and the community.

2.3 The Contribution, Limitations and Challenges of the PHEIs

As the country is following market oriented economic development policy, both domestic and foreign investment is growing alarmingly. The private sector is encouraged to invest almost in all areas of the economy including the education and training sector. As indicated in the proceedings of the first national conference on private higher education in Ethiopia (2003), there are many practical reasons why a strong private sector in higher education is so important. Limited financial resources and capacity on the part of the government to offer all courses for all young people according to their needs is the one among other things. It can be also argued that the only way to ensure a truly independent and flexible educational system is through a strong private sector. Moreover, some research findings show that private colleges can respond to the changes taking place in the labour market than the public higher education institutions, since they are more dynamic and cost effective due to competition among themselves and with other partners.

Like in many countries of Africa, higher education was mainly the role and responsibility of the government of Ethiopia and many of the educational institutions were highly dominated by the government agencies. In other words, the burden of the ownership and running of these institutions rested on the shoulders of the government of Ethiopia.

Today, following the conducive environment created in the country, private colleges are mushrooming mainly in the city of Addis Ababa, and in some regional cities to complement the efforts of the government. And the graduates of these private colleges are believed to meet the demands of the skilled and qualified manpower in the economy. The following table shows the number of accredited PHEIs in the years 2003/2004.

Table 1: Distribution of Accredited PHEIs by Region.

Region	No. of PHEIs 2003	%	No. of PHEIs 2004	%
Addis Ababa	11	47.83	19	63.3
Nazareth	2	8.70	2	6.6
Awassa	1	4.35	2	6.6
Diredwa	2	8.70	2	6.6
Mekele	2	8.70	2	6.6
Harar	2	8.70	2	6.6
Nekemt	1	4.35	1	3.3
Kuyera	1	4.35	-	-
Total	20	100	30	100

The table above clearly indicates that there is high concentration of PHEIs mainly in city of Addis Ababa and some of them have branches in few regional towns of the country. On the other hand, the number of PHEIs has increased tremendously from 20 PHEIs in 2003 to 30 PHEIs in 2004. This will also increase the number of students and the type of courses provided to the clients. The table below indicates Ethiopian PHEIs by the types of courses they offer.

Table 2. Ethiopian PHEIs by Type of Courses offered

Type of courses	No. of PHEIs	Percentages
Accounting	26	86.6
Secretarial Science	16	53.3
Business Management	15	50.0
Computer Science	13	43.3
Marketing Management	11	36.6
Management	11	36.6
Auto-mechanics	2	6.6
Medicine	2	6.6
Economics	1	3.3
Agriculture	0	0.0

As indicated above, in terms of the fields of studies, the PHEIs focus on courses which are inexpensive such as Accounting, Secretarial Science and Office Management (SSOM),

Management, Computer Science, etc. give less emphasis to courses such as Auto-mechanics, Medicine, Agriculture which are highly demanded by the labour market to promote rapid development in the country. For instance 26 PHEIs provide Accounting out of the total PHEIs (30). The same applies to SSOM, provided by 15 PHEIs out of the 30 PHEIs.

Regarding the enrolment rate, the Report cited above displays that it has grown from 11, 175 in 2000/01 to 29,237 in 2001/02. The information gathered from the Ministry of Education also indicates that PHEIs account for 18 percent of student enrolment in higher education institutions. This figure could have been much higher if the intake of unaccredited institutions had been considered.

The information cited above also indicates that, in terms of Diploma graduates, PHEIs in Ethiopia have also significant contribution. That is out of 19,564 total number of Diploma graduates in 2001/02, 6,867 /43.5/ were from private institutions. Thus, for a poor country like ours, where the private sector is not developed, this contribution could not be underestimated.

3. Findings of the Study

3.1 Discussion with Ministry of Education (MOE) Officials

According to the discussion held with the concerned department of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the private Higher Education Institutions have significant contributions. Their contribution to the supply of colleges are relatively playing their role in providing educated manpower to the needs of the economy. They also provide an alternative for those who completed grade 12 but are unable to join the public higher educational institutions and are trying to fill the gap created by limited capacity of the public higher institutions. In this regard, the PHEIs have positive attitude from the public.

In order to overcome their limitations, promote their positive contributions and maintain their strength, PHEIs should undertake national study or assessment on issues related to PHEIs in the country. This may include how many young people graduated, in what field of studies, how many of them got employment opportunities either in the form of wage employment or self-employment, which sectors of the economy are in favour of employing their graduates, which type of courses are more demandable, with what amount, etc. so that they can contribute more and complement the efforts of the government to fight against poverty and unemployment.

To sum up, although, the Ministry does not supervise and support them both technically and professionally due to its limited capacity/power, PHEIs should focus on more diversified field of

studies on the basis of research findings to be more competitive in our free market economic system.

3.2 Discussion with Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and Financial Institutions

In the Ministry, there are about 22 Secretaries, out of whom 11 of them are currently attending their higher education in different PHEIs in the same field through extension programme. This is now common in other governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The researcher also contacted and made an interview with about 10 financial institutions operating in the city of Addis, out of which 70% of them responded to the questionnaire distributed to them. The following data collected may reflect the contribution of PHEIs in the reduction of unemployment problem in the country.

Table 3: Employed young people graduated from PHEIs by type of Employer Organizations

Ser. No.	Employer	M	F	Total	%
1	NIB Bank	51	29	80	33.4
2	Awash Bank	30	37	67	28.0
3	Wegagen Bank	35	15	50	20.9
4	United Insurance	3	15	18	7.5
5	Abyssinia Bank	10	3	13	5.4
6	United Bank	2	6	8	3.3
7	Africa Insurance	2	1	3	1.2
	Total	133	106	239	100%

The data in table 3, above clearly shows us NIB Bank has employed more young people graduated from the PHEIs (33.4%) than other employer organizations covered by the study, followed by Awash bank (28.0%) and Wegagen bank (20.9%) respectively. From this information one can deduce that, the PHEIs in Ethiopia are creating more employment opportunities in partnership with the private financial institutions operating in the country. On the other hand, almost all financial institutions covered by this study responded that many unemployed young people are always knocking at the door of their offices seeking either employment or free service opportunities. However, due to their limited capacity, they could not accommodate all applicants. This clearly indicates the problem facing the urban youth which needs the attention and collaboration of all public and private institutions including civil society.

Furthermore, according to the information gathered from the department of human resources of each financial institutions covered by the study, equal opportunity is given to all job seekers meeting the criteria during the whole process of employment. That is to say that no discrimination is made among graduates from both the public and private higher education institutions. What is more important is to be competitive and win both the theoretical and practical examination given to them. So the effort and qualifications of the individual person is important.

On the basis of the data indicated above one can say that for a country like Ethiopia, with high youth population and high urban youth unemployment problem, the contribution of PHEIs cannot be underestimated but rather they can be seen as an alternative for those unemployed young people unable to join the public higher education institutions.

The information gathered from the private financial institutions also indicates that the PHEIs in Ethiopia are not only playing greater role in meeting the needs of educated humanpower for all sectors of the economy, they are also helping the government by sharing its burden particularly in meeting the educational needs of the young and creating employment opportunities for those young people looking for jobs for their survivals and to support their families. Thus, provided that they are supported both technically and professionally by the government, private sector and the community at large, their contribution to the reduction of urban youth unemployment and other related social problems are more significant.

On the basis of the discussion held with the relevant persons of the selected private colleges say that employment opportunities are also being created for many students graduating from their own respective colleges and other unemployed young people. For instance, Admas College has created job opportunity for 300 unemployed young people out of which more than 50 employees are students graduated from the college itself. The same is true for St. Mary's college, which employed 26 young people who graduated from the college, out of which 24 are male and 2 are female.

Regarding linking theoretical education with the world of work, the college has also created a good relationship both with the public and private institutions. For instance, in 2003, about 800 students graduated from the College and almost 80% of them are employed in the Ministry of Inland Revenue. On top of this, the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills development center established in 2003 is doing its best to promote self-employment for its graduating students.

The private higher education forum, created among few private colleges is also another initiative to share their experiences and promote partnership among institutions to provide better quality of education for the reduction of unemployment problem among the growing youth population.

3.3 Analysis of Students' Response: The Case of St. Mary's College

In order to have better understanding about the role and contribution of PHEIs in reducing urban youth unemployment, the researcher has tried to assess the views and opinions of students at St. Mary's College. The researcher has interviewed 100 students randomly selected from St. Mary's College out of which 90% gave their responses.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Their Field of Study and Sex.

<i>Ser. No.</i>	<i>Field of study</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Accounting	20	10	30	33.3
2	SSOM	-	11	11	12.2
3	Marketing Management	14	8	22	24.4
4	Law	15	4	19	21.1
5	Computer Science	3	5	8	8.8
	Total	52	38	90	100

As indicated above in Table 6, the size of respondents studying Accounting is higher than other field of studies (33.3%), followed by Marketing Management (24.4%) and Law (21.1%). And the number of female students studying Accounting and SSOM is relatively high, while their participation in studying Law and Marketing Management is low in relation to their counterparts.

The students were also asked to give their reasons as to why they chose their specific field of study. 71.1% responded to get job very easily, 7.7% to acquire knowledge while 32.2% for both reasons. This clearly tells us that the majority of students are learning to meet their employment or survival needs. On the basis of the information gathered from their friends and relatives the most marketable or employable field of studies are Accounting (43.3%), Computer Science (30%), SSOM (24.4%), Law (12.2%), and Marketing Management (5.5%).

Today, it is true that, there are many opportunities which foster the mushrooming and development of PHEIs in the country. These include, among other things, free market led economic system, provisions such as policies, laws and regulations enhancing investment in the country, Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) development strategy, the National Education and Training Policy, National Education Sector Development Program could be cited. However, on the basis of the information gathered from different sources, the following issues could be seen as the major challenges facing PHEIs in the country.

- Lack of strong vision and commitment to work towards meeting the long-term objectives of the country, focus on similar fields of studies rather than focus on more diversified and marketable courses such as Medicine, Engineering, Auto-mechanics, Agriculture, etc;
- High concentration of insitutions in the city Addis Ababa and few regional cities, no proper attention to the less developed regions of the country;
- Being unable to create strong linkage with the demands and needs of the labour market and the economy at large. That is the lack of strong relationship with the public and private sectors including NGOs operating in the country;

- Being unable to make timely assessment or evaluation study about their strength, limitations including their contribution to the reduction of unemployment and poverty in the country; and
- Lack of strong partnership among themselves and relevant government institutions. That is to say, no common forum for social dialogue or open discussion on common issues such as the quality of education, unemployment, research activities, etc which can promote their strength.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

As indicated in the Education Sector Development Program of Ethiopia, the over all strategy of higher education is to provide good quality higher education to large numbers, equitably but with diminishing dependence on public resources in the long term. It is also stated that, higher education is the central programme in the national capacity building programme which emphasizes on human resource development improving working systems and setting up institutions to facilitate the overall agricultural and industrial development process.

Investment in higher education is so important for socio-economic development which in turn is crucial prerequisite for sustained poverty reduction in the future in the country. In a country like Ethiopia, where higher education sector is not developed and where there is a huge demand for highly trained personnel to foster the development of the country, investment on higher education is really indispensable.

It is true that, today, with the conducive environment being created in the country, Private Universities and Colleges are flourishing mainly in the city of Addis Ababa and in some Regional cities. PHEIs in Ethiopia are playing greater role in meeting the demand for educated manpower for all sectors of the economy. They can be seen as helping hands of the government and sharing its burden particularly in meeting the educational demand for the young people, who are unable to join the public higher educational institutions. Regarding employment creation, the growth and expansion of PHEIs has also created employment opportunities for many young people looking for jobs for their survivals and support their families.

When we see the employed young people by type of their field of studies and sex, graduates in the field of Accounting are 136 out of the total 239 employed young people in 7 financial institutions, out of which 85 are male and 51 are female, followed by 43 female graduates in SSOM, then by 28 graduates in Computer science, out of which 23 are male and 5 are female, followed by 20 graduates in Marketing Management, out of which 16 are male and 4 are female. However, investment on higher education alone is not enough, unless it is supported by the provision of good

quality of education and training that enables the youth to make a living and actively participate in the development efforts of the country. This could be equally shared by the PHEIs which are growing in the country, which in turn demands the strong commitment and good will of these institutions to work towards the reduction of poverty and unemployment facing the Ethiopian Youth.

Provided that PHEIs in the country are supported by the government both technically and professionally, their contribution to the reduction of youth unemployment problem and other related social problems is more significant. This does not mean that PHEIs in the country have no limitations, rather they have certain problems such as lack of skilled and qualified teachers, limited availability of text books and computer services, lack of strong relationship with employer organizations, and absence of timely assessment and research on the needs and demands of the labour market, lack of working space, and other recreational facilities as suggested by the students themselves and the observation made by the researcher himself.

Therefore, for more contribution in the reduction of poverty and unemployment, PHEIs should undertake national assessment on issues related to what is going on in the economy. Then pre-plan on the basis of their findings what field of studies are more demandable/marketable, with what amount and which sectors of the economy are in favour of employing their graduates. In order to do this, they should also adopt themselves to the changing political, socio-economic, technological and environmental realities both locally and globally, and prepare the youth for productive engagement in national development.

More importantly, PHEIs in Ethiopia should reorient themselves into a direction where apprenticeship plays an important role. They should also reflect more the educational and employment needs, problems and potentials of the youth in particular and the country in general. Furthermore, PHEIs in Ethiopia should establish strong partnership among themselves and other relevant Government institutions such as MOE, MOLSA, Investment Office, etc. Public colleges and universities and other private institutions including NGOs. They should also have common forum for social dialogue /open discussion on common issues such as the quality of education, unemployment, poverty, HIV/AIDS, etc so that they can promote their strength and minimize their weakness.

To sum up, the creation of an organic link between education/training and the job market is a fundamental prerequisite or a priority area for accelerated development.

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A Survey on the Provision of Distance Education in PHEIs: A Comparative Case Study

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the current provision of Distance Education (DE) in three PHEIs in Addis Ababa namely, St. Mary's College, Unity University College and Alpha Distance Education Institute. As a result of their situational and functional limitations, most of the government higher education institutions are unable to accommodate many students beyond their already (existing and expanding) vast regular and extension programs. Accordingly, with regard to the provision of educational opportunity through distance learning at higher level, the better and potential option, at hand, are the well established PHEIs like St. Mary's College, Unity University College and Alpha Distance Education Institute. These PHEIs have already started Distance Education Programs that are becoming popular in the various Regions of Ethiopia.

Therefore, the major purposes of this study are the following:

1. To discuss and forward comparative analysis of the provision and organization of distance education in the three PHEIS in Addis Ababa.
2. To investigate the factors that positively and/or negatively affect the distance education programs in these institutes
3. Finally, based on the findings of this study, to forward viable conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the provision and organization of distance education

Questionnaire survey was conducted with staff of distance education institutions and interview was made with some officials of the institutions to collect data. The data were analysed through descriptive statistics and presented in tabulations. The major finding in this study revealed that staff of the institutions believe that distance education provision has some merits over conventional education, but distance education provision in PHEIs is facing some constraints that require some actions.

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

The need of educational provision through distance means of the delivery system which is based on the rationale that distance education can reach a great majority of youth and adult learners at a distance within a relatively shorter period of time. As observed by Manjulinka (1996:15) and Bishope (1989:154) in developing countries (like Ethiopia) distance education is seen as the best alternative model of delivery system due to its flexibility and its relatively reduced cost as well as its capacity to address hundreds and thousands of adults missed out by the conventional education system. Hence the need for such study becomes very important to improve its improved provision.

1.2 Methodology of the Study

Two methods of data collection techniques were employed in this study. These were questionnaire survey and interview with concerned officials of the studied institutions. The method of data analysis technique employed in the study was by and large descriptive. More specifically, frequency count, mean score, simple percentage and rank order were utilized. However, the study didn't take into account the views of students that participate in distance education programs which could limit the validity of the information gathered from the staff of the institutions. Hence, the study could only serve as an eye opener and requires further indepth study. For the questionnaire survey, 12 staff each from St. Mary's and Unity University Colleges and 15 from Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies were considered

2. The Concept, Context and Development of Distance Education in Ethiopia

2.1. The Concept of Distance Education

Unlike the conventional classroom approach, distance education refers to the "practice of providing education and training through selective use of instructional means both traditional and innovative which can promote self teaching and learning to achieve specific educational objectives with greater geographical coverage than the traditional face to face systems of education" (ME.UR 1990:1). This does not mean, however, that distance education completely avoids other approaches. Thanks to modern information technology, distance education is now being disseminated to various regions and nations of the world by the mass media (radio, television) and the internet through face to face tutorial and e-mailing of printed materials respectively.

On the other hand, Kegan (1996:4) tends to focus on what D.E does rather than what D.E is and hence, forward the following defining elements of distance learning.

- a. The separation of teacher and learner as opposed to the traditional face-to face instruction;
- b. Its focus on self-directed learning and private study that liberated it from the influence of highly structured educational organization;
- c. The use of technical media including printed materials and instructional devices to unit teachers and learners;
- d. The provision of two-way communication at a distance through the internet and through tele-lecture , discussion and dialogue; and
- e. The possibility of occasional meetings for both dialectic and socialization progress

2.2. The Development of Distance Education in Ethiopia

As compared to the conventional educational system, distance education is a recent phenomenon which dates back to 1840 (Rmuble 1992. 14). At its early age, it was known as

correspondence education whose delivery system entirely depends on the printed materials that are distributed to the learner through mail and now e-mail through. According to Manjulilka (1996:16) since 1970 the name distance education has become popular. However, along with the development of distance education, other related mode of delivery like Telmatic teaching, 'Correspondence education', 'Home study', 'independent learning', 'off campus study' and 'external system' have come to the educational scene. Today, distance education is seen as one of the dynamic educational provision systems that guarantees remarkable change of quality, quantity, status and credibility to the current education system.

In the Ethiopian context, distance education was started in the early 1940s. At that time, this mode of delivery was introduced (under the name of correspondence education) to upgrade the level of primary school teachers without taking them out of their work place.

According to MOE (1997), the distance education program started its operation under the name "directed study for teachers" through a bilateral agreement of the Ethio-U.S.A cooperative education program. After the pioneering activity of the 'directed study for teachers' the then Haileselassie I University (now Addis Ababa University) in collaboration with the MOE established a distance education program in the extension division of Addis Ababa University and made educational provision in such a mode of delivery from 1960 to 1964 E.C. However, this venture became very weak and remained idle and paralyzed from 1965-1967 (for two years).

Later on, being cognizant of the value of distance education, the MOE exerted greater effort after 1967 for the reestablishment of distance education program. Then in 1967, The MOE took over the full responsibility of the provision and organization of distance education programs and started distance teaching in twenty six courses in Addis Ababa and its suburb. When this pilot project was found to be successful, D.E. was started in 1973 in the various regions of the country.

According to Mehreteab (2003:26), since 1967 E.C., the MOE established the Educational Media Agency (EMA) which was responsible for a distance education unit. Since 1967 to date, EMA has made educational provision to more than 21,000 primary and secondary school teachers through the radio, television and correspondence. Similarly, since 1986 to date, the Addis Ababa University, Alemaya University, Dila Teachers College and Bahr Dar University are giving distance education programs for four pedagogical courses, namely: a) Introduction

to Educational Psychology; b) Educational Research c) Introduction to Curriculum; and d) Introduction to Educational Organization and Management. In its unpublished leaflet entitled African Virtual University (AVU) of AAU, the Arat kilo AVU center has introduced internet-based education programs as well as its future vision and plans for the expansion of distance education programs through the use of interactive instructional telecommunication network (AVU leaflet 1997:2). In its recent undergraduate programs of October 2002, it has already started training in the following courses:

- Computer Engineering
- Computer Science
- Electrical Engineering

Another, recently established government higher education institute that plays significant roles in distance education is the Ethiopian Civil Service College (ECSC). The leaflet entitled "Center for Distance Learning" States :

The learning technology and media at the Global Development Learning Network is equipped with both send and receive distance learning programs, activities and events through synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication. i.e. learning with one or two ways video integrated with print, audio and computer.

According to this bulletin, the ECSC center for distance learning is currently providing courses (organized by WBI from Washington D.C) in the following major area:

- Economic Policy and Poverty Reduction
- Governance, Regulation and Finance
- Human Development
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Non- Thematic Courses

Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) are also currently actively involved in distance education programs in various fields of study. Among these PHEIs, Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies, St. Mary's College and Unity University College are the selected very popular sample institutions that provide distance education in 5 areas of study and over 15 field of specialization. These are in Business Management and Social Sciences; such as Languages, Education Management, Law, Natural Science, Technology, Library Science, Sociology, Political Science. For detailed information, please refer to the attached annex for each PHEIs regarding the course areas of study and the statistical data (no. of students in each department).

3. Results and Discussions

In the introductory part and literature review, the study has attempted to describe the context and trends of development of distance education in Ethiopia. This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data. For the analysis of the merits of distance education as perceived by distance education staff, four points scale was prepared for interview. The scale was developed as follows:

4= Very Strongly Agree

3= Strongly Agree

2= Satisfactorily Agree

1= Partially Agree

Then, for the total samples, each item is rated out of four and summarized in percentage and mean scores values. The results of the analysis are presented below.

3.1 Advantages of Distance Education

Table 1: Merits of Distance Education program: Views of Distance Education Institutions

Merits	St. Mary's College Total Score (12x4=48=100)			Unity University College Total Score (12x4=48=100%)			Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies Total Score (15x4=60=100)			Grand Score (156=100%)		
Distance education is less expensive	48	32	66.7	48	41	85.5	60	50	83.4	156	123	78.8
Distance education saves time	48	31	64.6	48	39	81.3	60	52	86.7	156	122	78.2
Distance education reaches learners where they are	48	43	89.4	48	38	79.1	60	51	85.2	156	132	84.6
Students can learn at their own Pace in Distance Education	48	46	95.7	48	39	81.2	60	54	90.2	156	139	89.1
<i>It gives better educational opportunity</i>	48	45	93.6	48	45	93.6	60	50	83.4	156	140	89.7

As shown in Table 1 above, the respondents from the three PHEIs express the different advantages of provision of various courses in distance education program with high percentage score ranging from 81-93%. The weighted average percentage scores of all the three PHEIs indicate again the merits of distance education provision with percentage score ranging from 78-89%.

3.2. Perception of Distance Education Institutions Staff on the Factors Affecting Distance Education Provision

Respondents were also asked to rate the factors that affect their distance learning on a four point scale. A rank order is given to the weighted average of each item ranging from 1 to 4. As indicated in Table 2, below, the average score of the three colleges ranked “Delay of feedback ...” and “Teaching materials don’t reach on time” as 1st and 2nd respectively. ‘Lack of modules’, however,

was ranked last with weighted Av. Score of 1.02. The same item (mentioned above) is also scored very low by each of the three college respondents with average score of 0.92, 0.75 and 1.33 respectively This indicates that this item is the least constraining factor that affects the provision of distance education in PHEIs.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Distance Education Provision: Views of Distance Education Institutions

Rank Order	Grand Total Score and Average (Maximum Score =156)		Factors Affecting Distance Education	Scoring for Each Private Higher Education Institute					
				St. Mary's College (Maximum Score 12x4=48)		Unity University (Maximum Score 12x4=48)		Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies (Maximum Sore 15x4=60)	
	Grand Total	Mean		Score	Mean	Score	Mean	Score	Mean
2	87	2.23	Teaching Materials don't Reach on Time	36	3	35	2.92	16	1.33
3	75	1.92	Problem of Tutorial Services both in Breadth and in Quality	18	1.5	27	2.25	30	2
1	102	2.61	Delay of Feedback for Appraising Exercises and Activities	27	2.25	29	2.42	46	3.07
4	70	1.79	Poorly Prepared Teaching Material	21	1.75	14	1.17	35	2.33
5	40	1.02	Lack of Modules Specifically Prepared for Distance	11	0.69	9	0.75	20	1.33

Remark: Rank order is made from the grand total on four point scale. Rank order for each PHEIs could be deduced from the table if needed

$$\text{Average Score} = \frac{\text{Total Score earned} \times 4}{\text{Maximum Score}}$$

Table 3: Distance Education Delivery System.

Rank Order	Grand Total and Average Values		Items	Scoring for Each Private Higher Education Institute					
				St. Mary's College (Maximum Score is 12x4=48)		Unity University College (Maximum Score is 12x4=48)		Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies (Maximum Sore is 15x5=60)	
	Grand Total	Mean		Score	Mean	Score	Mean	Score	Mean
1	120	3.08	Correspondence	24	2	44	3.67	52	3.47
3	72	1.85	Mass Media	5	0.41	12	1	55	3.67
4	65	1.67	Internet	2	0.17	9	0.75	54	3.6
2	73	1.87	Computer	3	1.25	18	1.5	52	3.47
5	59	1.51	Tele-lecture	2	0.17	12	1	45	3

Remark: Rank order is made from the grand total of the four point scale score

Maximum score for each item=156

$$\text{Average Score} = \frac{\text{Total Score earned} \times 4}{\text{Maximum Score}}$$

3.3. Distance Education Delivery System

As shown in Table 3, the overall picture of the responses from the three PHEIs reveals that distance education mode of delivery through correspondence, mass media and computer ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with weighted average score of 3.08, 1.87 and 1.85 respectively. In all cases, distance learning through the internet and Tele-lecture are the least scored and practiced by the three colleges wholly and independently.

Table 4: Supplementary Educational Provision Approaches Employed

Education Provision Approaches	St. Mary's (Total Score 12x4=48=100)			Unity (Total Score 12x4=48=100%)			Alpha (Total Score 15x4=60=100)			Grand Total and Average (156=100%)		
	Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%
Tutorial Centre and Libraries	48	4	29.2	48	24	50	60	45	75	156	83	53.2
Additional Face-to-Face courses during Vacation	48	8	15.7	48	17	35.4	60	37	61.7	156	62	39.8
Study kits with Exercise and Activities	48	23	47.9	48	32	66.7	60	38	63.3	156	93	59.6

Regarding the complementary and/or supplementary distance education provision approaches, the responses from the three PHEIs reveal that distance education at Tutorial Center and with study kits stem out to be popular with weighted average score of 53% and 59% respectively. The face-to-face mode of course delivery during long vacation seems to be the least practiced by all the three PHEIs.

Table 5: Degree of Link and Collaboration among PHEIs in Distance Education

No.	Areas of Collaborations	St. Mary's College (Total Score is 12x4=48=100)			Unity University College (Total Score is 12x4=48=100%)			Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies (Total Score is 15x4=60=100)			Grand Total and Average Value (156=100%)		
		Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%	Total	Score	%
1	Discussion on Quality of Distance Education	16	10	62.5	16	11	68.8	40	39	97.5	72	60	83.3
2	Discussion on Admission criteria	16	5	31.2	16	12	75	40	38	95	72	57	79.2
3	Exchange of Experience on Accreditation	16	6	37.5	16	7	43.8	40	35	87.5	72	48	66.7
4	Discussion on Credit Load	16	6	37.5	16	10	62.5	40	31	77.5	72	47	65.3

Finally, asked about the degree of their link and collaborations, only 33% of the respondents from each of St. Mary's and Unity University College and 66% of the respondents from Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies recognized the importance of their coordinated efforts out right. And this group who favoured this issue were asked about the areas and degrees of their collaborative efforts. As shown in Table 5 above, respondents from all the three PHEIs expressed their strong support for collaborative discussion on "Quality of Distance Education", "Admission Criteria"; "Exchange of Experiences on Accreditation" with average percentage score of 83%, 79% 66% and 65% respectively.

3.4. Interview Report of Distance Education Dean and Coordinators

To make the result more concrete, reliable and comprehensive, the researcher has interviewed the Dean and coordinators of the three PHEIs regarding the provision of distance education in the institutions. The responses of the Assistant Dean for Distance Education of Unity University College, and Dean of the Distance Education Division of St. Mary's College and the Dean of Alpha Distance Education Institute are summarized and presented in the following schematic chart.

From the interview results of the three examined institutions, the following points are deduced.

A. Strengths and/or advantages

- D.E provides greater educational opportunity for the learners at distant place who are denied access to the regular system;
- D.E serves as complementary and supplementary to the regular system; and
- D.E is more appropriate to use modern educational technology like TV and the Internet for disseminating education nationally and globally.

B. Major Problems of DE provision

- Lack of awareness and commitment to the significance of D.E problems on the part of most of the educational officers and policymakers as well as the participants themselves;
- Lack of well developed infrastructure, technological media as well as lack of well prepared modules and study kits; and
- Lack of qualified and trained instructors and tutors.

C. Possible Solution

- Developing awareness and better skills in D.E. among instructors through training and seminar;

- Developing infrastructure and using modern educational technology like TV, internet for distance learning; and
- Offering special training for distance educators in the preparation of modules, study kits and the use of modern educational technology for DE.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall findings of this study reveal that distance education is the most flexible and significant mode of delivery that offer educational opportunity to those participants located at distance, and who have their own learning pace and convenient time. Most of the current government higher education institutions do not have the capacity and facilities to address this issue, especially with regard to using modern media. The interview report also revealed the major problems of D.E.

Most of the PHEIs like St. Mary's college, Unity University College as well Alpha Higher Institute of Distance Studies have witnessed their capacity and capability in the dissemination and provision of educational opportunity through distance mode of delivery.

Following the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. From the interview result, it was made clear that distance education in the institutions is constrained by shortage of well trained teachers in the different fields of studies. Hence, to guarantee quality D.E provision, PHEIs need to involve qualified teachers in their distance education programs. To do this, provision of special pedagogical and professional training for distance education program teachers becomes important.
2. As revealed in the finding, the dominant mode of delivery practiced in all the three PHEIs is educational provision through correspondence with relatively minimum use of the mass media. Accordingly, there is the need to use and promote current mode of delivery of distance education through Tele-lecture, computer and the Internet. These aspiring and promising PHEIs can learn from the experiences of other universities and colleges of distance education programs like the AVU of Addis Ababa University and Centre of Distance Education of the ECSC.
3. They solve distance education administrative and situational problems by creating smooth link and negotiating tactics with both concerned government and non-government organizations.
4. PHEIs should dilute their differences and need to promote their collaboration and link to promote the provision of quality standard and accreditations of distance education in their

respective colleges and institutes. Such endeavour can be promoted in a number of ways such as through establishing distance education association and through organizing seminars and conferences.

5. Finally, PHEIs need to give extended, consistent and unreserved pedagogical and professional training to their academic staff in various areas of study such as:
 - Preparation of modules and study kits;
 - Techniques of tutoring, tele-lecturing, etc;
 - Computer literacy training;
 - The use of the Internet for education;
 - Educational technology;
 - Information Technology and Communication; and
 - Curriculum development and design for self-directed learning and programmed instruction

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The Status of Information Technology Education in Selected Private Colleges in Addis Ababa

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Abstract

The rapidly growing information and communication technology (ICT) is knocking at the front door of every country in the world. Globalization of ICT has made the world smaller and opaque through digital and virtual reality of cyber space. It is this technology that is setting the pace of business growth in this millennium. Entrepreneurs can break encrustation in the economy through innovation from information and communication technology and through new form of competition. Developing an IT culture is a task involving a transformation of the people and the economy from traditional agrarian society to “Knowledge intensive one”. Governmental bodies in collaboration with the private sector should take the lead in setting, as a national goal, the shift to information society. Both sectors should research and demonstrate projects in IT to cultivate and create understanding and appreciation of IT among people, and enable the great majority of people to have basic level of access to services.

Appropriate information technology (meaning technology which is grounded firmly in curriculum goals, incorporated in sound instructional processes, and deeply integrated with subject matter content) is proving to be a useful tool in facilitating learning and overall socio-economic development as opposed to passively receiving it and help develop advanced thinking and reasoning skills. Conversely, when this grounding is absent, student performances are unlikely to meet the minimum standards in business fields of studies.

The study attempted to examine the current status of IT education in four selected private colleges within Addis Ababa with special emphasis on the existing problems that hinder the learning-teaching process. The target populations of the study are students, heads and instructors of the four selected private Colleges. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the required data.

Shortage of personal computers, limited lab access hours and lack of adequate reference materials, lack of previous exposures to computers and stealing of computer accessories are some of the drawbacks that existed in the Colleges.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

“Knowledge is becoming the key factor of production”.
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1.1.1 Basic Concepts about Information Technology

Information technology, today, has become a sine quanon in all spheres of life. Making it imperative for every educated citizen to undergo an appropriate training in the field. Today, when the world finds itself at the beginning of the 21st century, most research studies indicate

that the new millennium heralds a great victory of the information technology worldwide. Yet, there are parts of this same world that lay far behind, in this respect. A number of developing countries are still unable to rejoice the benefits of these modern developments. This is mainly attributed to lack of material and skilled manpower resources among other causes.

Our civilization is in the midst of a transition from an industrial economy to a post industrial information economy. The transition, or paradigm shift is having a profound influence on the way we live and work, and it is likely to challenge many of our beliefs, assumptions and traditions. Computers and information technology are crucial to the change (Beekman 1994).

Without information technological skills, airlines simply wouldn't fly. Designers use CAD (Computer Aided Design) software to design aircraft. Engineers conduct extensive computer simulations to test them. Pilots use computer-controlled instruments to navigate their planes, monitor aircraft systems, and control autopilots. Air traffic controllers on the ground use computerized air traffic control system to keep track of incoming and outgoing flights. And, of course, computerized reservation systems make it possible for all those planes to carry passengers.

To sum up, it's becoming harder all the time to find jobs that haven't been changed in some way by information technology utilization.

1.1.2 Historical Background of Education In Ethiopia

Traditional Church Education

We cannot date the beginning of church education exactly. It might have originated in the Axumite kingdom when Christianity was introduced at the court of king Ezana in the fourth century. Christianity, Islam, Judaism and paganism have co-existed in Ethiopia for centuries and all have founded schools for their adherents' children. Any account of Ethiopian education must recognize the contributions made by these different religious, linguistic and cultural communities (Teshome 1979).

Nonetheless, it is true that in the course of their long history of Christianity, Ethiopians evolved their own peculiar system of education. Like church education in other parts of Christendom it was designed primarily for the training of the priesthood but served also to diffuse and preserve all aspects of Christian culture (Pankhurst 1967).

Foundation of Modern Education

Gradually, post elementary schools were expanding faster than elementary education, which, in turn, gave rise to a need for further education at the College or University level. This had not been immediately feasible for Ethiopia, but when independence was regained in 1941, the old blueprints for higher education were reactivated and plan for a University College was approved by the board of education and the emperor (Trudea 1964).

On 20 March 1950, the emperor invited Dr Lucien Matte, a distinguished Canadian Jesuit educator, who had been serving as a head of Tafari Mekonnen School to take the responsibility for the first College in Ethiopia. After Dr. Matte had travelled to Europe to purchase supplies and equipment and to recruit faculty members, class began on 11 December 1950. Dr. Truedo pointed out:

It was a humble beginning. There was a staff of nine teachers, all men, who had completed high school. The students, all boarders, and some of the staff members were living together on campus, in the building that used to be the commercial school and was still partly occupied by students of this school. Dormitories, dinning halls, library, classrooms and laboratories were accommodated in this building. It was simple and poor, but sufficient too.

The University College as it came to be called included a two-year program leading to an Ethiopian higher certificate. After the formal inauguration of the College, much heated discussion ensued as to whether the College should be affiliated with a British University. The final decision was to keep the College independent and to work for the recognition of its diplomas and degrees by foreign institutions rather than submit the students to a foreign land. This was the cornerstone of higher education in modern Ethiopia.

Private Colleges in Ethiopia

The establishment of private Colleges in Ethiopia is a recent phenomena dated back to 1998. The opening of Unity College heralded it (Unity College Brochure 1998).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In a pre-industrial society, the development of a country was solely judged by matter. Land at that time was the basic source of wealth .Unfortunately, however, when time goes by, matter becomes a trifle thing to be dealt with—especially, in regard to measuring a country’s socio-economic status.

It’s a truth, universally acknowledged fact that everything is in flux. By the same token, the value of matter as sole criteria in evaluating a country’s development becomes lower and lower.

Gradually, the devaluation of matter paved the way to the new form of evaluation criteria called knowledge. The new industrial revolution is a revolution of mind over matter.

It is crystal clear that our times are labelled as the computer age, the information age and the age of technology. There is no doubt that the last twenty to thirty years have brought about a dramatic change in the very infrastructure of developed societies. Technological innovation has permeated so many areas of our lives - in the home, in medical care, in travel, in communication, in government, in finance, in recreational activities and of course in education. Thus, if not all, the majority should acquaint themselves to the current technological advancements so that he/she can accomplish various tasks successfully.

Broadly speaking, neither information technology which is a direct effect of knowledge, nor knowledge itself is independent of education. In one way or another, they are directly associated with education. Thus, education is a framework or rather a pillar to the development of global socio-economic achievements in general and to any nation in particular.

With the collapse of agriculture, and then of industry, as the primary provider of people's livelihood, today's increasingly service-oriented, information-based societies are familiar to the fact that an educated elite is vital for the well-being of a nation.

Illiteracy toward IT and the lack of know-how by the majority, means a heavy socio-economic blow especially in the current information age, where most or almost all tasks depend on access to information since it is the basic commodity to stick to. By analogy, education is therefore, the act of "putting a spark" in young minds.

Countries throughout the world, especially those of developed ones, now-a-days, give due emphasis to education and research, in updating current educational systems and other education related things so as to cope with and to benefit the merits driven from IT. It's a long tradition and still keeps on. Because of this and other related reasons, they climb the ladder of success and prosperity prior to the developing ones.

Speaking of developing countries, especially in Africa, little emphasis has been given to education in general and IT education in particular. When we come to Ethiopia, the population by and large is illiterate and is not aware of the value of Information Technology (IT). In a population of around 65 million, only a few thousand people know about the internet and about other related IT aspects. However, the establishment of private higher learning institutions in the recent past, especially, their efforts towards offering IT courses will contribute not only to creating a skilled

and innovative manpower, but also help citizens to come up with new ideas so as to facilitate various governmental and private businesses. However, the status of such Colleges and their efforts in creating skilled IT professionals which are capable of contributing to the overall national development endeavours has not been well studied. Due to this fact, the researcher is initiated to study the current status of private higher learning institutions in Ethiopia and their overall performances in relation to IT education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to assess the current status of information technology education in four selected private colleges within Addis Ababa. The specific objectives of the study are to identify:

1. whether the colleges have adequate and appropriate technological facilities and information sources including hardware and software to support the education;
2. the current problem in offering IT education (if any) and to recommend possible solutions for the problems.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Information Technology and the Emerging Global Economy

The significance of information and communication technologies is a recurrent theme in the global economy. First, these technologies have an enabling role for the globalization trends; they constitute the means for the compression and transgression of time and space barriers. Second, information technologies are major determinants of competitiveness in global industries. This latter aspect is related to the increasing importance attributed to using information and knowledge as a factor of production and competitiveness in knowledge-based industries such as airlines, financial services and the like. IT applications nowadays have spread throughout common operational standards.

It is, therefore, worth mentioning that one of the most profound consequences of the ongoing information revolution is its influence on how economic value is created and extracted. The new information technology redefines the relationship between buyer, seller and middleman, allowing new ways of accessing and tapping information and price arrangements (Kibruyisfa and Berehanu 1999). However, these effects and further advancements and applications of ICT, can't be fully realized and utilized without the development of appropriate knowledgeable and skilled human resources.

2.2 Developing Countries and the Emerging Global Economy

When we come to developing countries with regard to the emerging global economy, Augerou in his article entitled “How can IT enable economic growth in developing countries” argued that while managers and policy makers in developing countries “are mobilizing resources for the acquisition of technology - the formidable task in its own right - they have to address themselves to the organizational and economic changes that will accompany the technology innovation. The questions, therefore, that need to be addressed are what kind of economic structuring and what ways of organizing work in business firms and public services should be pursued. He summarized that policy makers in developing countries need to combine the adoption of universal standards and regulations with a process of organizational innovation appropriate to the local socio-economic context.

2.2.1 Africa’s Problem in Exploiting Information Technology (IT)

It is only fair to appreciate the historical role Africa played in global information and communication. This is mirrored in the past spectrum of information technologies and other aspects of communication growth. The cave paintings, writings and the Egyptian hieroglyphics bear witness to the African past experience and contribution in the area of information and communication. The Gutenberg printing invention in Germany revolutionized works in terms of publishing and printing, but only after the early century African center stage that offered viable communication in the history of mankind (Shibanda 2000).

The communication revolution in world’s history was initiated by the early African Kingdom of Ashanti and earlier on by the ancient Egyptians. Both communities were able to relay on the first coded signal over considerable distances using “talking” drums and a sophisticated telegraphic language before Morse’s invention in the 19th century (Shibanda 2000).

Unfortunately, the historical role set by Africa in the information and communication field has been lost and Africa is seen now as a net consumer and therefore importer of information technologies. Timberlake (1998) sees Africa as a continent on the brink and explains her plight as unique in that whereas the rest of the world is moving forward with accepted indicators of progress, Africa is moving backwards. He laments that features of modern society to which many Africans have been exposed are withering with lack of spare parts, power supply, and smooth communication infrastructure and many institutions deteriorating both in physical capacity and their technical and financial ability to perform efficiently. He argues for the change of policies, otherwise development in Africa will continue to be frustrated leading to political, social and economic nightmares by the turn of the century. Sy, Habib (1994) observes that Africa is still in

the darkest ages of communication. Local business opportunities are curtailed by serious lack of knowledge about local and international markets for instance, the changing patterns of demand, or new products, technologies and methods of production. Shibanda (2000) summarized the African information technology situation as:

- ❖ Lack of sound legislation and policy guidelines;
- ❖ Financial inadequacy for investment in IT;
- ❖ Official insecurity and bureaucracy against IT;
- ❖ Need for education;
- ❖ Research and IT development structure;
- ❖ Poverty and illiteracy prevalent in African Society;
- ❖ Curtailed freedom of information due to political interference;
- ❖ Need for regional integration and cooperation;
- ❖ Need for IT cultural ethics; and
- ❖ Reduced access to knowledge and education.

2.3 Survival Strategies to Alleviate the Problem

The vision is to make Africa part of the worldwide information society. Africa, therefore, needs to come up with meaningful programmes that will surely support and activate the use of information and communication technology. Indeed, such initiatives should harmonize other international programmes ensuring Africa a partnership role in the information revolution. Shibanda (2000) concluded that the initiative need be reflected on:

- Sectoral-national-regional information infrastructure;
- Promoting the use of online communication. This can be achieved by ensuring a functional system as outlined above;
- Developing national information strategy, ideally, should consider the implication of information technology and finally make a choice to participate as partners in the worldwide information super highways;
- Incorporating a research and development system for assessment of viable trends and lines of action to ensure that Africa exploits the opportunities availed by cyberspace technologies; and
- Formulating possible programmes of action through national/regional information technology, fund policy and resource committees, information task force, network programmes, information technology promotion groups and government information technology committee.

To sum up, Africa is economically stagnant and technologically marginalized. It is time to embrace information technology as a priority area and extend the democratization process into the information and communication fields. Of course, Africa needs to have a vision for information technology and evolve information society in partnership with the rest of the world.

2.4 A General Overview of Information Technology (IT) Curriculum in Colleges and Universities

Few occupations have grown rapidly as the information profession. The US bureau of census has identified the position of information professionals as the fastest growing career between the years 1992-2005 (Cougar, 1999). This phenomenal growth rate has given rise to a number of studies of curricula and programs at College and University level and assess whether educational institutions are keeping pace with the changes in business and technology.

Studies of the IT profession recognize that several changes in the technology, business and information systems (IS) function areas are in process, which are driving revisions in the skills requirements of IT professionals. First computer technology has advanced and continues to do so at an astounding rate. As the price/performance ratio continues to decrease for processing communication and storage of information, there have been corresponding advances made in the ability to manipulate information in various areas effectively. The implications for IT professionals are that they must be able to remain abreast of these changes, to understand their potentials, and to be prepared to integrate them in to the operations of the organization. In addition, the increasing sophistication of end-users and the ease of use of technology have pushed many organizations toward distributed computing. Users are becoming increasingly more responsible for systems conception, development, implementation and management.

The changing nature of the information profession requires a new paradigm for IT education so that new information graduates have the required attributes to succeed in the rapidly changing world of the 21st century.

Gupta and Watcher (1998) outline the minimal skills that will characterize the new breed of IT professionals in the 21st century. These skills are:-

- ❖ Interpersonal and management knowledge skills which include the ability to:
 - plan and execute and work cooperatively in a project team environment; and
 - maintain productive user/client relationship.
- ❖ Business functional knowledge which includes the ability to:

- interpret business problems and develop appropriate technical solutions; and
- understand and learn about the business environment and business functions.
- ❖ Technology management knowledge which includes the ability to:
 - focus on technology as a means not an end; and
 - understand new technologies and trends.
- ❖ Technical specialties knowledge which include the ability to:
 - telecommunications networking;
 - system integration;
 - data management; and
 - fourth generation language

2.5 The Role of Private Sectors in Development and Application of Information Technology Education in Ethiopia

There is currently no private telecom company operating or investing in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) is operating as a monopoly preventing any other company from moving into the sector. No role or responsibility is given to the private sector in the development of the IT industry. Moreover, the population by and large is not aware of the value of information technologies. Indeed, in a population of around 65 million, only a few thousand people know about the internet, what the worldwide web-WWW is, how it can be accessed, and what kind of information can be accessed by its use (Kebour Ghena 1999).

However, it is obviously not possible to expect much from the private sector in an environment where the laws are restrictive and the infrastructure is not set up for venture deals. Ethiopia gives and continues to give greater attention to other traditional non-technological sectors, and because only few people in the country see much value in the new technologies, their political leverage in pushing for the development of IT has been practically nil (Kebour Ghena 1999).

Accordingly, effective mechanisms should be designed to bring the private sector to:

- ✓ take risk that involve financial investment to start up companies;
- ✓ communicate its needs to government; and
- ✓ push for the acceptance of local and/or foreign financing agencies to fund IT projects;

It is important that Ethiopia formulates a coherent and all-encompassing policy for the diffusion and adoption of information and communication technology which facilitates growth and future policy, as well as the appropriate market structure, and to ensure that investment takes place properly (Kebour Ghena 1999).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Target Population

The target population of this study were senior students, instructors and heads of the colleges. Senior instructors and senior students were selected because they have a better exposure to the college so that they can provide accurate data which is to the benefit of the research. Again to make the research impartial, relevant data from the Head of Colleges were collected.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Method of Data Collection

It was quite difficult to entertain all the instructors and students selected due to the fact that the number of both instructors and students is large. In order to get appropriate and relevant data for the study, selecting experienced instructors and Heads in each college is undeniable. To this end, one instructor and one college head are selected from each college are judgement sampling technique is employed.

Students from four private colleges were considered for the study. These were Unity University College, Microlink, Queens and Zegha Business Colleges. From each college, the samples were selected by employing simple random sampling technique. A Questionnaire was distributed to a total of 72 students using random sampling techniques. To avoid repetition, the researcher adopted a control mechanism by asking them whether they not clear the questionnaire or not.

The method employed for the purpose of data collection was centred on the use of a set of questionnaire and interview which are prepared in advance. In addition to the aforementioned methods, observation was made and secondary sources were consulted.

4. Findings of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study specified earlier, the available literatures were reviewed and relevant information was gathered, analyzed and presented in the following section. Previously, many of the respondents (62.5%) had no previous exposure to computers.

Students were also asked to respond, in general, what they feel about the present status of IT education in their respective colleges, here in Addis Ababa. One of the major limitations which almost all of them complained is that there is no permissive atmosphere with regard to computer utilization in the lab. Especially, lack of effective coordination, insignificant free access hours and negligence of instructors in controlling and guiding students are some of the major factors which aggravate the existing problem.

Problems encountered in the process of IT education at the colleges were also explored. Lack of adequate lecture-theatres is the one which hinders rather than facilitate the learning-teaching process. Failures to harmonize theories with down-to-earth practical applications are another constraint which aggravated the problem. About 38 students (52.8%) asserted that their attitude towards the current IT education in their college is good.

The majority of respondents suggested that lack of adequate and latest reference materials outweigh all problems by far. Furthermore, space problems were manifested in the library. Therefore, respondents suggested that the College administration should consider such drawbacks and must inject some panaceas to cure them.

Most of the students (56.9%) are found to take (learn) IT to get a Job. This shows that the majority of students are job seekers, and for this reason they join the department to have high employment opportunity. The next large number of students (34.8%) indicated that their primary reason is to cope with the current information age.

The majority of the respondents, 52 (72.2%), are not aware of the content of the whole courses in the curriculum. Only a small amount of them, 20 (27.8%), know the whole courses content in the curriculum through their personal effort. By the same token, some of them feel that the relevance of the curriculum is good. Shortage of adequate personal computers in Lab hours is a major problem which the students faced. Students were also asked to respond to what they feel or suggest about the present status of IT education in private colleges here in Addis Ababa. Their responses have been summarized as follows:

- ✓ There is no permissive atmosphere with regard to lab sessions. Especially, lack of effective coordination, insignificant free access hours and negligence of instructors in controlling and helping students are some, among others.
- ✓ They also complained that theft of computer accessories like mouse occurred repeatedly.

Even though governmental policies for the development of IT education is promising, some drawbacks such as, failures (delays) to give construction sites so as to build new campuses are discouraging. Because of this, they (the Colleges) ask exorbitant prices (high semester fees) to cover house rents.

Even if most instructors are members of professional associations like Ethiopian Information Technology Professionals Association (EITPA) and Ethiopian Computer Standard Association

(ECSA), due to time constraint (class loads) they fail to actively participate in workshops and seminars.

5. Recommendations

Ethiopia is one of those societies that should do a lot to attain a better socio-economic status. The strategy to overcome this setback always lies in giving due attention to tertiary level education. Nevertheless, there is a great discrepancy between the need to provide as much skilled manpower as possible, on one hand; and the technical and material resources on the other to meet these demands. Despite this factor, there is considerable growth of information technology education nowadays. Moreover, governments must envisage a sound policy and should collaborate with various institutions to implement a better IT education in Ethiopia at the grass-root level.

When compared to developed countries, our country seems to be on the threshold of IT education. Despite this fact, more investment should be channelled towards education so that citizens are given a better chance to actively participate in the development of ICT in the country.

To foster a sound educational environment, the Colleges should acquire additional PCs, skilled manpower, libraries and reference materials and the like. Besides, students need a practical understanding of the technology, not only of theory. Because, it is crystal clear that, traditional educational structures are not promising for the well being of any nation. Instead, new information technology (IT) curriculum which deals with professionalism, system development, interpersonal relationships and creativity driven out of critical thinking should be adopted. Therefore, to this end, instructors should devotedly help and guide students, particularly in lab sessions so that the students can easily comprehend and harmonize what they have learnt with their previous theoretical knowledge. These in turn enable students to use the technology in a pragmatic manner. Since, semester fees are too costly, the colleges should reduce the cost to a reasonable fee, in a bid to attract more people to the Colleges which indirectly contribute for creating a skilled IT professional. But all of them complained about the expensiveness of house rents, which in turn forced them to make semester fees so high. Here, the government is also expected to support actively, for example, by letting the private investors to build additional Colleges easily.

It is an acknowledged fact that the world is in flux. Especially, in IT area, every minute, new cutting-edge technology is invented in some corner of the world. To this end, as much as they can, IT professionals must be able to remain abreast of these changes, to understand their potentials, and to be prepared to integrate them into the operations of the Colleges. In addition, instructors, as well as the Colleges should heavily interact with Universities and professional associations.

Similarly, research works are expected to be done by creating coordination with staffs, management of the Colleges and with governmental bodies.

To facilitate the teaching learning process of the Colleges on top of the existing methodology, additional schemes must be adopted. For instance, it will be preferable and feasible if students have restricted access to servers so as to enhance the interaction between instructors and students. Since, distance should not be an obstruction to instruction; students can retrieve notes and submit assignments by directly accessing a shared folder on the server.

Besides classroom lectures, it is better for students to participate or to be exposed to educational visits to other organizations and the like so that they can learn from real-world scenarios.

Today, in the 21st century the minimal skills that will characterize the new breed of IT professionals are interpersonal and management knowledge skills, business functional knowledge, technology management knowledge and technical specialties knowledge. Therefore, to exploit the benefits driven from the current age, the above mentioned skills should be incorporated on top of the current curricula of those colleges which offer IT education in Ethiopia.

The Government should heavily participate in and encourage the designing of indigenous IT applications which are closely linked with the education and training strategies needed to allow countries to compete in the globalized world. Only then can the developmental role of IT be effectively targeted and geared toward overall development.

To sum up, seeking developmental impact through information technology adoption is a long-term enterprise. It requires building human resource capacities, not only to use but to manage the technologies within the framework of national development strategies. It also requires immense and carefully targeted financial investments. This calls both private and governmental bodies for the need to determine where investment in information should be made, how and to what end. To a large extent, options, boil down to the choices that those promoting the technologies, need to make between their interests in the short term and the long-term impact, as well as the decisions that national policy makers need to make in terms of their social and human developmental priorities. On top of this, government should cut taxes on imported computers, their accessories and all IT related equipment.

Finally, the study was conducted with many limitations, and has very limited scope. So, it is recommended that there should be other (further) studies which incorporate governmental plans and policies to assess the overall status, and relevance and make further improvement.

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Opportunities and Implications of the Higher Education Systems Overhaul (HESO) Project for the Leadership of Private HEIs in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This paper describes some of the opportunities and implications for the private higher education sector of the *Report of the Higher Education Strategy Overhaul Committee of Inquiry into Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopia's Higher Education System (HESO)*. The report draws on visits to 11 HEIs, discussions with members of the HESO team who were drawn from 8 HEIs and the Ministry of Education and evidence from 5 witnesses. It suggests that there is a window of opportunity for the private sector to increase its influence, demonstrate how it can help to meet the Government's development agenda, contribute to the higher education reforms, improve its management and leadership and in the process gain access to various public goods.

The paper analyses:

- i) what the sector can do as a whole, through its Association, for example:
 - develop as an effective lobbying body;
 - share experience, information and resources amongst members and with the public HEIs; and
 - develop and recommend a qualification framework and credit accumulation system.
- ii) what individual private HEIs need to do in order to improve:
 - strategic planning, organization and operational effectiveness;
 - communication and decision-making;
 - human resource management and staff development; and
 - systems review and cost effectiveness.
- iii) what the Government and its agencies can do to support the private sector in particular:
 - develop more incentives for the expansion and support of private HEIs; and
 - provide access to training and to QRAA and EHESI Boards.

1. Introduction

In March 2004, the Ministry of Education (MOE) set up a Higher Education Systems Overhaul (HESO) to examine the problems, challenges and ways to improve the governance, leadership and management within Ethiopia's higher education system. The committee included heads and vice heads of public and private sector institutions, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) higher education management advisors working in the Ministry of Education and in higher education institutions (HEIs) and a senior expert from the Ministry of Education. The report of the committee is about to be published (Ashcroft 2004).

The committee was set up because of concerns within the Government that its wide ranging reforms might be threatened by poor governance, leadership and management at all levels of the higher education sector. These reforms have been laid out in various MOE documents, for example, ESDP-II, (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2002a) the MOE Capacity Building Program (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2002b), the MOE's Strategic Plan 2003/4 – 2004/5 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2003a) and the Higher Education Proclamation Number 351/2003 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2003b).

In many ways, the private sector should be able to lead the way and give direction to the sector as a whole, since the focus of the reforms (greater customer-orientation, more business-like attitudes and practices, expansion of programs, institutional autonomy) is already an essential part of the way in which the private HEIs operate. The private sector is perhaps more capable of overcoming the challenges presented by these reforms and the expansion of the sector than the public universities. Because they are generally smaller, the majority of private institutions having 500 or less students (Saint 2004), they can implement and manage change more speedily and effectively: for example, private sector institutions have already established systems for financial and resource management. In addition, private sector institutions have already developed methods of identifying course-costs and income-generation that results in profit not loss; in many cases they already have active governing bodies; are less bound by Government bureaucracy; and already have experience of greater autonomy and work independently.

Of particular interest to private HEIs is the intention to expand private higher education. At present, accredited private institutions account for 24% of HE students in the country (Ministry of Education 2003). Female students account for nearly 50% of all the students (ibid). In the last year alone, student numbers in accredited private HEIs have increased by 43% (Saint 2004). Dr Teshome, the Vice Minister for Higher Education, said at a consultation meeting with Presidents of HEIs that the private sector should grow between 40 and 50% of all undergraduate student enrolment in Ethiopia within the next three years. This expansion of market share would be within a system that is set to double in the same period. Thus, if Dr Teshome's predictions are to be taken at face value, the number of students in private HE will quadruple from the present level.

Such a projected expansion has great implications for the private sector leadership. It puts private higher education in a strong negotiating position. The private sector should be organizing itself, for example to take advantage of HESO, recommendations that there should be regular meetings with the MOE so that private HEIs can influence policy and practice. These reforms and the

expansion of the higher education sector, therefore, provide a singular opportunity for the private sector to show that it is an essential part of the country's higher education capacity. It is an opportunity to show that it can help meet the challenges of an expanded system and especially provide examples of good practice that it is prepared to share and help the public sector to develop. To be credible, the private sector should demonstrate that it can provide quality education that will assist the country in meeting its development needs (see Ashcroft and Rayner 2004, also presented at this conference). In return, the private sector should expect some assistance and support from the Government and its agencies; for example, incentives in the form of tax concessions, land acquisition and ease of procurement and import of learning materials. However, these incentives can only come if the private sector can satisfy both the Government and the public that it is worthy of this assistance.

The paper discusses some of the opportunities and implications presented by the HESO report for leadership in the private sector. It is divided into three sections:

- i) what the sector can do as a whole, perhaps through its Association;
- ii) what individual private HEIs need to do; and
- iii) what the Government and its agencies can do to support the private sector.

2. Research Methodology

During the early part of 2004, we (with others) visited all six of the public universities and two of the institutions that are destined to become universities over the next two years. Five visits were undertaken on behalf of the newly established Ethiopian Higher Education Strategy Institute and Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency, and three on behalf of the Higher Education Strategy Overhaul Committee of Inquiry into Governance, Leadership and Management in Ethiopia's Higher Education System (Ashcroft 2004). During each of the visits, we conducted a series of meetings with groups of senior managers, administrative managers, academic staff, and students. In two institutions we also met the VSO Higher Education Management Advisor. An agenda was provided for each of these meetings. In all but one of the visits, we were given a tour of the site that included the library, IT facilities, student facilities, a typical classroom, a typical laboratory and other facilities. Where the institution was a multi-campus operation, these tours generally included visits to more than one site. In all but one of the institutions, we also had individual meetings with the librarian, a science instructor and the IT center manager.

Thus, the study draws on a total of 34 meetings in public sector higher education institutions, observation of facilities in seven institutions and discussion with their managers in seven institutions.

The visits generally lasted between one and three days, two days being typical. During the visits, the researchers enquired about the management, leadership, strategy and policy priorities of the institution and the challenges that they face.

During every phase of the visits, each of the researchers took detailed notes of what they were told and what they were able to observe. At the end of each visit, one of the researchers wrote up these notes into an integrated account. This account was checked and amended by the other researcher. This agreed draft version was then sent to the President or the Academic Vice President (of the Institution visited) with a request that he corrects any errors. The account was amended in the light of this feedback and became the record from which this study has drawn.

In addition, the HESO team visited three non-Ministry of Education HEIs. In two they met the senior management team, in the one other, they met members of the Board of governors and in two they met middle managers. The notes of these visits were written by other members of the HESO team.

In addition, the study draws on extensive discussions with the HESO team and on expert witnesses interviewed by the HESO study including, representatives from the Teacher Education Systems Overhaul Project, the Minister for Capacity Building, a VSO HIV/AIDS expert, three experts from Center for Higher Education Policy Studies in the University of Twente and a representative of the Ethiopian Employers' Federation. It also draws on a meeting with HEI Presidents and from written and oral feedback on the draft report given by 26 (14 from the private sector) representatives of HEIs at that meeting. In addition, it draws on reading by members of the HESO team from over 71 texts.

3. HESO Recommendations

3.1 HESO Recommendations for the Private Sector as a Whole

The HESO team reported that the work of the two new university associations, one for the public universities, the other for the private universities and colleges were of great importance in terms of being pro-active and providing an effective lobby to influence Government policy and regulations for higher education.

In particular, it was recommended that the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions should ask for and be granted regular meetings with the Ministry of Education, as well as offering regular advice to the Government and its agencies such as Ethiopian Higher Education Strategy Institute (EHESI) and the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA): for example establishing quality benchmarks within the private sector and making recommendations to the QRAA.

The Association of Private Higher Education Institutions has an opportunity to bring the private sector together and to develop and share resources and good practice. To this end, the Association could establish a support and information-sharing network for the private sector (this conference may be the start of that), such as disseminating examples of good governance, leadership and management practice and/or developing databases of resources to enable resource sharing and pooling especially for libraries, staff training and exchange. In the long run term, this might also include considering the costs and benefits of sharing the effort in the design and/or selection of an integrated management system. Private HEIs might consider employing a part-time academic secretary for the Association (perhaps a recently retired academic manager) to facilitate and coordinate this work. This would have to be paid for by a system of subscriptions by the members of the Association.

This idea of working together to develop and share information, experience and resources should not just be limited to the private sector. As was highlighted at this conference last year (Patrick 2003), one of the issues for the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions was to address the interaction between the public and private higher education sectors. How do these two sectors currently communicate with each other? Is it planned, effective and regular? If not, how can this communication be facilitated now and in the future? How can the sharing of resources across the two sectors be materialized now and in the future?

The private sector cannot rely on others (for example the MOE or the individual public universities) to implement these strategies. Although QRAA and EHESI may play a role in building bridges between the two sectors, we would suggest that the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions should lead by example and perhaps set-up initiatives that bring the two sectors together to address particular issues or run seminars or workshops (perhaps in conjunction with the association of public universities) around particular themes. These seminars and/or workshops could also include participants from other stakeholders such as employers or Government and/or its agencies.

3.1.1 Ladder of Opportunity for Learners

The private sector may wish to initiate discussions with public universities, the QRAA, the Government and other stakeholders within higher education about the possibility of developing a ladder of opportunity for learners. Such a ladder might incorporate a range of post-Grade 12 sub degree qualifications (advanced certificates after one year full-time equivalent of study and advanced diplomas after two years) and post graduate certificates and diplomas. It is suggested that these could be ‘cashed in’ towards bachelor or master's degrees (depending upon their level). Such qualifications have been found in other countries to tempt more mature students into study (see, for example, QAA 2004a). They are particularly attractive to part-time students, who may not wish to face perhaps six years of evening study to gain a degree, but who wish to upgrade their qualifications while working. Continuing professional development of this kind can make a real contribution to bridge the skills gap in Ethiopia. Such students could be a new potential sources of recruits for private higher education through their extension and distance learning programs.

The Government is more likely to accept such qualifications if they are part of a credit framework that has been designed in conjunction with the public sector and QRAA, endorsed by QRAA, and backed by EHESI research and policy recommendations. This requires the private sector organizations to band together to form an effective and organized lobby that can work on several fronts at once.

3.1.2 Accreditation of Prior Learning and Mature Students

The private sector is in a particular strong position to initiate and promote alternative models of learning; there are, for example, a range of older people who have left high school without the qualifications to enter HE, but who, through training and experience at work and through further study, now have learning and understanding at least equivalent to a high school leaving grade of 2.0. If there were a developed system for the accreditation of prior experiential and other learning, such potential students might be admitted to private and public HEIs. It is the private sector institutions, smaller and probably more flexible both in terms of curriculum and organization that are better placed to develop these initiatives. Private institutions also cater for substantially larger numbers of local students, many of whom may be unable or unwilling, to move to another part of the country to continue their education even assuming that the public universities could accommodate them.

It is also not uncommon for applicants (in other countries) who have undertaken a range of training and experience that has resulted in relevant learning to be entered into programs of higher

education with advanced standing. That is, the applicant presents a portfolio of evidence (essays, analyses, transcripts of courses attended and so on) that shows that s/he has achieved a level of learning to permit (say) direct entry into the second year of a program. Such systems of advanced standing would also allow someone who had undertaken study in one HEI to transfer into another through their course without loss of time.

A number of other countries have developed such systems and the private sector HEIs could lobby for the introduction of such schemes in Ethiopia. They would need to have the public sector HEIs, QRAA and EHESI supporting them, and so again the need is clear for an effective and organized lobby (see for example QAA 2004b).

3.2 HESO Recommendations for Individual Private HEIs

Strategic planning

The HESO report makes a number of recommendations about strategic planning that applies equally to private and public sector HEIs. It suggests that it is important to evaluate progress achieved in the previous strategic planning period and to learn from such an evaluation. Ethiopian HEIs tend to be reasonably sound in their analyses of their context, frequently undertaking SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats) analyses. But often some of the elements of a good strategic planning appear to be absent.

Ethiopian HEIs sometimes set targets but they are often too generalized and list objectives and aspirations rather than the concrete and well timed activities that will lead to specified and measurable outcomes. The HESO report suggests that SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based) targets are essential in strategic planning. This implies that real priorities are set and that the resources, critical path to completion, monitoring and evaluation systems and timing will all be part of the plan. The Council on Higher Education (2004) points to the centrality of monitoring and evolution in planning and ensuring the implementation of plans and that this should include qualitative as well as quantitative data collection so the social contribution of the HEI can be captured and policy and strategy properly informed.

Good strategic planning includes a process of risk assessment in order to identify action to mitigate those risks. Typical risks for HEIs include risks related to:

- learning and teaching systems to support excellence and the country's need for skilled labor and management;
- researching systems to support excellence and the country's development needs;

- the institution's contribution to and links with other sectors of education, the economy and society;
- ensuring fair access for under-represented groups into higher education;
- areas of strength and diversity;
- management and leadership skills at all levels;
- developing institutional, practice and procedures to support improved human resource, financial and resource management; and
- developing institutional systems and processes for the collection, archiving and analysis of data and other information.

The massification of higher education also applies to the mushrooming of private higher education institutions. The quality of many of these may be good, but there is little check to ensure minimum standards of process and output: accreditation presently focuses almost entirely on inputs. The HESO report suggests that quality and its assessment should be an important focus for the HEI's strategic planning. In another paper presented at this conference we have suggested some reasons that the private higher education sector in particular should be concerned to develop quality systems and influence the quality agenda (Ashcroft and Rayner 2004).

Some of the areas that an HEI may wish to consider within the context of its Strategic Plan are considered below. The HESO team suggests that HEIs should have a plan of action to achieve measurable improvement in each of them.

Principles to guide the organization and operation of HEIs

The HESO report suggests that HEIs should accord to good, modern organizational practice. By so operating, the institution will also develop its own management capacity and provide an example of good practice for the sector as a whole. Below are some of the principles that might guide the institution's organizational operation and structure. These are based on a range of sources, including the Business Excellence Model, the UK Management Charter Initiative (BREFI undated), the Investors in People Standard (Investors in People 2004) and Higher Education Funding Council for England good management practice guidelines (see, for example HEFCE 2000 – others can be found on the Web at www.hefce.ac.uk).

Well functioning organizations have clear line management structures, with line managers generally authorized to make all human resource and budgetary decisions, except those involving on-going expenditure beyond the current year. The line manager is held responsible to senior

managers and the head of the institution would be accountable to the governing body for these decisions. Such an arrangement would protect the institution and prevent unnecessary bureaucracy.

Effective and well managed organizations are characterized by clarity of roles and responsibilities amongst staff. With these provisions not fixed but will be adapted and redefined on an annual basis through a formal appraisal process gained through experience. This enables clarity and task focus, while ensuring that staff can develop their roles and responsibilities as they acquire experience and expertise. It also enables staff development needs to be clearly articulated by managers and members of staff themselves. Such roles and responsibilities can be defined by a system of person specification and job descriptions for each member of the staff.

Effective organizations are characterized by efficiency in the running of all meetings, including and especially the governing body and accessibility of all definitive documents and paperwork. These responsibilities are located with an individual member of the staff (in smaller organizations) or a secretariat (in larger ones). This ensures that there is only one official version of the record of business and that it is properly archived and open to all authorized staff and stakeholders. In modern organizations, such a record is kept on an internet (generally with some secure areas accessible only to staff). This system should operate within defined timescales, for instance for distributing agenda and paperwork for meetings and putting documents on the web and updating them.

Communication and Decision Making

The HESO report states that an important leadership priority should be the establishment of appropriate fora for communication with staff and students. As most of the private institutions are substantially smaller organizations than their public counterparts, there should be an area where the private institutions can easily implement good practice to be shared with the public institutions. Such fora may include collective meetings with staff and student bodies, formal representation groups of staff and students that regularly discuss issues with management, line manager meetings with groups of their staff and regular one-to-one meetings between line managers and the staff. The HESO report further discusses the development of a variety of means of communication: such as newsletters, open reports of all meetings must be kept in accessible places and committees and groups.

Formal systems allow staff opinion, ideas and creativity to be expressed. In addition, clear communication channels enable staff at all levels to understand decisions, priorities and plans. In smaller institutions, it is easy to assume that this can happen informally, but there are dangers that some voices may not be heard, it may be unclear where or when decisions are made, matters may be raised but not resolved, and so on. HEIs may find it more effective to have a formal consultative structure, with meetings of the staff scheduled, with an agenda and minutes making it clear which papers were received what matters were noted, what matters were left to be resolved at another meeting, what actions were required by whom and by when and what decisions were recommended to the senior management.

If communication is to be effective, focused and two-way, it is important that decision-making bodies review their operation and consider means of improving their focus on terms of reference and efficiency of operation and reporting.

Effective organizations are characterized by openness and transparency. Such openness implies that potential conflicts of interest are declared at meetings. Papers are open to all staff unless declared confidential and all open documents are stored to make them easily accessible, for instance on an internet. Such openness also implies that the organization operates in an ethical way and that it has policies to ensure equality of opportunity and the equitable treatment of staff and clients. In the Ethiopian context, the principles of ethical public life adopted by the MOE and other government agencies might be a starting point (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2001).

There is also a need for the private sector to communicate effectively with the outside community. In another paper presented at this conference the researchers suggest some of the ways in which the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions may be able to promote the private sector through such measures as an annual report or publishing performance indicators (PIs) for the sector (Ashcroft and Rayner 2004).

Human Resource Management

The HESO document has much to say about human resource management, for example, in relation to the appointment of senior staff such as Presidents and Vice-Presidents. One of the jobs of the leaders within the institution, and particularly governing body members, is to determine the tenure and processes and criteria for their appointment. The process is full of risks. These may be reduced if certain steps are taken. The first of these is to develop the vital person's statistics on and to consider carefully which qualifications, experience, skills, qualities and so on are really essential

for these posts and which are desirable. For instance, it is unlikely that a senior manager could perform adequately in the post without considerable prior experience of management, budgets, people, academic programs and quality. So, such experience should be specified as essential. They may not need to be an ICT expert, so it is probably a desirable rather than essential qualifications for the post that they can manipulate spreadsheets and data bases. Governing bodies and others within the private HEI sector may find it useful to consider the features of good managers when designing person specifications.

Good higher education managers will act in educationally and morally defensible ways. This requires some courage. It means that they see tackling poor performance as a moral imperative, since it will affect the lives and opportunities of staff and students. They will seek to establish open and transparent processes and in particular root out corrupt practices and conflicts of interest. They will establish systems that ensure that the weakest members of the academic community are protected and do not suffer unfair treatment: so for instance, they will ensure that systems are in place to ensure that students are not exploited or abused and that their work is fairly assessed. A respect for all members of the academic, administrative and student community is basic to the ethos of higher education and can only be achieved with conscious attention to non-discrimination. In the Ethiopian context, this implies that, in addition to gender, regional affiliation, ethnicity and disability, attention is paid to non-discriminatory policies for students and staff with HIV/AIDS.

Good managers will also pay attention to the goals and purposes of higher education. The government, students and their families, and other stakeholders invest time and money on higher education in order to secure certain societal, economic and social benefits. These require the academic manager to have clear objectives and achieve integration with institution's mission and strategic planning. It requires skill, knowledge and experience for a manager to recognize the key change drivers for the institution and identify external factors such as legal changes and developments in best practice and explore with colleagues their implications for the institution. Such analysis requires the manager to identify what has been done in the past, what has been worked, what not, draw lessons and set clear goals/targets/priorities.

The HESO team suggests that virtually all HEIs, whether public or private, will need to develop better human resource practices to cover all staff. Those processes that need consideration include appraisal, evaluation, job specification, disciplinary procedures, differential rewards, training and employing students to extend the range and opening times of services.

Whatever happens, it is inevitable that Ethiopian HEIs will face an acute shortage of staff, particularly academic staff, within the next couple of years. The expansion in higher education means that there will not be sufficient post graduates emerging from Ethiopia's HEIs to satisfy demand, irrespective of high pay (Saint 2004). This means that HEIs must prepare to meet staff shortages. They should start immediately developing more economical methods of learning and teaching that increase the ratio of student learning to staff effort (i.e. student-centered learning). There are a number of countries that have already tackled this problem and their experience can be drawn on (see for example, Ashcroft and Foreman Peck 1994). HEI leaders will need to understand that such methods require savings to be made elsewhere in order to enable an investment in libraries, pedagogic training and ICT.

The introduction of staff appraisal can be controversial but has been found to be a useful management tool that is recommended in the HESO report. Where the introduction is gradual and developmental, success and staff support are more likely to ensue. This implies that a developmental model of staff appraisal that separates the disciplinary process from appraisal should be adopted.

Among the risks of human resource management is the possibility of professional misconduct or poor performance within the institution. This can be particularly pertinent to private sector institutions which may be more susceptible to accusations of bribery or awarding inappropriately high grades to (fee-paying) students. The performance of an organization can be seriously threatened by the inappropriate performance of individual members of staff. To minimize this, institution should develop disciplinary policies and procedures to enable it to manage unprofessional, marginal or poor performance of staff. It will need to develop a process of identification of poor performance the presentation of evidence of such marginal or poor performance to the staff member the rights of the staff member to representation at each stage in the process the method of assessment and presentation of the staff member with performance targets and timescales for their achievement; rules for subsequent disciplinary action; and the rights of the staff member facing a severe sanction such as dismissal or final written warning to have access to the governing body for the purpose of appeal.

The poor, corrupt or biased performance of management and governing staff can present an even greater threat to an organization's strategic aims and objectives than the poor performance of staff at lower levels. For this reason, in most modern organizations there are mechanisms to protect whistle blowers (except those acting from malice). The institution should develop and adopt a

whistle blowing policy, with clear rules to protect against malicious complaints, but providing a safe and anonymous channel for staff (or students) to make complaints (perhaps to a designated, independent, member of the governing body). Such complaints should be sensitively investigated and recriminations against the complainant be prohibited.

Management and Co-ordination of Staff Development

The management and co-ordination of staff development must be seen as an integral part of the management arrangements of the institution and reflect the principles of best practice. Clarity about the process of staff development should ensure equity and transparency. Resources should follow institutional need. Staff development needs should, where possible, be met from within the internal capability of the institution. Where this is not possible or appropriate the use of external resources may be considered.

As has been noted previously (Wondwossen 2003) staff development for the private sector is a particularly pertinent issue. The Government at present seems reluctant to use public resources to support private sector development and is unwilling to open up its various training initiatives to members of the private sector, although HESO recommends that a quota of places on courses and other training and development opportunities should be allocated to non-public HEIs which have achieved pre-accreditation or accreditation. This allocation could occur through the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions.

The private sector is currently excluded from one of the main training activities being undertaken for teacher-educators, the Higher Diploma Program. It is also unclear how the private sector will link up with the Government's plan for all public HEIs to have their own pedagogic resource centers (PRCs). Many of the individual private HEIs will also be too small to be able to undertake any substantial staff development on their own. It is perhaps more cost-effective and therefore more realistic if the private sector considers sharing its staff development programs, perhaps coordinated through its Association.

Whoever coordinates, this activity should consult widely with representatives from different institutions, faculties, departments, trade unions and staff generally. We have suggested above that a secretariat should be established to contribute to the monitoring, evaluation and validation of activities and report annually on the scope and development of the activities and achievements to the individual HEIs and the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions.

Staff development should promote a learning organization culture and take various forms:

- In-house courses, workshops/on the job training/seminars/distance/open learning arrangements and materials including virtual learning;
- Secondment/study leave/placements;
- Participation in the wider academic and professional community;
- Individual and joint projects, including for example research;
- Study for vocational qualifications/professional qualifications;
- Working party membership/task groups;
- Counselling, coaching or mentoring; and
- External activities/conferences/courses.

Reviewing Systems and Achieving Resource Efficiency

As noted at last year's conference (Samuel 2003), many private HEIs have better developed financial and resource management systems than public HEIs. They are more business-focused: their entire existence depends upon their financial probity and security, so they have made this a priority. Since most, if not all, of their income comes from student fees and they lack access to other support in terms of funding or donation, private higher education institutions are particularly exposed to whims of market forces and fashion, for instance in the students' choice of subject to study. There are therefore opportunities for public higher education institutions to work with, and learn from, the private sector about market-responsiveness.

Where resources are limited, there needs to be a greater sharing of these resources to ensure that they are used to the maximum. This may mean that departments and faculties have to cooperate to ensure that they share the same facility, rather than expecting separate facilities. This may mean that, where opportunities exist, institutions can work with other private institutions or with the local business and public community to share resources. HEIs themselves should be resources for their local communities.

The HESO team notes that the private sector appears to be less wasteful with regard to administrative staffing than the public sector. This is not however to say that efficiencies cannot be achieved. It is suggested that every HEI undertakes an asset audit and analyses the use of each asset to determine whether it might be used more intensively (for instance, by extending opening hours of facilities). The HESO report goes further and suggests that the University associations analyze what economies and efficiencies might be made possible by sharing resources, training or planning across institutions.

HESO Recommendations to the Government and its Agencies in Relation to the Private Sector

As it has been highlighted previously (Wondwossen 2003), it is reasonable that the private sector should expect something in return for implementing the proposals outlined above. The HESO report echoes demands that the Government should provide stronger incentives for the expansion of private tertiary education: for example, access to land; more generous and streamlined custom exemptions for importing educational materials; access to the distribution of benefits such as ‘soft’ loans, scholarships and land between private and public institutions; and also extend quality-enhancing support to private institutions identified as needing improvement. The HESO report also suggests that the government considers to partially subsidize tuition for learners in the existing private higher education institutions, provided that they met a certain quality threshold.

What is also currently missing from the private sector is sufficient on-going access to development and training for managers in private sector institutions. Since a significant proportion of Ethiopia’s graduates come from such institutions, and since this proportion is likely to grow in the future, it is important that they should be well governed, managed and led. Both EHESI and QRAA have proposed that representatives from private HEIs participate in the training and other activities proposed for the establishment of the two organizations. These include, for example, facilitating capacity building tours, locally or abroad, to enable institutional managers from both public and private institutions and to learn from international experience of such issues as human resources management, quality assurance, change management, communication and empowerment as well as looking at systems for consultancy, research and enterprise.

There is some concern about the rapid expansion of the private sector and about the sustainability and continuity of the private institutions. The public needs a guarantee that the educational activities of the private institutions cannot be terminated without realizing the possibility for the current learners to finish their education. The government has to put in place mechanisms by which the stability of private institutions are ensured and continue to be ‘public goods’. Private HEIs should be accountable for the provision of these public goods but equally they need Government and its agencies’ support.

Two representatives of the private sector will also be members of the board of the QRAA (see the Higher Education Proclamation Article 84) and it is proposed that they will be represented on the Board of EHESI. HESO has proposed a Steering Committee to be set up to oversee the implementation of the HESO recommendation and one or more representatives from the private sector should be part of the Steering Committee.

4. Conclusions

The Government of Ethiopia has set out very ambitious targets for the expansion and reform of its higher education system and it recognizes that this cannot be achieved by the public sector alone. It is, for example, the private sector that is currently meeting the MOE's targets in relation to female enrolment and the development of distance-learning (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2002b and 2003a, see also Saint 2004). The Ministry of Education is also aware that the sector as a whole needs to be overhauled in terms of its governance, leadership and management.

In each of the cases above, HESO recommendations clear the way for innovative thinking and new ways of extending learner opportunities that private HEIs might be particularly well equipped to manage, see for example last year's conference paper on distance-learning (Ayalew 2003). This implies that private HEIs have a window of opportunity. The length of time that HESO is considered to be a priority by Government is unpredictable, but in three or four years time another aspect of education may be rising up the agenda and the opportunity for private higher education to create such opportunity may be lost or diminished – time is of the essence.

Many of these suggestions and recommendations are not new, the private HEIs have been discussing the role of the private institutions in Ethiopia's higher education sector, to our knowledge for at least a year but probably for much longer than that. However, the changes and reforms currently being implemented by the MOE present the private sector with a singular opportunity to demonstrate that it is an essential part of the country's higher education capacity. The private sector is already ahead of the public HEIs in many respects. It should be in a position to offer advice and guidance to the sector as a whole. This, however, depends on the private sector being seen not only to offer quality education but also by being pro-active, innovative and prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges presented by the HESO team's recommendations.

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The Role of Private Higher Education Institutions towards Strengthening ICT in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a critical success factor for economic, political and social development. Those who have access to information at the right time with high level of accuracy could cope up with the underlying changes in market demands, new products and new technologies. Due to this, information has turned out to be the key resource. Information and Communication Technology has become the key technology. In spite of this fact, like many of the less developed countries, the development of ICT in Ethiopia is at its infant stage. One of the challenges in ICT development in Ethiopia is lack of human resource, which in turn is the result of lack of academic institutions in this area.

Unlike other training programs, this program presupposes substantial investment in ICT infrastructure for which public institution couldn't solely afford. Hence, although some of the public institutions like Addis Ababa University have shown significant developments in this regard, the demand for ICT training programs has persisted and has drawn the attention of PHEIs. As a result, a number of private colleges have launched training programs in this area. Therefore, this paper strives to pinpoint the role of PHEIs in promoting ICT development in Ethiopia. It attempted to assess the ICT training programs offered by some selected PHEIs together with their intake capacities. To achieve the stated objectives, the study utilized secondary and primary data from selected higher education institutions and analyzed the data through descriptive statistics.

In line with this objective, results of this study have shown that there is a high demand for ICT training programs although there is limited space for applicants in public institutions. For instance, out of the total 3,858 applicants for the 2004/2005 SIST (School of Information Science and Technology) program of the Addis Ababa University, only 10.4% of the total number of applicants have secured admission in both Computer Science and Information Science programs in the day as well as evening programs. Thus, the need for other alternative institutions seems a necessity. To this end, PHEIs are offering options and hence playing vital roles through filling the gap between the demand and provision of these training programs. The outcome of this study has also indicated that the growth of PHEIs is in favor of ICT training programs. This is confirmed through a consistent growth in the percentage share of enrolments in ICT training programs in the last four years in all the PHEIs covered in this study. Hence, it is plausible to conclude that PHEIs are playing a vital role in the struggle to transform the nation to the Information Society.

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Human development proceeds in three stages; namely: agrarian, industrial and information society in their respective order. So, just as industrial society replaced agrarian society, the information society is replacing industrial society. In information society, which is today's modern society, the main activity is to produce information via research and development, to process information through studying and teaching, and finally to distribute information using communication technologies. As a result, information has become the key resource, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) the key technology.

The development of information and communications technologies (ICT) in developed countries has brought an extra-ordinary growth of information. This information boom enables multinational companies to compete with changes in market demands, new products and new technologies, which in turn can boost the economy of a country, increase its efficiency and win global dominance.

The third world countries have difficulties to seek, to receive, to process and to produce information due to their limited capacity to manage information. The lack of appropriate information at the right time will result in low productivity, low quality research works, and waste of time to pursue information and even to do research, which actually had been done by others or, in other countries.

Ethiopia, as a developing country should have a great concern on this deficiency and efforts have to be made so that the digital divide could be reduced or there will be an economic recovery. In fact, it is a matter of survival. To this end, Ethiopia seems aware of the seriousness of the information technology gap, which could be confirmed by the fact that a number of measures are being taken that enables to launch and accelerate information production, transmission, management and handling of information.

ICT human resource development is one of the key factors that could significantly contribute to the development of communications and information technologies. Among other things, lack of skilled manpower in ICT is one of the factors that have hindered the development of ICT in Ethiopia.

Although computers are deployed in many of the public and private organizations, in most cases due to lack of skilled manpower, computers are being used for basic computing works like word-processing. This is to say that, in spite of the tremendous power of computers to process

information, many of these organizations are not utilizing their computer systems for high-end value-added applications like information systems (MIS, DSS), databases, personnel management systems, accounting and budgeting and so on. In this respect, results of a survey conducted have revealed that as much as 83% of the capacity of a PC is often underutilized (Lishan Adem 1999).

To meet this demand, public universities like Addis Ababa University are offering ICT training programs at diploma, degree and Masters levels. Moreover, apart from a number of private computer training centers mainly involved in the basic level training and a number of business organizations like the banks providing in-house and out-house computer training to their staff, the private sector involvement in this area is growing significantly. This could be witnessed by the fact that private colleges that provide ICT training programs are mushrooming and even the existing institutions are strengthening their ICT programs in intake capacity as well as a variety of programs.

1.2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which Private Higher Education Institutions are contributing towards strengthening ICT with particular emphasis on the ICT human resource development. Accordingly, the roles that have been played and will be expected from those institutions in this area will be thoroughly examined. It also strives to include reference to what works in similar circumstances, and to formulate its recommendations on that basis.

2. Research Methodology and Data Sources

This study made of primary and secondary data collected from five higher education institutions: four from the private sector while the other one is from the public sector. The sampling technique used to identify the higher educations that would be covered in this study is on the basis of non-probability sampling. The institutions are selected based on the preference of the researcher. Moreover, relevant literature in the area of ICT and education was reviewed. In order to collect data from the aforementioned sources both questionnaire and interviews were employed. To process the data, descriptive statistics that incorporates percentages, ratios and other models was employed. In doing so, SSPS computer package was used. Then, the results of these statistical tools and techniques were interpreted, and thus findings as well as conclusions are forwarded accordingly.

3. Literature Review

Since the emergence of computer, the role which this machine could play has changed rapidly and drastically. Based on the role that computers might act upon, different terms are coined and

introduced to describe the phenomena. The terms Information Technology (IT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are among these that are related with the application of computers in the day-to-day life of human beings. These terms may be different things for different people. Some may use these terms interchangeably, while others might think as different concepts that refer to different world. In this regard, it seems plausible to make a distinction between these jargons before we dive into the discussion of the theme.

IT refers to the hardware, software and skills that surround a single stand-alone computer or laptop. Hardware refers to the physical components of a computer such as printers, scanners, CD-ROM, DVD drive and so forth. Whereas software is associated with the set of instructions such as word processors, spreadsheets, databases, and packages. Hence, IT refers to the lowest level of involvement in the use of computer technology for performing tasks (Nance, 2003).

However, the notion of information and communications technology (ICT) incorporates the networking of computers together. This allows computers to do stand-alone type tasks more effectively, in so far as it potentially makes available a wider range of shared software held centrally on servers and can make management of the system easier and more efficient. The key to ICT, however, is in the possibilities for communication, both within and between institutions (Nance, 2003). Moreover, in the case of ICT, your computer is linked to other computers and you have access to the Internet, email, etc. Thus, the convergence of telecommunications, information technology, broadcast media and Internet-based information exchange has facilitated the emergence of more accessible formal, continuing, and life-long learning opportunities, and this phenomenon is termed as ICT.

Progress in ICT is changing the way people live, work and do business, study and do research, and are entertained. The cumulative effect of these changes have brought the transformation of industrial society to information society where information is the most important resource and ICT is a principal means of production.

The term Information Society is coined to describe a society characterized by a high level of information intensity in the everyday life of most citizens i.e., in their personal life as well as in their work environment through the use of modern technology for a wide range of personal, social, educational and business activities. It also embraces the ability of citizens to transmit, receive and exchange digital data rapidly between places irrespective of distance (IBM Community Development Foundation, 1997).

Therefore, in order to become a member of the modern society, one must know and apply ICT, which can be used in almost every aspect of human civilization. Even, there is a hope for less developed countries that ICTs may help countries to leapfrog the development process by moving directly to an information-driven society without passing through the industrial stage if they take the proper steps. Otherwise, the developing world will never close the gap (United Nations General Assembly, 2002).

Thus, to explore the potential of ICT for development and to diffuse this potential to the public at large, it seems inevitable to train qualified ICT human resource in large numbers. Development of ICT human resources requires a new profile of labor forces, that is, the ability to adapt, adopt and exploit new technologies and to manage the change where skills and knowledge learned can be applied. In countries like Ethiopia where the penetration of computers is almost non-existent, capacity-building programs should be tailored to the need of ICT needs. The training of ICT specialists has to be the foremost concern for both the public and the private institutions because it holds the potential to enable realization of the benefit from the Information Society.

According to Lishan Adam (1999), one of the persistent challenges to the growth of information technology in Ethiopia is lack of well established academic institutions that take step as source of study in information and communication technology. Some of the academic departments of the public higher institutions offer specialized courses in ICT related area. Currently, Addis Ababa University offers Bsc. and Msc. degree programs in ICT via the Department of Electrical Engineering, Department of Information Science and Department of Computer Science. More recently, the Addis Ababa Commerce College and other Universities in different regions are also running degree programs in business information system and computer science respectively.

Despite the existence of these departments and training programs, lack of ICT specialists is still observable. Lishan Adam (1999) has noted that because of lack of academic institutions in this area, the country faces the utmost shortage of ICT human resource. Indigenous efforts on systems development, system analysis and design, network development, application developments have been very limited.

However, the establishment of a private higher education institutions such as HILCOE, Microlink, St. Mary's, Admas, Unity University-college and the like have shown a significant potential for the expansion of education and training in information and communication technology in Ethiopia, especially, in software development field. These institutions are increasing not only their intake

capacity but also in the level and diversity of their ICT training programs. Of course, it is worthwhile to mention that among the private colleges established so far, most of them do have one or more ICT training programs. The role of private higher education institution, especially, in ICT training programs is indispensable because of the fact that this program demands significant investment in ICT infrastructure, which could not be solely affordable by the public institutions due to scarcity of resources.

PHEIs offer various educational programs often not available in the public institutions. This provides access to increasing number of students who might otherwise not be admitted to tertiary education. These institutions enable a significant augmentation of higher education enrollments and hence share the cost that could have been incurred by the government. In fact, PHEIs provide client-oriented and flexible programs focused on the changing needs of the job market (The World Bank, 2003).

In addition, the private institutions represent significant portion of enrollments in certain training programs. For instance, according to the report of the World Bank (2003), PHEIs train three out of four business students and also three out of four computer science students enrolled in the country. The report has also revealed that PHEIs train half of all law students. Moreover, recently, some graduates of private colleges have established a new software services firm that earns foreign exchange through the international sale of its services the report noted.

5. Results and Discussion

This section is devoted to process and analyze the data collected from the selected public and private higher education institutions. First, an overview of ICT training programs in PHEIs was presented to see the extent to which these institutions are providing different options. The demand for ICT training programs is also assessed in this section of the report. Besides, a sub section is devoted to assess the percentage share of the enrolment of students in ICT and non-ICT training programs in the institutions under investigation. Finally, an overview of the ICT infrastructure of these institutions is also incorporated in this section.

5.1. ICT training Programs in PHEIs: An Overview

In the last few years, a number of PHEIs were established and they have been running diverse programs, which include ICT training programs. Since most of the PHEIs are often engaged in client-oriented and flexible training programs that are focused on the changing needs of the labor market, the ICT training programs that are being offered in private institutions are either not available or are in short supply in public higher education institutions.

Table 5.1: *ICT Training programs offered by the PHEIs covered in this study*

ICT Training programs	Degree	Diploma
Information Technology		✓
Management Information Systems	✓	
Software Development & Networking	✓	
Database Management	✓	
System Integration	✓	
Software Development	✓	
Networking & Telecommunications	✓	
Information & Communication Technology	✓	
Computer science		✓
Software Engineering	✓	
Computer Engineering	✓	
Accounting Information Systems	✓	

Table 5.1 portrays the ICT training programs offered by the four PHEIs covered in this study. It is indicated that most of the programs are inclined towards the field of software development. Of course, the degree program of these institutions offers diverse options for applicants, whereas the diploma program comprises only two programs namely computer Science and Information Technology. This circumstance might reveal the fact that PHEIs are steadily transforming themselves to the degree programs via offering diverse options. In fact, most of the ICT training programs that are being offered by PHEIs under consideration are quite different from the ICT training programs that are offered by their counterparts. Hence, this ensures that private institutions are offering alternatives rather than duplicating the existing ones.

5.2 The Demand for ICT Training Programs

Nowadays, the demand for ICT training programs is continuously increasing due to the increase in the awareness of the society in ICT. Every year, a number of applicants are registered for these programs, but due to limited intake capacity of public academic institutions, students are forced either to join programs in which they are less interested or to go to the PHEIs or to defer their study. To justify this fact, reviewing the total number of applicants and those who secured admission for the SIST (School of Information Science and Technology) program of Addis Ababa University could suffice.

Table 5.2: *Number of applicants and those who secured admission for the SIST program of Addis Ababa University for the year 2004/2005*

Type of program	Program	Number of applicant		No. Admission		Percentage of admitted students From applicants
		Female	Male	Female	Male	
Computer science	Day	127	554	13	87	14.7%
Computer science	Evening	254	1281	14	86	6.5%
Information Science	Day	178	290	32	68	21.4%
Information Science	Evening	452	722	36	64	8.5%
Total		1011	2847	95	305	10.4%

Source: *Addis Ababa University, Registrar office*

The above table reveals the number of applicants and those who secured admission for the SIST program of Addis Ababa University for the 2004/2005 academic years. This table indicates that out of the total, 3858 applicants only 400, which accounts for 10.4% of the total number of applicants, have secured admission in both Computer Science and Information Science programs in the day as well as evening programs. This seems a good indicator to show the existence of chronic demand for ICT training programs as well as the restricted intake capacity of public higher education institutions in this realm. Here, what is important is, although SIST is one of the programs in AAU, unlike other programs, students are expected to pay 70 birr per credit hour, which is almost the same as the tuition fees in private higher educations. This indicates that students are ready to pay if they are sure that adequate knowledge could be acquired and accredited credential could be earned.

Therefore, the role of PHEIs is not an addition to the existing public institutions; rather it is to absorb the abundant training seekers who cannot be accommodated by the public institutions. In other words, unless the PHEIs are in the position to provide a room to absorb the excess demand, the fate of those applicants who could not get a chance to be admitted in public higher educations will be regrettable. This fact magnifies the indispensable role of PHEIs in providing alternatives for potential citizens. Specially in the Ethiopian context, the role of PHEIs becomes very crucial as the public institutions are blamed for their rigid programs and limited intake capacities particularly in ICT programs.

In these institutions, once a program is designed, regardless of the demand for such a program, the program will be persistently offered. As a result, programs with utmost demand will not have a room. However, in the case of PHEIs, the story is quite different; it is usually market-driven. Thus, students could be trained based on their preference and programs with high demand will have a space to accommodate those students.

Table 5.3: Enrolment of students of Addis Ababa University (AAU) in ICT and non-ICT programs from 2000/2001- 2003/2004

Year	AAU								Percentage Share of ICT
	ICT programs				Non - ICT programs				
	Diploma	Degree	Post graduate	Total	Diploma	Degree	Post graduate	Total	
2003/04	129	796	90	1015	5928	6155	1052	13135	7.2%
2002/03	43	293	76	412	2243	4123	840	7206	5.4%
2001/02	153	1037	24	1214	2030	2295	466	4791	20.2%
2000/01	130	214	24	368	3243	1058	453	4754	7.2%

Source: Addis Ababa University, Registrar office

Table 2 portrays the enrolment of students of Addis Ababa University in ICT and non-ICT programs from 2000/2001- 2003/2004. As it can be seen from this table, the enrolment rate in ICT training programs is very low in spite of its significant importance for economic, social and political developments of the country. In the year 2001/02, the percentage share of students in ICT programs accounts for 20.2% of the total enrolment of the University. This unforeseen rise in enrolment in ICT training programs is attributed to the opening of new program, that is SIST, which already took about 723 students during the indicated year.

On the other hand, the years 2000/01 and 2003/04 have shown the same percentage share although this is ironic as the University claims that it is expanding its ICT training programs. Actually, the total number of enrolment in ICT program in the year 2003/04 is much higher than in the year 2000/01. However, since the university's expansion program in the non-ICT training programs has increased substantially, then this has lowered the percentage share. Finally, in the year 2002/03 the percentage share is 5.4% and this is the lowest rate recorded in the last four years.

Table 5.4: Enrollment of students In AAU and PHEIs

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Enrolment of students in ICT and non-ICT programs and Percentage Share of ICT From the Total Enrolment</i>												<i>Weighted Average Percentage Share of ICT</i>
	<i>2003/04</i>			<i>2002/03</i>			<i>2001/02</i>			<i>2000/01</i>			
	<i>ICT</i>	<i>Non-ICT</i>	<i>% Share</i>	<i>ICT</i>	<i>Non-ICT</i>	<i>% Share</i>	<i>ICT</i>	<i>Non-ICT</i>	<i>% Share</i>	<i>ICT</i>	<i>Non-ICT</i>	<i>% Share</i>	
AAU	1015	13135	7.2%	412	7206	5.4%	1214	4791	20.2%	368	4754	7.2%	9.2%
College A	391	1810	17.8%	284	2071	12.1%	98	728	1.2%	0	1557	0%	9.9%
College B	594	2319	20.4%	323	2253	12.50%	214	3000	6.7%	0	1025	0%	11.6%
College C	2383	3819	38.4%	820	1870	30.5%	953	2904	24.7%	748	2700	21.7%	30.3%
College D	798	32	96.2%	925	347	72.7%	1027	498	67.3%	665	499	57.1%	71.1%

Table 5.4 depicts the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs from the total enrolment in each higher institution in the last four years. In this table, the ICT column refers to the number of students enrolled in the ICT training programs, which encompasses diploma, degree and masters (only for AAU) levels, in each year in the corresponding institutions. The non-ICT field stands for the total enrolment in the programs, which are different from ICT related training programs. On the other hand, the '% share' column represents the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs from the total enrolment in all programs in each year in the corresponding higher education institutions. The Weighted Average Percentage Share of ICT column seems self explanatory, which refers to the weighted average percentage share of the enrollment in ICT training programs in the last four years.

As shown in the same table, in all the private higher education institutions there is persistent growth in the percentage share of ICT enrolment from the total enrolment in each institution. The outcome has also revealed that in the last four years the weighted average percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs is 26.9 percent. In contrast, as it can be observed from the same table the growth of the percentage share of ICT program, enrolment in AAU has declined over the last four years although there is a significant growth in the total number of students enrolled in all programs in each year. In fact, the weighted average percentage share of ICT enrolment of the university accounts 9.2 percent. This indicates that from 100 students of the university 9 of them are in ICT training programs.

Table 5.5: Growth rate of percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage Share of Enrolment in ICT Training Programs in each Institution</i>				
	<i>AAU</i>	<i>College A</i>	<i>College B</i>	<i>College C</i>	<i>College D</i>
2000/01	7.2%	0%	0%	21.7%	57.1%
2001/02	20.2%	1.2%	6.7%	24.7%	67.3%
2002/03	5.4%	12.1%	12.5%	30.5%	72.7%
2003/04	7.2%	17.8%	20.4%	38.4%	96.2%
Growth rate in Log Linear (%)	-13.2	134.8	55.7	19.2	16.4
Significance Level	0.706	0.249	0.044	0.007	0.027

Table 5.5 shows the growth rate of the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs from the total enrolment in each higher education institution in the last four years. To ensure the statistical significance of the growth of the percentage share, a test was applied and results of this statistical test has shown that among the five higher education institutions included in this study, the growth of the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs of the three institutions were found to be statistically significant. As it can be seen from the table in College B, every year

the percentage share is growing at a rate of 55.7 percent, whereas in College C and College D the percentage share is growing at a rate of 19.2 and 16.4 percents respectively per annum.

All the same, the growth rate of the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs in AAU and in College A was found to be insignificant. This indicates that these institutions are not responding positively to the ever-growing demand of ICT training in the country. Particularly, in the case of AAU, the growth rate is not only insignificant but also its sign is negative, which reveals a decline over the last four years.

To sum up, although the growth rate of the percentage share of enrolment in ICT training program in one of the PHEIs covered in this study was found to be insignificant, the outcome of this study has indicated that the growth of PHEIs is in favor of ICT training programs. This is confirmed through a consistent growth in the percentage share of enrolments in ICT training programs in the last four years in the remaining PHEIs covered in this study.

ICT infrastructure

ICT infrastructure is the most important resource required in offering ICT training programs. The lack of ICT infrastructure is one of the constraints that might hamper the expansion of ICT training programs in most of the academic institutions. Moreover, it has a significant impact in the quality of education in ICT training programs.

Table 5.6: ICT infrastructure of some selected PHEIs

Institutions	Total Number of computer Laboratory	Total Number of computers in Laboratories	Average Number of computers in each Laboratory	Local Area Networks (LAN)	Internet Access	Capacity of lab at a time in percent from total students
AAU	19	475	25	Yes	Leased line	2.8
College A	8	160	20	On progress	Dialup	6.5
College B	9	180	20	Yes	Leased line	5.2
College C	12	300	25	10 Labs	Leased line	6
College D	8	111	14	8 Labs	Leased line	8.6

In the light of the above table, the ICT infrastructure in the PHEIs covered in this study has revealed that efforts are being made to equip their programs with the necessary ICT infrastructures. For instance, out of the four PHEIs, have already developed Local Area Networks and with regard to Internet, they are already connected through Leased Line three of them. As a result, students as well as staff members of these institutions would have an extensive access to the

Internet. The fourth institution is also currently developing a LAN, which is supposed to encompass all computers in its computer laboratories. Nevertheless, the type of Internet connection of this institution is dialup, which offers a limited access to the Internet. As a result, although so many computers would be connected to the network, the functionality of the network for Internet service would not be visible. Thus, students and staff members of this institution would have a limited access to the Internet.

It has also been learnt that one of the PHEIs included in this study has already established an Internet café that encompasses about 40-70 computers and was functional for the last couple of years. Students, staff members and other individuals could use this café at reasonable price. Actually, the institution charges only 0.08 cents per minute, which is much lesser than the price being charged in the prevailing Internet cafés in the city. This seems a very important deed as it contributes a lot in the teaching and learning process of the institution. Moreover, it would also have a significant role in increasing the number of Internet users in the country and thereby exploit the potential of ICT. As a result, one could envisage the extent to which PHEIs could contribute in acquainting its with such technologies if such gears could be provided in other similar institutions.

According to the standard set by the Ministry of Education, institutions could secure accreditation among other things if their computer laboratories could accommodate 20 percent (for TVET and 25 percent for degree programs) of the total students in the institution assuming that two students could use one computer. Considering this standard, PHEIs are by far below the standard as can be seen from the table. However, what is surprising is that the AAU itself is even below the figures indicated in all the PHEIs covered in this study. In other words, the PHEIs are much better than AAU in terms of their computer facilities against the number of students they have.

In general, although efforts have to be made to strengthen their ICT infrastructure, the prevailing ICT infrastructure seems to be promising. Basically, the ICT infrastructure is designed and developed as a prerequisite for the ICT training programs; however, the infrastructure would have additional benefits such as providing various services to the community of each institution. For instance, students and teachers would become Internet users and they will also introduce themselves to the current technologies. As a result, these institutions could play an important role in disseminating information and technology to their community. Hence, they could have a positive impact on the effort to transform the nation to the information society.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

So far an attempt has been made to assess the role of PHEIs towards promoting ICT in Ethiopia with particular emphasis on ICT training program. Thus, the outcome of the study has shown that in the last four years, the enrolment in ICT training programs has persistently increased significantly which in turn justifies that PHEIs are playing an essential role in mitigating the shortage of skilled humanpower in this field. Based on the findings of the study, the following remarks are made.

- ❖ The demand for ICT training programs is continuously increasing due to improvements of awareness of the society in ICT. Every year, a great number of applicants are registered for these programs. But due to limited intake capacity in the public academic institutions, students are forced either to join programs in which they are less interested or to go to the PHEIs or to defer their study.
- ❖ As compared to the ICT training programs in AAU, the ICT training programs of PHEIs offer diverse options for applicants. Hence, PHEIs are emerging as institutions that offer specializations in various programs that are not available in their counterparts.
- ❖ In all the private higher education institutions, there is persistent growth in the percentage share of ICT enrolment from the total enrolment in each institution. The outcome has also revealed that in the last four years the weighted average percentage share of enrolment in ICT training programs is 26.9 percent. In contrast to this, the growth of the percentage share of ICT program enrolment in AAU has declined over the last four years although there is a significant growth in the total number of students enrolled in all programs in each year.
- ❖ The ICT infrastructure in the PHEIs covered in this study has revealed that efforts are being made to equip their programs with the necessary ICT infrastructure. Although efforts have to be made to strengthen their ICT infrastructure, the prevailing ICT infrastructure in the PHEIs seems to be promising.
- ❖ It is indicated that most of the ICT training programs in PHEIs are inclined towards the field of software development. However, there are other fields, which are left untouched like Networking and Communication, Hardware, Information Science, etc, which are equally important. Thus, PHEIs should look into these fields in order to further diversify their training program.
- ❖ Although this study has come out with results that justify the inevitable role of PHEIs in strengthening ICT in Ethiopia through mitigating the lack of skilled humanpower in ICT in the market, the quality of education should not be taken for granted. Therefore,

potential researchers could assess the quality of education in the ICT training programs of the PHEIs.

- ❖ The public ICT literacy in developing countries particularly in Ethiopia is very low. To be more specific, the ICT literacy among teachers and students in higher education in Ethiopia is still low as compared to what is expected. Thus, the expansion of ICT training programs in PHEIs will have a positive external effect in increasing ICT literacy among teachers and students as well as the public at large. As a result, PHEIs could shore up the nation in order to be a partner of progress in the ICT age. Nevertheless, to boost their efforts in this regard, PHEIs should expand and incorporate programs that are aimed at acquainting ICT to their community. To this end, they should provide extra services such as Internet services, teleconferencing and state-of-the-art technologies.
- ❖ Assuming the standard set by the Ministry of Education related to computer laboratories, PHEIs are by far below the standard. Thus, ways and means have to be sought to raise the level of ICT infrastructure, particularly, the capacity of computer laboratories.

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Appendix A: Enrolment of Students in Sample PHEIs in ICT and non-ICT Programs (2000/2001- 2003/2004)

Table A.1: Enrolment of Students in College A for ICT and Non-ICT Programs (2000/2001- 2003/2004)

Year	College A							
	ICT Programs			Non - ICT Programs			Total Enrolment in each year	Percentage Share of ICT
	Diploma	Degree	Total	Diploma	Degree	Total		
2003/04	391	0	391	1375	435	1810	2201	17.8%
2002/03	284	0	284	2071	0	2071	2355	12.1%
2001/02	98	0	98	728	0	728	826	1.2%
2000/01	0	0	0	1557	0	1557	1557	0

Table A.2: Enrolment of Students in College C for ICT and Non-ICT Programs (2000/2001- 2003/2004)

Year	College C							
	ICT Programs			Non - ICT Programs			Total Enrolment in each year	Percentage Share of ICT
	Diploma	Degree	Total	Diploma	Degree	Total		
2003/04	327	2056	2383	1129	2690	3819	6202	38.4%
2002/03	0	820	820	666	1204	1870	2690	30.5%
2001/02	0	953	953	2293	611	2904	3857	24.7%
2000/01	0	748	748	1997	703	2700	3448	21.7%

Table A.3: Enrolment of Students in College B for ICT and Non-ICT Programs (2000/2001- 2003/2004)

Year	College B							
	ICT programs			Non - ICT programs			Total Enrolment in each year	Percentage Share of ICT
	Diploma	Degree	Total	Diploma	Degree	Total		
2003/04	381	213	594	1752	567	2319	2913	20.4%
2002/03	272	51	323	2130	123	2253	2576	12.50%
2001/02	214	0	214	3000	0	3000	3214	6.7%
2000/01	0	0	0	1025	0	1025	1025	0%

Table A.4: Enrolment of Students in College D for ICT and Non-ICT Programs (2000/2001- 2003/2004)

Year	College D							
	ICT programs			Non - ICT programs			Total Enrolment in each year	Percentage Share of ICT
	Diploma	Degree	Total	Diploma	Degree	Total		
2003/04	116	682	798	32	0	32	830	96.2%
2002/03	925	0	925	347	0	347	1272	72.7%
2001/02	1027	0	1027	498	0	498	1525	67.3%
2000/01	665	0	665	499	0	499	1164	57.1%

Ethiopian Private Higher Education and the Pursuit of Social Responsibility

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Abstract

It is to be taken for granted that the university serves as a handmaiden to the burgeoning internationalization of scholarly communication and of knowledge in general. But it is also founded within particular cultures and embedded in a specific society and it is the child of the communities in which it is set. Because higher education is a public service and education a social good, the university has a public duty not only to go beyond its academic agenda and broaden its extra-curricular services deep into the realm of social and community life, but also to protect and advance local cultural, intellectual and scholarly traditions. They have also the responsibility to respect the rights of the consumers of their services with exemplary ethical integrity and moral concern.

In spite of this, however, Ethiopian higher education institutions, both private and government, have failed to satisfactorily live up to fulfilling their social responsibility that may include, *inter alia*, spearheading socio cultural endeavours, nurturing the accumulation of social capital, safeguarding social justice, promoting environment protection, advocating social and political debates, designing conflict resolution mechanism, etc. They have also succeeded very little in providing good quality and socially relevant research and teaching services as well as in their socially crucial responses to the threats and opportunities posed by globalization.

It is worth remarking, however, that some private colleges in the country have made a good start in fulfilling their social responsibilities in some areas like the promotion of environmental sanitation programs, the organization of research and discussion forums, the promotion of sports activities, and the like; but still, a more aggressive civic engagement is lacking.

With the above background and theoretical notes, this paper attempts to address the extent to which private higher education institutions in the country especially those operating in Addis Ababa are pursuing social responsibility as a fundamental principle.

In more specific terms, the paper explores into the extent of the sense of moral responsibility and ethical concern which Private Higher Education Institutions are exercising towards the consumers of higher education services as public goods; this will be done using such variables like quality, pertinence, finance and management, international cooperation/competition as well as the attempt to massify higher education and other related variables as gauges of the pursuit of social responsibility.

The paper also attempts to look into the depth of engagement of Private Higher Education Institutions both as participants and leaders in promoting social, cultural, economic and to some extent, political activities that directly benefit the general public. More philosophically, this refers to the utilitarian gestures these

institutions extend to the larger public as a practical expression of gratitude to the society to whom they owe their very *raison d'être*.

A semi-structured questionnaire is used to collect information from colleges selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. The data collection is further enriched through observations, group discussions, and reviews of documents, where available.

Finally, following critical interpretations and some percentage descriptions of the findings, the paper makes suggestions that would help these institutions strive better to get engaged in championing this responsibility and be able to avail their services to the society in which they have been germinated to the level of expectation and ultimately be able to “survive” in this competitive world of fast evolving academic breakthroughs and scholarly excellence.

1. Introduction

The ancient university was an ivory tower where the sage had a possibility to engage himself in studies relevant only to him. People respected the sage because he was seen to have knowledge of the unknown. Today, the modern university can flourish if it lives in genuine interaction with the society at large. Today, people’s respect does not come as easily as before; universities must earn it by yielding to the service of their supporters as taken from a speech made by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Natal, South Africa.

Happily gone are the days when the intellectual and his institution stand as secluded whimsical islands in the midst of a mammoth crowd of illiterate and semi-literate people and when the university which is otherwise implanted in the social milieu was lamentably devoid of community flesh and blood. Many have echoed their concern of this archaic and outmoded fad whereby the apparently all-knowing scholarly demigod lives in his own fancy world swaddled in an impermeable envelope of cognitive pride oblivious of the society which otherwise nourished and fathered him. De Wulf in his philosophical treatise (1907: 153), writes in wonder of the intellectuals of his day "what general social influences could these men wield who closed their doors and windows against the outside world, and philosophised without the least heed for the dominants (challenges) of the time." Such orientations still hold true in most universities of the world and in some contexts have even worsened given the geometric gap in knowledge made possible by the information technology.

Ethiopia has not been and is not an exception to this global scenario. Tekeste (1996:101-102) writing on how modern education started in Ethiopia made the accurate observation that our education system came into being through European and American scholars and very few foreign-educated Ethiopians. Under such historically inevitable influences, it was only natural that it

evolved as a fragile “plant” made up of parts imported from multiple Western cultural and knowledge packages glued together, hence, by and large, lacking Ethiopian touches, tastes and colours (Girma 1973:3); the staff profile and curricular portfolio of our education system especially the higher education one, *ipso facto*, ended up as the carbon copies of Western universities. This state of affairs coupled with the consistent lack of dynamism and relevance of the curriculum has effectively dissociated our higher education system from the general public and compounded its failure to reflect the changing demands, constraints and values of our society.

The near-global university-society polarization has, for long, been the concern of policy-makers, researchers, the public, and even universities themselves before it metamorphosed into a consensus to pursue social responsibility as a fundamental university virtue.

Accordingly, at the International UNESCO conference that convened in 1950 in Nice, the universities of the World stipulated three indivisible missions for which every university should stand, namely: the right to pursue knowledge for its own sake and to follow wherever the search for truth may lead; the tolerance of divergent opinion and freedom from political interference; and the obligation as social institutions to promote through teaching and research the principles of freedom and justice of human dignity and solidarity, and to develop mutually material and moral aid on an international level. This argument enjoys a number of solid justifications. Primarily, this institution is founded within a particular culture and embedded in a specific society and it is the child of the community in which it is set. Hence, communities own and have every natural right to dictate their course. If one agrees with the premise that the university is indeed the power source of development, then society is the agent that fuels and greases and runs its operations. It is at the same time the beneficiary of its academic and non-academic exploits. This argument boils down to the assertion that the universities on their part whether public-owned or private-owned, have to be vigilant of the rhythm of change in societal demands and constraints. With that background, this study attempts to address the role private higher education institutions in the country are playing in pursuing the multi-faceted responsibilities expected of them. It then reminds these Institutions to pay a more credible attention to the pursuit of social responsibility as a university principle and hopefully open the door for a more profound and methodologically seasoned exploration of the issue in the future. The study would also implicitly invoke a self-critical and inquisitive sense in government-owned higher education institutions to evaluate their current position vis-à-vis this virtue.

2. Research Methodology

The paper focuses on Private Higher Education Institutions expressly refraining from indulging into the perilous excursion of treating the realm of government-owned higher education. The underlying reasons are two-fold: primarily, if government-owned higher education institutions are included in the equation, the analytical variable that we end up with would be the political facet of social responsibility, hence undermining the attempt to capture and appreciate the composite picture of social responsibility, in both conceptual and pragmatic terms. Put bluntly, nominal university autonomy plus fragile academic freedom plus a highly politicized university administration and management that characterize government-owned higher education in Ethiopia today would tell the whole story.

Secondly, the treatment of the issue of social responsibility would yield more valuable outcomes if discussed from the perspective of the private-owned higher education system which is a fast-developing and hence a potentially potent engine of socio-economic transformation.

The selection of colleges and universities for this study was done on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. The first stratum is formed by the relatively old, populous and hence more experienced colleges (universities), while the other consists of the relatively young and specialized colleges (universities). All of these institutions, eight in total, are found in Addis Ababa.

For collecting the necessary data, a semi-structured questionnaire that is composed of both closed and open-ended question items was distributed to the selected colleges. Review of documents especially the curriculum of so few of these colleges, informal discussions with college staff and students and a series of field observations were also used to enrich the data. The information so collected was analyzed using mainly qualitative critical interpretations and percentage descriptions.

3. Ethiopian Private Higher Education: An Overview

The private provision of higher education in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon though it showed a very dramatic expansion within a span of very few years, about 40 percent between 1999/2000 and 2001/2002. Today, 21 % of the nation's higher education enrolment is covered by the 73 private colleges and institutes of which 18 have been accredited since 1989EC. Three of these institutions are not-for-profit institutions. The majority of these institutions are quite new and enrol 500 students or less, and offer training in specialized areas such as Accounting, Business Administration, or Information Science. The remainder range in size from 1000 students up to a maximum of 7,100 students (World Bank 2003:11).

All private colleges offer diploma programs, Half-a-dozen of them have mounted degree programs; most of them offer distance courses. These institutions offer diverse educational programs often not available in public institutions such as Dentistry and Photography. They provide access to growing numbers of students who might have otherwise not be admitted to tertiary education. What is more, they enable a significant expansion of tertiary enrolments at very little additional cost to government.

The sources of funds for running these institutions are almost exclusively obtained from tuition fees; the latter range between Birr 2,500 to 3,500 per student per year. In fact, as Wondwosen (2003) observes, this linear reliance on student fees is a potential threat to the renovation and expansion drive of the country's Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). In a further argument, he attributes this to the fact that the private sector, which may include industries and other employing sectors, lacks the strength and has not yet fully developed the culture of providing contributions and donations to PHEIs.

According to the World Bank report cited above, private colleges teach 3 out of 4 Business students and other 3 out of 4 Computer Science students, and nearly half of all Law students in the country.

The path private higher education had to traverse was not, however, a bed of roses. From licensure to accreditation, these institutions had to break through a litany of bureaucratic bottlenecks and procedural ups and downs. They were also plagued by other equally important problems such as the lack of clarity regarding the import tax exemption they are reportedly entitled to for the importation of instructional materials and by the complications associated with obtaining loan financing for expansion because of the lack of tangible collateral. All private colleges except one do not have their own buildings and still operate in rented buildings in an adverse academic environment at the side of busy streets grappling with noisy pedestrians and roaring vehicles. In a recent interview held with the English Weekly *perspective*, the President of St. Mary's College complained of the government's failure to respond to his repeated requests for land for securing his own buildings that are designed and constructed with the requisite academic aptness. The President also disclosed that he was forced to pay an annual rental fee of over Birr 1 million for a single campus (*Perspective* 2004).

It is worth noting that the private education institutions that are mushrooming today securing their work permits in quite a short time have a lot to owe to those pioneering institutions that braved the plethora of government-driven political accusations and erratic bureaucratic requirements; those institutions had to walk on pins and needles to break through the thick iceberg of adamant

government reluctance to officially accept private provision of higher education as a public good, which was only a lingering legacy of communist obsession with public ownership (Patrick 2003). The unswervingly dear sacrifices these institutions had made proved to be an effective antidote to the ubiquitous change inertia which was a poignant amalgam of robust state resistance and mostly unfounded qualms from an uninformed (ill-informed) public. Private education institutions that are currently enjoying a relative peace from the government tug and pull at the dear expenses of their forerunners ought to maintain a higher degree of institutional integrity and ethical accountability and refrain from any free rider mentality.

4. Discussion of Findings

Universities are said to have three indivisible missions: teaching, research and public service. Social Responsibility as a generic term is a university virtue that runs through all these three functions.

The issue of social responsibility, which we will be discussing in the pages that follow in the context of our Private Higher Education Institutions, will have two indivisible sides as in a coin. The first refers to the sense of moral responsibility and ethical concern Private Higher Education Institutions ought to exercise towards the consumers of higher education services as public goods. This responsibility, which is legally enforceable, is manifested in the quality and relevance of the curriculum to dynamic national and international realities as well as in a university's sensitivity to respect and advance the rights of its students, staff and the general public. This notion may also include the role higher education institutions play as "a model for society, a haven of honesty and accountability," as well as sentinels of the social-cum-cultural values of the community in whose bosom they germinate and grow. This role is appropriately highlighted in one of the accreditation criteria of private higher education institutions in the country suggested by the World Bank (2003: 101) which reads: "the institution exemplifies, and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in all dealings with students, faculty, staff, external agencies and organizations, and the general public".

The second aspect deals with what the French call *responsabilité civique* (*civic responsibility*). Basically, this consists of a cocktail of social, cultural, economic and, to some extent, political activities in which Private Higher Education Institutions ought to get engaged by virtue of their being a child of the society in which they are founded. More philosophically, this refers to the utilitarian duties they execute as a practical expression of gratitude to the society to whom they owe their very *raison d'être* and the great deal of nourishment they have constantly been receiving there from.

Society evaluates the breadth of its universities' pursuit of the first dimension of social responsibility referred to above, which is a legally enforceable one, mainly from four angles: pertinence, quality, management and financing and international cooperation/competition (UNESCO 2003).

Pertinence may be defined as the degree of convergence between what society expects and what the university is able to do. In other words, this aspect defines the overall social relevance of a given institution. In a higher education context, this facet of social responsibility finds expression through, but not limited to, the relevance and dynamism of the overall program, curricular contents and research. Therefore, maintaining a socially pertinent, academically dynamic and contextually appropriate curriculum is by itself a fulfilment of the role of social responsibility, while the express failure to do so may be construed as an evasion of this virtue.

On the other hand, research has to be accorded a serious regard and should form part of the job description of academic staff. As an emphatic reminder of the significance of research for a higher education institution, writers in the area recommend that academic staff commit at least one-fourth of their time for research. However, committing sufficient time for research cannot in and by itself lead to fruition; the quality of the research is what counts most in the final analysis. Research need not only be an area for showing off one's scholastic elegance and academic perfection, but more importantly, it needs to give priority to national problems and its outputs have to be socially valuable. Research has to be oriented in such a way that society owns its process as well as its outcomes.

The issues surrounding the pertinence of the curriculum and research undertakings are also reflected in our discussion of "quality", which demonstrates to society the extent to which individual institutions are meeting the high standards expected of them. As in the following discussion, the first and most important aspect of social responsibility of higher education institutions, whether private or government-owned, should be able to design curricula that reflect national and international realities and values. Should one condemn the government if it refuses giving away a licensure to a college that wants to set up an aeronautics college, which is but a tragically uncanny move and a badly misplaced investment in our contemporary context?

In both respects of quality and pertinence, the fundamental responsibility society expects the university to assume is to reflect the changes society itself faces and, in turn, the capacity of the university to identify, distinguish and prioritise between them in a manner acceptable and beneficial to society always dictated by altruistic drives. After all, an account of their pursuit of knowledge production and their role in creating the cream of societies, universities are furthering

the virtue of social responsibility. In their attempt to adapt themselves to changes in the environment and their contribution to the employment market, they are promoting social transformation. In this regard, the question they need to address would be whether they are capable of concentrating on what is socially beneficial and still bear fruit and make constant revisits to their program and curriculum and accordingly cut-off the barren branches; these refer to disciplines that may be pursued on account of the relative ease with which they can be offered and the relatively low level of difficulty they pose to staff in terms of resources and skill requirements even when these disciplines are not readily sellable in the job market and hence are socially irrelevant. This state of affairs might happen naturally because of the information asymmetry that prevails between university academia which can easily forecast the way job markets move in the future with relative precision and the knowledge thirst student corps that has a shallow comprehension of such issues. The point is that the numberless secondary school graduates who have failed to join the government owned higher education system may be anxious to grab whatever higher educational opportunities as the key to social mobility are available at the sheer mercy of the private college. It has succinctly been observed that some private colleges have made unwholesome gains by enrolling eager students without even fulfilling the minimum criteria required for providing higher education services.

The above scenario takes us to the discussion of another crucial aspect of the pursuit of social responsibility: the social implications of the pursuit of the different aspects of social responsibility to the post-graduate scenario, namely to the world of employment. That is the question of what percentage of Ethiopian private college leavers is employed, underemployed or misemployed, which is a direct reflection of the efforts, academic or otherwise, that are exerted by colleges to make their students readily sellable in the labour market. Some of the interventions to this effect may be in the areas of curricular revision, job search counselling, employment market research, office practice and apprenticeship arrangements, etc. Although exact figures cannot be presented here, some graduates from some of the accredited colleges have secured employment and most of the working students who graduated from the night extension programs secured promotion in their respective workplaces. On the other hand, graduates of some colleges who enrolled in anticipation of future accreditation and which subsequently failed to secure the accreditation on time failed to secure employment.

The gap between graduation and employment has serious social implications. To begin with, an army of unemployed graduate force may in the long run be a cause for social instability as the situation tends to widen the gap of government legitimacy. The deterioration of human knowledge that accompanies the gap has also huge social costs because of the inevitable *brain recycling* in

switching to occupations that are totally irrelevant to one's qualification with adverse efficiency ramifications; worse still, the delay compounds the likelihood of never getting employed again which might in turn probably lead to a massive brain drain scenario (Shimelis 2003:201).

Secondly, the gap reinforces frustration that automatically leads to graduate underemployment that entails a high social cost because of surplus schooling or over education and because of the unethical workplace behaviour it might engender. A study has shown that underemployment and the feeling of being overeducated for the job and the attendant state of underpayment is one of the motivators of corruption in the country (Shimelis 2004: 20). Most of the private colleges studied were found to have made considerable efforts at arranging work practices and apprenticeships, and some said that they have at times made aggressive lobbying and job searching efforts for their graduates.

A related measure of the pertinence and quality of a higher education system's curricular system that has tremendous implications to social change is its aptitude to inculcate a sense of humility and patriotic sentiments. Hence, its potential to prepare graduates who are committed to engaging in services that benefit the poor and the vulnerable. Very unfortunately, our universities, whether government-owned or private-owned, have only succeeded in fabricating a mass of amorphous graduates that are apathetic to rural engagements and have thereby deprived society of what it mostly desires: models of altruism and interested service (Shimelis 2003: 7). Sisay Wagne (2004: 14) in his recent newspaper article writes: "our graduates search for office jobs with sophisticated rolling chairs, computers, telephone and the internet." Concurrent to our argument, he attributes this situation to "...the barren education system that cast-off other suitable qualities like responsibility, altruistic vision and other compulsory societal values." This argument seems to make a good point in that it is the whole education system that is to blame for this state of affairs. The fact is that it is also at the secondary level that this urban employment mania begins to crystallize. The colleges simply inherit an already malformed moral figure and further erode his/her ideals of humility and fill him/her with a sense of self importance and cognitive pride (Teshome 1993). Further strengthening this line of argument is that enrolments in Agricultural fields in the country's tertiary systems constitute only 7% of the total tertiary enrolment, compared to 33% and 26 % enrolments in mostly urban bound Business/Economics and Education programs, respectively. It is worth noting that this figure is the lowest in the case of private colleges which is an indication of their stronger urban-bias (Please refer to table-1 on page 8). Therefore, the curricular malaise seems to concern even the lower levels of the education system and hence the remedy towards making the curriculum more morally appealing needs also to address these levels.

In a very similar tone, the higher education curriculum seems to have failed to instil an entrepreneurial spirit in the minds of graduates, which is a much needed ingredient in an otherwise budding free economy like ours but with limited public employment choices. A recent study by Samuel (2003) has revealed that the public is not yet satisfied with the job creating ability of the graduates from the private institutions. As a way out, he qualitatively suggests that “institutions would do well if they were to concentrate on such courses that would sharpen the entrepreneurial skills of their prospective graduates”. With regard to job market orientation, the MOE has set a good precedent worth-emulating by the Private Higher Education system by undertaking a preliminary analysis¹ of the labor force requirements in relation to the need for educational training and skill preparation. As a complementary strategy, the World Bank has suggested that Ethiopia like some other countries consider the possibility of creating a “higher education labour market observatory” for this purpose (World Bank 2003: 15).

There is now a set up “autonomous” Quality Assurance and Relevance Agency apparently for the task of assessing the quality and social relevance of private higher education institutions. The agency is believed to “allow government to take advantage of the additional access and resources they (Private Higher Education Institutions) can contribute, provide incentives to private institutions that meet accreditation standards, and protect the public from fraudulent and questionable quality providers that have plagued many other countries” (World Bank 2003: 62). There is, however, a general concern among private providers of education that the agency may lack the proper institutional autonomy and /or professional competence to take up the rather gruelling responsibility of measuring and appraising such an illusive notion like quality; equally worrying is the fear of the agency’s being excessively control-oriented (Belay and Wondwosen 2003). That this quality watchdog can really exercise genuine and consistent consumer protection remains to be seen. But if this is indeed the case, both the general public and the private provider will benefit. The public would benefit from the enforcement processes that would bring about “truth in advertising” and that would “monitor learning achievement and shore up sagging standards when they are detected”, and more importantly, from the provision of improved quality higher education services. There are not so few private higher education institutions that have played foul and enrolled hundreds of eager and frustrated higher education aspirants without even securing a licensure.

¹ The survey, to be conducted at least once every three years, is said to collect information on job vacancies, salary structures, unemployed graduates, tracer study comparisons of public and private university graduates, employer satisfaction with graduate employees, demand for specific skills, etc.

In fact in one of the standards of accreditation suggested by the World Bank (2003: 101), it is stressed that “in presenting itself to students and other members of the interested public, the institution provides information that is complete, accurate and clear.” For the private provider, it would create a legitimate and vocal mechanism to demonstrate to a rather suspicious public that it meets appropriate standards as degree or diploma granting institution. This is in these two respects where in our discussion of social responsibility that this agency fits: as a liaison that would help galvanize the university-society coalition and that would, in ethical terms, enforce the social contact necessary for the pursuit of the virtue of social responsibility as this agency is entrusted with the strategic function of accreditation. The World Bank has thankfully incorporated the need for private higher education institutions to uphold social responsibility as a university virtue in the standards for accreditation that it has recently suggested to the government. One of the standards worth mentioning requires the existence of a mission and statement of purposes. The same criteria also establishes that “it (the mission) should be appropriate to higher education, the institution’s distinctive character, addresses the needs of society, and identifies the students it seeks to serve in a realistic way. The mission must include teaching, research, and public service” (World Bank 2003: 101).

In light of the following discussion, an enriched adaptation of the “Total Quality Approach”, which stresses broad participation, constant improvement, organizational learning and a focus on the customer, would have been an ideal quality assurance mechanism, especially as regards social responsibility, in addition to the “Reputation” and “Outcomes Approaches” currently in use, which by and large lack social concoction (Cloete 1997: 2).

In an attempt to gauge the extent of pertinence and quality, a quick document review of the curricula of some of the private colleges vis-à-vis the prevailing labour market demand and what may possibility prevail in the foreseeable future therein has shown that these institutions have outsmarted their government counterpart. The reason is mainly because of their effective application of the ‘market strategy’ and hence because of their need-based program orientation. In fact, they have accomplished what their aged “ivory tower’ counterpart has for long failed to accomplish by offering a variety of programs which are otherwise highly needed in the job market. According to a recent World Bank report, these institutions have succeeded in providing “client-oriented instruction focused on the shifting needs of the job market, and attract a high proportion of women students (almost 50%)” (World Bank 2003: 11).

An analytical glance at the statistics in table-1 below reveals a relevant story. The number of tertiary enrolments in Business/Economic and Computer Science programs far outnumbers the

enrolments in other programs. And these enrolments are the highest in Private Colleges and Evening Public programs. It is also noteworthy that bright prospects of employment reside in these disciplines. A 2001 survey of 192 employers in seven regions of the country found that employers encountered the greatest difficulty recruiting new staff in the areas of Business Administration, Engineering, Computer Science and Law (Budu, 2002). This researcher remembers his own experience of becoming a chemist-turned- auditor after the office he was employed in allowed him to attend conversion courses in Accounting during the period when the demand for Business graduates reached its climax in the 1990's.

Table 1: Distribution of Tertiary Enrolments by Academic Program, 2001/20023

Programs	Fields of Study									Total
	Social Science	Business/Economics	Education	Law	Health	Science	Technical/Engineering	Agriculture	Other*	
Public Degree	3,164	1,774	3,935	661	1,975	2,445	4,530	2,948	347	21,779
Public Diploma	0	2,556	3,865	88	2,065	175	906	1,691	299	11,645
Evening	976	10,846	16,088	1,024	1,779	768	4,547	1,924	1,252	39,204
Private	0	15,271	30	730	123	0	875	85	1,977	19,091
Total	4,140	30,447	23,918	2,503	5,942	3,388	10,858	6,648	3,875	91,719
Percent	5	33	26	3	6	4	12	7	4	100

**More than half of this figure represents Computer Science students*

Source: MOE (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2001/2002).

With regard to research, except for some excellent exceptions, Private Higher Education Institutions have shown exceedingly feeble progress partly given the costly and technical nature of the research enterprise and partly because of their lack of rudimentary awareness on their central role as driving and packaging agents of research. Incidentally, this researcher expresses his grave disappointment of the way some of the private colleges approached for this study reacted when they were asked for research information; it is a bemoaning anomaly for an institution of higher learning which is otherwise the nucleus and reservoir of a country's knowledge treasures to decline to fill out a research questionnaire even on an issue that is pertinent to its cause. This is perhaps a living case in point of the deplorable status of research as an important university enterprise in Ethiopian Private Higher Education and may partly apply also to the the Government Higher Education System; it is this partly nation-wide pursuit of research that Damtew (2004: 6) rightly dubbed as the "missing antidote" in Ethiopia's pursuit of its higher education vision.

The other variable that can be used to gauge an institution's social responsibility is "Management and Financing". These constitute the means and procedures by which the individual institution

prioritizes the expectations society has expressed in the light of the means society provides for their execution (UNESCO 2003: 7). More specifically, it refers to the institution's system of governance which is expected to espouse managerial proficiency, procedural consistency and ethical integrity both vis-à-vis its own internal community and external users; this aspect may also implicitly inform the degree of autonomy an institution enjoys in the face of cumbersome state regulatory excuses especially in its pursuit of social endeavours. With respect to the issue of administrative integrity, this study has revealed that nearly all of the private higher education institutions have not yet put formal mechanisms to tap the voices of their student population. It has also been frequently observed that this aspect of social responsibility is not respected by some of our Private Higher Education Institutions especially in the area of admitting students who have not attained the required grade level and graduating students who have not scored the required Grade Point Average. In fact, despite the difficulty of measuring it, one of the criteria of accreditation suggested by the World Bank stipulates that "the (higher education) institution has an open, fair, and ethical admission".

Institutional autonomy of our PHEIs is, on the other hand, an area of considerable concern. Eleni (2003) in her recent study even argues that the provisions of the Higher Education Proclamation themselves jeopardize the institutional autonomy of PHEIs and leave room for misinterpretation. With a special reference to social responsibilities, unlike many highly democratic societies where higher education institutions enjoy an enviable liberty to exercise their autonomy, the pursuit of civic virtues can, in the Ethiopian context, be stretched only to a certain limit or else they may compromise the primary vocation of the pursuit of knowledge production; and it might, in the worst of cases, bring the institutions on a collision course with a rather suspicious government machinery, hence entail terminal consequences; this can be partly attributed to the nebulous ambiance that surrounds the private-government rapport that has always brutally frustrated the progressive but fearful steps that had been attempted by the private education system.

In terms of the financing component, from the questionnaire administered to few randomly selected private colleges, it was learnt that some 80% of these colleges do not have budget for social endeavours, while 90% of them lack the support unit that can run such non-academic outreach activities. In fact, some administrative and academic staff said that they do not see any market justification for allocating budget for social endeavours, while some said that though they agree in principle with the need to put aside some percentage of the administrative budget for socially beneficial activities, they expressed their doubt as to its feasibility.

The fourth aspect, *viz* “International Cooperation/competition” stands as the practical arena for competitive excellence to show solidarity with institutions more or less privileged but equally important in the development of a common global civilization. This gauge of social responsibility brings to the fore the issue of globalisation and the concomitant daunting challenges of higher education institutions in keeping a judicious balance in their academic and non-academic responses to local and international changes.

Globalisation as a contagious world phenomenon that is reshaping the higher education landscape across nations via the greater access to knowledge beyond a nation’s frontiers through the medium of overseas higher education institutions will both accelerate social change and eradicate inequalities. Such a linkage would not only boost the legitimacy and prestige of a not-so-developed institution found in a developing country, but it would also increase the likelihood of post-graduate studies abroad both for its students and staff members (Hopper 1998). Owing to the raging surge of this phenomenon that engendered the inescapable universal interconnectedness among higher education systems as well as among employment markets, higher academic institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to persevere as servers of a menu of knowledge with a universal savour. Employment imperatives of today’s globalized world seem to cater only to the individual who happens to know all possessing a scholastic résumé that sounds like a recipe for divinity. There are so many changes more than what we can absorb in today’s world. Our higher education system has in many respects become an anachronism in a scholarly global village littered with soul-searching curricular innovations and incredible research breakthroughs. The situation seems to have posed a threat to the very survival of our Higher Education Institutions in the social *Darwinistic* sense of the term.

Some of the private colleges surveyed seem to have fully recognized this threat and were found to have made important steps in the direction of forming strategic linkages in such highly technical areas like curriculum design with overseas colleges. Moreover, the proliferation of private colleges and institutes that offer Computer Technology Programs is by itself an indication of the responses that we are making, *will-nilly*, to the irresistible magnetic influence of globalization, one of the vehicles of which is information technology. Once the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization on higher education systems are sufficiently appreciated, then another equally important and delicate task would follow: to uphold a sensible balance between the pressure for change which comes from the process of technical development through globalization and the tensions created within civic society as a result of the impact of economic and technological change upon the social fabric. “But such a task,” UNESCO (2003:12), argues "is no less delicate for the fact that it comes over and above such well-recognized obligations as acting as a vehicle of

understanding between cultures and communities and for rectifying, where possible, the social imbalances which result from poverty, exclusion and conflict.” In other words, these institutions, although they are moulded by a global university culture, ought to constantly reflect on and organize themselves in tune to their immediate local context, instead of totally shedding their national identity.

An additional variable to the ones suggested by UNESCO discussed above and which has been treated by this survey deals with the role higher education institutions play in *massifying* higher education services as public goods through the vehicle of distance education, which has become a term that encapsulates a gamut of teaching models like IT Learning, computer-assisted instruction, e-learning, televised teaching, self-learning and other innovative learning mechanisms. In a mass system, the diversity of the number of institutions, staff, students and learning programs undermines the authority (trust) of the elite system. The concept of a “gold standard” of quality would then fail to apply to the wide range of class, age, ethnic and race backgrounds that were left out of the higher education equation sifted through an examination system like ours reputed for its “poor predictive validity” (Tirusew 1998:19-35). In other words, the pursuit of this aspect of social responsibility is intimately linked to the quest for social justice as it would help bridge prevalent gaps of social and economic inequalities. Distance learning, besides its flexibility and cost-effectiveness, has the robust social dimension of its being women friendly, hence allowing women get a facile access to higher education services in a manner unmatched by the conventional models (Guri-Rosenblit 1999). However, putting such a pedagogic model in place, especially by a private college, might not at all be a painless task. In spite of the low recurrent costs that would be required to run a distance higher education system, which are in large part covered by student fees, the system has a front loaded investment profile in that it requires a substantial initial capital outlay to design curriculum, train staff, develop and test learning materials and acquire selected technology (Saint 2000). In addition, tertiary distance education programs generally require stronger management skills than traditional programs. “With scattered students, dispersed part-time tutors, far-flung logistics, unreliable communication services, time sensitive production and distribution of learning materials, and detailed student records, successful distance education programs require above average skills in organization, logistics, and problem-solving” (World Bank 2003: 60). Partly for these reasons, Ethiopia ranked last in a recent survey of distance education capacities in 22 African countries (Saint 2000). Again, the progress the country’s private higher education institutions are making along this line is encouraging. As a notable instance, in a recent report, it has been disclosed that one private higher education provider alone has enrolled

33,000 students nationwide supported by four regional offices. The same institution has reportedly graduated 4,300 diploma students in Accounting, Management, and Mechanics.

The second aspect of social responsibility as a university virtue is the engagement of higher education institutions in pursuing social, cultural, economic and at times political agendas that are directly beneficial to the general public. In this regard, from the questionnaire administered, it was learnt that some colleges spearhead environmental protection activities, while others play a leading role in promoting gender equality and in building the capacity of the public sector and the community. It was also found out that almost all colleges surveyed play a participatory and at times a leading role in sports activities, and still few others said that they get involved in health related interventions and in fostering social justice, whatever the latter may mean. Interestingly enough, one of the selected colleges was found to have been involved in enterprise and entrepreneurship development. Overall, given their resource limitations and lack of an enabling environment, this is by no means a discouraging achievement. After all, universities, especially the private-owned ones, cannot simply meet whatever is demanded by a society like ours, with a myriad of its problems, places upon them. It may even be ethically erroneous to assume that the university should be reduced to a “service agency”, accepting without question and without independent judgment, every trifles of short term “service-oriented” pressures exerted by the “market”. Herein lies the ethical tension/the moral challenge engendered by the irrevocable fact that Private Higher Education Institutions are private-owned and hence have profit generation as one of their leading agendas. Therefore, it is absurd, in both economic and academic terms, to expect them to operate like charity organizations. Neither should they be plagued by steep profit motivations and by what Levy (2002) called the hyper commercialism syndrome. Both extremes are not so judicious options and may even be suicidal choices.

Another important observation so far made with regard to the pursuit of social responsibility by private colleges in the country, which is perhaps the case else where, is the personal influence of university leaders and presidents, both through their “charisma and cash”. Some writers even argue that the pursuit of social responsibility in a higher education context can be fully realized through the personal influences of university leaders and influential academics, instead of through the university as a corporate entity with a miscellany of interests and influences. This has somehow successfully been seen in some of the strongest private higher education institutions in the country. This argument is drawn on the assertion that the personal whims and fancies of university “owners” and presidents play a decisive part in upholding or downplaying this virtue as epitomized in the maxim, “ He who pays the piper calls the tune.”

In all the above discussed scenarios, what is expected of higher education institutions is to be socially responsible in all facets of their enterprises and give due respect to societies' concerns and at times take the risk of seeing ways of anticipating and taking the initiative in meeting some of society's pressing demands. The term pressing needs to be underscored, because it is a relative term and because it forms the heart of the virtue of social responsibility. Professor Brenda Gourly (cited in UNESCO 2003: 20) argues that, "if universities, wherever they may be, with whatever resources (human and physical) do not seek solutions to the pressing human conditions of the society in which they are embedded, then this could only be regarded as an ethical failure or an intellectual failure, or both." The challenging nature of societies' problems and their sheer volume almost always call for alliances to be forged in which universities play the role of a lead facilitator or a broker. This alliance may bring in the government, the community, industries, NGOs, etc. Is such an alliance in place in Ethiopia today? Certainly not! We have a country where there is a nascent civil society. To what extent are NGOs sponsoring private higher education institutions in pursuing civic responsibilities? What attempts has the government made to support these institutions in these endeavours? Has the government established an atmosphere of trust which is the least that is required of such an alliance? Is the public not still unsure of the credibility of private higher education institutions as it is sometimes misinformed by rumours and speculative surmises? But the crucial question of all remains: are private higher education institutions themselves sufficiently aware of the role expected of them especially in pursuing social, cultural and even political activities? To begin with, there is a widespread lack of awareness on the very need to pursue such activities as a fundamental university principle. Most students and some academic and administrative staff with whom discussions were held said that such activities are exclusively the responsibilities of the government. This same group argued that an excessive engagement with resource commitments in such endeavours would not only be considered as a double taxation on the private provider, but also as a luxurious vocation that may compromise the pursuit of a host of academic imperatives. In other words, they conjecture that excessive pursuit of this dimension of social responsibility might eliminate the pursuit of the other equally important dimension which surrounds quality and pertinence, which is otherwise more closely linked to the process of accreditation and to the very survival of the institution. Almost all academic and administrative staff emphatically added that they harbour the apprehension that their socio-economic engagements might be mistaken by the government as a guise for furthering ulterior political interests. And, they unanimously call upon the government, first of all, to take courageous steps towards considering the private higher education system as a trustworthy development partner instead of an adversary.

Finally, in the midst of the host of daunting civic responsibilities laid upon the modern-day university, there is much to be expected from society itself for a fruitful engagement therein. A strong coalition has to be created among a country's higher education system and the society. The latter should, implicitly or explicitly, reach a sort of *social contract* on the basis of the *volonté generale* (general will) à la Rousseau with its universities via its associations, which would automatically entail a very critical ingredient of social responsibility, i.e. the notion of mutual accountability. But it does not sound so original to argue that Ethiopia has not yet gave birth to a vibrant civil society that can really provide the necessary trust to this coalition. The bitter reality is that robust university-community bondage may not at all be tolerable with some regimes reputed for their classic disengagement from their public and which, out of sheer frustration, forge counterfeit civil society organizations in their own likeness to undo the authentic bondage already created. Are there not lingering memories of such kinds of scenarios in our context?

On the contrary, however, a regime that is seamlessly close to its public would provide the badly needed leverage of facilitation in reaching and executing this social contract. This line of argument takes us to the role the government has to play in the effort private higher education institutions are making in pursuing social responsibility. In stead of discussing what the government should do, however, it would be more feasible to discuss what it should not do given the complex political situation we are in. The minimum the government should not do is to unnecessarily and unscrupulously interfere in the operations of these institutions and curtail their full academic freedom and autonomy in exercising their responsibilities in the name of licensure and accreditation. It should not consider the private higher education system as “a marginal academic appendix” to the public sector and as a vestigial organ within the country's complex socio-economic configuration (Wondwosen 2003: 24). Even the World Bank whom Damtew (*Loc.cit.*) christened as Ethiopia's “unwitting relative” recommends that expansion of private tertiary institutions be more actively encouraged in order to make the burden of higher education expansion borne by Government more bearable. The Bank also envisions a near term goal of doubling the share of private enrolments from the current 21 % to 40 % by 2010. More importantly, to help achieve this goal, the Bank in the most cheering of words suggests that the Government provide stronger incentives for the expansion of private tertiary education (e.g., access to land, more generous customs exemptions for the importation of educational materials), and also extend quality-enhancing support to private institutions identified as needing improvement (e.g., participation in the National Pedagogical Resources Center, leadership and management training, creation of a fund for remedial actions) (World Bank 2003).

Yet, as a final remark, it needs to be born in mind that the government has every right to hold accountable and tug and pull the private institution into ethical poise as far as the latter fails to feel *socially responsible* for the collective obligation of quality, fairness, tolerance, and for the upkeep of academic, administrative and moral standards.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the critical interpretations of the findings of this modest study, the following conclusions and recommendations are made towards a more forward-looking and committed engagement of private higher education institutions in the pursuit of their social responsibilities.

There is a prevalent mistrust between government and the private education sector; the government has not yet developed the badly needed trust for constructive engagement with the private higher education system. The government still mistakes the civic engagement of private higher education institutions as a guise for political subversion and a threat to its legitimacy and an unwarranted encroachment into its turf; this ambiance of mistrust has to be dispelled for the sake of national development. A collaborative interface needs to be created among government-owned and private-owned higher education institutions in the pursuit of social responsibilities; this would have the added advantage of dissipating any speculative reciprocal illusions and the accompanying mutual mistrust. Conducting periodic meetings between higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders would solidify the hitherto shaky private-government-society collaborative interface. In a related tone, the newly established “Ethiopian Private Colleges Forum” needs to play an increased role in promoting and facilitating civic engagements by private higher education institutions and in galvanizing the desired society-university synergy.

- ◆ There is a reasonable degree of awareness among private higher education institutions on the need for pursuing social responsibility as a university principle and some practical steps have already been taken in that direction. Some, though very few, of the surveyed institutions put aside some percentage of their budget for promoting social endeavours. However, their responses so far to fast-evolving macro and micro-level changes within the country and at the international level, be it through curricular revisits or research engagements, can only be characterized as rudimentary and insufficient. Therefore, it is suggested that Private Higher Education Institutions be more vigilant of changing macro and micro-level changes within the country and at the international level and give appropriate responses and even go long distances to the extent of ensuring the employability of their prospective graduates.

- ◆ The absence of a vibrant and genuinely representative civil society and an embracing donor community that sponsors social endeavours that are initiated by private colleges in the country overshadows the full realization of the virtue of social responsibility now and seems likely to continue into the near future. Therefore, national and international donors and employing firms need to become increasingly involved in sponsoring socially beneficial endeavours that are initiated by private higher education institutions.
- ◆ Limited attempts were made so far by private higher education institutions to *massify* higher education services through the introduction of pedagogic models like Distance Education; the badly needed government incentive to put such otherwise costly systems in place such as loan financing for covering the huge upfront costs, tax exemptions for the importation of educational supplies and tax holidays have all failed to realize. The government should play a more aggressive role in supporting private higher education institutions in their attempts to *massify* higher education services especially via distance education and IT models; possible areas of government intervention may include, *inter alia*, allowing these institutions a privileged access to local capital markets and extending the existing tax holiday to a reasonable number of years and providing them with a duty free status for the importation of educational supplies and equipment. The government should also strive hard to remove all bureaucratic and administrative disincentives that have consistently been strangling the expansion drive of private higher education institutions. As a further constructive gesture, the government needs to consider the possibility of rewarding those private higher education institutions that would exert exemplary efforts to live up to their moral and historical responsibility to society.
- ◆ Private Higher Education Institutions have failed to fully appreciate the social costs of such post-graduate scenarios like unemployment, underemployment or misemployment on account of their failure to discern the way labour market trends move and act accordingly through program and curricular revisits or other interventions. Some of them have, however, shown aggressive commitments to ensuring the future salability of their prospective graduates via arranging apprenticeships and work practice sessions. They ought to pay greater attention to this aspect of social responsibility.
- ◆ Although Private Higher Education Institutions have begun to appreciate the threats posed and the possibilities opened up by globalisation, they still lack the macroscopic vision on how to strategically transact and deal with them. Their attempts to forge strategic academic linkages with overseas universities were not also sufficiently dynamic and persistent.
- ◆ There is scanty documented data so far on the role of Private Higher Education Institutions in the pursuit of social responsibility as a university principle; it is suggested that this

university mission be studied in greater depth and be well documented in the future in both private-owned and government-owned higher education institutions.

- ◆ The accreditation and quality assurance process tends to be excessively control-oriented towards Private Higher Education Institutions and does not consider these institutions on an equal footing with their government counterparts. Therefore, the first positive step in that direction, is to allow private colleges to be involved in regulation self regulation in the process of accreditation; and this would have the advantage of creating a sense of ownership and accountability on the part of private providers to the rules and regulations applied therein.

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Demand Side Constraints in Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

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Abstract

There exists a general consensus that education is an economically and socially productive investment. Research findings confirm that both private and social returns to education are significant. In many countries, education is mainly provided by the government though there are major shifts from this trend in recent years. Private investment in education is increasing in countries around the world and quite noticeably so in developing countries. Ethiopia's case is no exception. The substantial increase in private investment on higher education coupled with increased public investment has led to significant supply side expansion. Both researchers and policy makers alike have focused on the supply side problems ignoring the demand side of the story. A mere supply side expansion, however, does not guaranty that the demand is matched proportionately across all members of the society. This paper identifies and presents the major demand side constraints in the market for higher education in Ethiopia.

The findings of the paper would enable the researcher to argue that if proper financing mechanisms are put in place there is a possibility to overcome the demand side constraints. The paper is based on both published materials and information obtained from primary sources.

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

Much has been said about the overall contribution of education in development endeavours of a country. Studies around the world indicate that there are significant private and social returns to education in general and to higher education in particular. Writers have argued that through direct contributions to economic growth by influencing the nation's productivity and international competitiveness, through redistribution and empowerment, and through strengthening the entire education sector (World Bank Higher Education Development for Ethiopia 2003), tertiary education plays an important conditioning role in poverty reduction.

Being student cognizant of this fact, the Ethiopian government is attempting to expand the sub sector. Total enrolment has increased from 30,000 before 2000 to 91,719 in 2001/ 2002. The share of private institutions in the supply side expansion is not only significant but is also growing. Private institutions now constitute 20% of total enrolment of students and have registered a marked 40% growth between 1999/2000 and 2001/2002 (Ibid). These factors taken together, policy makers and researchers alike have focused on the success of supply side expansion that the demand side of the story is ignored to the worst and barely discussed at best. It is very essential, however, to check whether this supply side boosts is accessibly to the large majority of the poor.

As no considerable study has been made to date focusing on equity issues, this paper is expected to fill this gap.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Indeed presenting a panoramic assessment of the main demand side issues facing private higher education in Ethiopia is a daunting, if not impossible task. The objective of this paper is not thus to identify and discuss all possible demand side constraints. This paper will focus on the financial side constraints by comparing the cost of going to higher education with the paying capacity of the students and attempt to suggest some solutions regarding this. The main objective of this study is therefore to identify the main demand side constraints facing private tertiary education institutions and then come up with some recommendations that may help overcome these constraints.

1.3 Research Methodology

The paper is based on information obtained from primary and secondary sources. For the purpose of undertaking the research, a questionnaire was administered to almost all accredited private institutions. Unfortunately, the response rate was very poor. And this would obviously limit some of the conclusions drawn. In any case, to minimize this problem, efforts were made to gather information from other sources such as yearly abstract of CSA and extensive interview with the registrar offices of some of the colleges. The information obtained in this manner was analyzed and is presented in the form of tables using percentages and ratios when needed.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. General Overview

In Ethiopia, the task of providing higher education had been the task of the government for decades. Before the opening of *University College, A.A.* (now Addis Ababa University), the then government used to send students to overseas colleges and Universities. The opening of the University College, A.A. has offered more chance to students. All cost of university students (including pocket money) was paid by the government. This trend has changed as the number of students increased. And now as is the case in other countries, providing higher education is becoming beyond the capacity of the government. Education is an economically and socially productive investment. In many countries it is financed and provided predominantly by the government. The expansion of education, therefore, depends on fiscal resources. In recent years, however, adverse macroeconomic conditions and keen interest competition for public funds have reduced most governments' ability to continue expanding education. (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2002).

This reality has also forced the Ethiopian government to embark on cost sharing mechanism to lessen the burden to a certain extent. Even under these conditions the capacity of public colleges

and universities is too small compared with the existing demand for higher education. Though it is a recent phenomenon, the role that private higher education institutions are playing in filling this gap, is significant. Private institutions now constitute 20% of total enrolment and have registered a marked 40 % growth between 1999/2000 and 2001/2002 (World Bank, 2003).

Private higher institutions now provide a number of certificate, diploma, and degree level courses on demand basis. Recently, there are attempts to launch even a master's program. All of the private colleges offer diploma programs; a half dozen of them have mounted degree programs, and one has initiated a Master's degree program. These private institutions offer diverse educational programs often not available in the public institutions; provide access to growing numbers of students who might otherwise not be admitted to tertiary education; enable a significant expansion of tertiary enrolments at very little additional cost to the government...(The world Bank 2003 Page No.)

Seven years ago, there was no private higher education institution (except few religious institutions). As of 2003, however, about 37 private colleges and institutions have come into existence. As is mentioned elsewhere, in this paper, this shows that there is significant supply side expansion. As it supply expands, however, it appears very essential to assess whether this supply boost matches with appropriated demand across the society. Studies conducted in other parts of the world indicate that the private purchase of schooling, especially of higher education, is beyond the means of many poor families. Focusing on the supply side only, this issue is not given attention in the Ethiopian context. In the following section effort will be made to focus on this issue by analyzing the cost of going to higher education institutions in comparison with average household income and expenditure.

2.2 Costs of Higher Education and Household Income and Consumption Expenditure Compared

2.2.1. Cost of Education in private higher Education institutions.

Investment in education incurs both direct (tuition fees, books and other teaching materials, and transportation) and indirect cost (foregone earnings to families and individuals). In trying to include all costs, living expense (especially for those living in different area than their residential place for the very purpose of attending colleges) should also be included. In other words, the analysis of cost of going to private higher education institutions should include all these variables. In this paper however, all explicit and implicit costs are not treated. The paper simply focuses on certain aspects of the explicit cost by focusing mainly on the direct payment made to the providers. That point made, let us see the tuition fee private colleges charge for different programs as is shown in the following table.

Table 1: Tuition Fee Charged by Private Higher Education Institutions

<i>Type of Program</i>	<i>Maximum Yearly Payment</i>	<i>Minimum Yearly Payment</i>	<i>Regular Students' (Average Yearly Payment)</i>	<i>Total Average Payments</i>
Technical and Vocational Education and training (10+3 regular students)	3750	2432	3132.43	9372.29
Degree program (regular students)	3700	3300	3555.6	10666.8

Source: Survey data

As the above table shows, considering the tuition fee only, on average it costs about 3132.43 Birr to complete a three years /level III- TVET program. And on average, it costs 3555.6 Birr to complete a degree program in a certain private higher education institution. When other costs such as living expense, medical expense, cost of books and other teaching materials are included, the figure changes significantly. To bring the cost of education in public institutions in perspective, the direct cost of education is more expensive in public than private institutions. According to the calculation made by the higher education system improvement task force, the amount of money spent directly for education per year that is tuition fee is 3, 687 Birr (MOE 2001). Compared with the above average figure for degree program in private institutions (about 3555.6 Birr), it means private institutions are less expensive. In the following section household income and consumption will be presented so as to make comparisons between the two.

2.2.2. Household Income and Consumption Patterns

In this section household income and expenditure will be presented. This is shown in the following table.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Households by Economic Variable, Categories at Country, Rural and Urban Levels.

<i>Reporting Level</i>	<i>Categories (in Birr)</i>	<i>Economic Variables</i>			
		<i>Income</i>	<i>Domestic Expenditure</i>	<i>Total Receipts</i>	<i>All payments</i>
Country	Below 2,000	22.6	8.0	20.6	6.6
	2,000-12,599	72.1	87.8	76.6	86.4
	12,600 or more	2.3	4.1	2.7	6.9
Rural	Below 2,000	22.6	8.0	18.1	6.7
	2,000-12,599	75.9	89.4	80.1	88.6
	12,600 or more	1.5	2.6	1.8	4.8
Urban	Below 2,000	43.0	7.4	35.5	5.7
	2,000-12,599	49.5	79.2	56.3	74.9
	12,600 or more	7.6	13.3	8.2	19.3

Source: CSA, Report on the 1999/2000 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey. As the above table shows, on average 97.7 % of the households earn less than 12,600 Birr. Out of this, 72.1 percent of households earn an annual income that ranges between 2,000 and 12,599. One might argue here that the income statistics reported by households usually tends to underestimate the actual income level of households. To avoid the underestimation, as the above table shows, a total receipt of households is also presented. A look into the total receipts of households also

reinforces the above point as the total receipt of 76.6 % of households falls within a range of 2,000-12,599 Birr.

It is essential to note here that this is household rather than individual demand. With average household size of five persons (CSA 2004), it means on average five people in a given household lead their life with an annual income of about 12,600 a year which is close to 1,000 Birr (about 100 Euro) a month. Taking into account the average tuition fee in private higher institutions, it means a household needs to spend 24.8 percent of its annual income to send a single member of the household to a TVET program in a given private institution. If the student is to attend a degree program, that would require spending 28.2 percent of the household income.

Statistics on percentage expenditure of households shows that the expenditure on education is by far lower than the above percentages. On average Ethiopian households spend 1% of their income on education, entertainment and recreation and at urban level, the percentage share is about 2.5%. (See table 3 below). Even going for the urban level percentage, the maximum that the larger majority of households can spend on education is about 313.975 birr per annum. It should be noted here that the expenditure on education includes all expenditure on education from primary to tertiary level of education. It is true that primary and secondary education is free of charge in Ethiopia. But sending children to school will always involve cost ranging from educational materials to other related costs. Besides, the 313.975 Birr annual expenditure can be made on education only if all expenditure on recreation and entertainments is curtailed as the 2.5 percent reported expenditure includes recreation and entertainment. Compared to the average figure of 3132.43 Birr tuition fee for a TVET program, for instance, 313.975 Birr is too small and ends up covering only a single month payment.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Expenditure by Expenditure Item and Reporting Level

<i>Expenditure Item</i>	<i>Reporting Level</i>		
	<i>Country</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Food	51.7	56.7	34.6
Beverages	0.3	0.3	0.3
Cigarettes and tobacco	0.4	0.5	0.3
Foods and drinks taken away from home	0.8	0.6	1.3
Clothing and Footwear	7.9	7.7	8.7
Rent, fuel and power, water and construction materials	14.4	13.6	17.0
Furniture, furnishing, and household equipment	4.0	3.4	6.0
Medical care and health expenses	1.0	0.9	1.1
Transportation and communications	1.6	0.9	4.2
Recreation, entertainment and education	1.0	0.5	2.5
Personal care and Effects	0.8	0.7	1.2
Miscellaneous goods and services	2.2	2.5	1.4
Household non-consumption expenditure	13.9	11.7	21.6
Food	Country	Rural	Urban

Source: CSA: the 1999/2000 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey

An important question to be raised here is whether there are rooms to adjust the consumption pattern. But as it can be seen from the above table, it is a difficult option. Other expenditure variables are tough competitors and reducing their percentage share of total income to increase the percentage share of expenditure on education is not a likely option. “Even if families perceive the high benefits associated with education, they may lack the disposable income necessary to cover the immediate costs. The lower income groups are affected much more than the middle-income groups. As the poor have to spend much of their income on subsistence, they often have to make difficult choices.” (Patrinos 1999 Page No.).

An argument might arise here that investment made on education is not necessarily from the current year’s earning as people might invest their prior saving. But the saving status of households and the population at large shows a different result. According to the 1999/2000 Household Income, consumption and expenditure Survey result, out of the total expenditure/income at country level, Ethiopian households save some 4.0 percent of their total earnings. The figure is different for urban and rural Ethiopia. In rural Ethiopia, households save 3.6 percent of the total earnings, while the saving component for urban households is 5.2 percent of their total earning (CSA 2001). With 4 percent saving rate (assuming no interest gain), a given household needs to save for more than 17 years to be able to pay tuition fee for a single member of the household.

It is very clear from the above analysis that the cost of higher education institutions is significantly beyond the reach of the average citizen. Under the current financial arrangements, the potential contributions of households are limited leading to an untapped willingness of households to pay for education.

And this would obviously raise equity issues. Even if the supply side expansion of private higher education is significant, there are serious constraints from demand side. Tertiary education is still by and large inaccessible to the majority of the poor. Studies indicate that even in the cases where problem of access is solved by public provision of tertiary education, the income background of students, the type of high school attended, etc. might have an important bearing on the success rate of students after enrolment. A recent World Bank study in Argentina proves this conclusion.

Recent household survey from Argentina illustrates that even open access tertiary education systems can be deceptive from an equity standpoint. Despite the appearance of democratic access for all secondary education graduates, academic outcomes are strongly influenced by socio economic origin. Only fifth of the students from the poorest two quintiles who enter as first year students under Argentina's open access policy actually graduate from public universities.

By contrast, there are relatively few failures among students from the richest quintile (Patrinos 1999 page No.).

The above analysis then leads to an inescapable conclusion that tertiary education is still elitist as regards access and the socio economic composition of the student body. The argument that tertiary education can offer better opportunities and life chances for low income and minority students, "there by increasing their employability, income prospect, social mobility and decreasing income inequality" (Ibid) does not hold informal.

Effort is made to see the trend in student enrolment in the past 5 years and the result shows that demand for higher education in private institutions is showing a decreasing trend (see Appendix). In some of the colleges compared in the previous years, the number of students has decreased. In others, the number of students is increasing with a decreasing trend. Though not officially reported to the Ministry of Education, there are incidents of bankruptcy and possible close down at least one or two colleges. Besides, as the number of students reported shows the enrollment rate, the statistics does not show the drop out rate. But according to information obtained from registrar offices of some of the institutions, the drop-out rate is noticeable. Of course, whether the drop-out is related to the tuition fee and if so to what extent is an issue to be seen carefully. But as there is every possible correlation, the issue should be examined through further research.

3. Demand-Side Financing Mechanisms

Needless to say, fiscal constraints prevent many especially low income-countries from relying solely on government revenues to finance desired educational expansion. That burden is shared partly by the private sector. That task is on being done well in Ethiopia except for questions of affordability. As it is shown in the following part of this paper, there exist noticeable demand side constraints in private higher education industry in the country. Considering the tuition fee only, which is but only a part of the total cost of attending college, the above analysis has clearly indicated that the private provision of tertiary education are beyond the reach of the average citizen.

This would call for some kind of remedial action to tackle the constraint. Countries around the world use different types of demand side financing mechanisms to help poor families invest on schooling. These include voucher, stipends, scholarships, support given to educational institutions and student loans.

A voucher is a payment that a public entity gives directly to students and that students use at the school of their choice. It could be a chit given to each parent, cashable only to appropriately designed institutions. The value of the chit could be equal to, or somewhat less than, per student

government expenditure in public schools (West 1996). Vouchers could be tax funded or privately funded.

In addition to those taxes funded, there exist privately funded voucher systems. To see the difference, consider first a situation where the government taxes are given industry by “X” amount of dollars and uses the proceeds to supply education vouchers. In a second scenario, the government tax does not apply. Instead the industry voluntarily donates “X” amount of dollars from its revenues to finance educational scholarships (Ibid).

Many countries in the OECD, the US and even in a number of developing countries use voucher system. A full-blown voucher scheme exists in Chile, while targeted schemes are in place in Colombia and Kenya, among other places. Studies conducted to evaluate the voucher system show that they have increased educational opportunities for the poor, and achievement results are positive for many students if not necessarily for all. Proponents claim that vouchers will make the educational system more efficient, improve quality, increase access, and enhance equity. Those who oppose such proposals focus on the poor arguing that they are not able to make the right choices and that a voucher based educational finance system will increase social stratification. For poor countries or rural areas, critics argue, the debate over the choice is irrelevant.... (Demand Side Financing Mechanisms, retrieved from the Internet date).

Student loan is another major demand side financing mechanism. Theoretically, since the private rates of returns to education are high, the budget constraints faced by students can be overcome by borrowing. Practically, however, the option is not available as is the case in Ethiopia. Even when the option for borrowing is there, the poor are still denied access owing to the existence of strong imperfections that reduce participation. “Banks do not accept the promise of future earnings as collateral. The failure of the capital market thus affects not only the lower income groups but also middle-income groups who cannot finance tertiary education without credit” (Patrinos 1999 Page No.).

Offering scholarships is another major financing technique. Experiences of many countries even in the developing world show that there are interesting results in that area. In Senegal, for instance, annual funding for the scholarships is almost \$US750,000. Half of the money is spent on those studying outside Senegal. A local government committee, on the recommendation of officials, makes allocation decisions. In Gambia, there is a scholarship scheme for girls. The Cote d'Ivoire government has introduced a program of sponsoring public students to attend private institution to help bridge some of the gaps in the supply of places in public institutions (Ibid). Though the

amount and type vary, the survey result indicates that almost all private institutions in Ethiopia offer scholarships.

Some countries have also experiences of providing direct support to institutions. A study conducted by the World Bank in Pakistan shows that private school subsidy has significantly increased enrolment by the poor and “...may also prove to be a means to leverage public funds in order to provide access to schooling at rates faster than possible with public funds alone ” (Kim Jooseop *et al* 1998).

In general, it can be concluded that there are several options for demand financing in private tertiary education. There is no single option that must be used by all. The choice of the options depends on the specific country and situation under consideration.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations.

Constituting 75 % of business and computer science graduates, and nearly half percent of law graduates, needless to say, private providers play a critical role in the higher education development strategy of the country. The 40 percent or so growth of the private sector involvement in higher education is so remarkable that policy makers and researchers have focused on the supply side boost ignoring constraints from demand side.

This paper has made it clear, however, that not all groups in society can afford the direct and indirect costs associated with investing in education. The findings of this paper show that for the majority of households, the average household income and receipt is too small to invest on higher education for members of the family. The existing expenditure pattern also shows that the percentage share of education from total household expenditure is too small to cover even the tuition fees of the private providers. The saving rate is also too small that much cannot be expected from that angle.

This would basically means that even if the growing private investment would offer more opportunity for students that are unable to join public universities and colleges, the investment to be made is taking away that opportunity from them. In the case of Ethiopia, except for the high-income groups that constitute a tiny minority of the total households, in general terms even the tuition fee is not affordable.

Education in general and higher education in particular is a very productive investment. The survey of the literature review reveals that both social and private returns to education are significant. The 1995 estimate for Ethiopia shows that the private and public rates of return to education respectively are 27 % and 12 %. However, as education is a lifetime investment, the

benefits can only be realized in the future while the costs are immediate. Since the benefits of education accrue not only to its direct recipients, but also to society at large, there is a clear need for intervention to rectify problems of under investment in education.

Unless some remedial actions are sought, the demand side constraints would not only exacerbate the existing inequality but would also impose serious limitations even on the supply side expansion as demand is already exhibiting declining trend. This then calls for some sort of intervention from the government and other stakeholders. In light of this, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- There is a need for state intervention: with the above analysis in mind, the existing demand side problems in the private higher education industry requires introduction of major intervention packages from the government side. Patrinos points out.

When private demand for schooling is lower than optimal, along with the other market failure arguments, a role for public intervention may be justified. However, it does not necessarily follow that the public sector role is provision. It may not even be finance. Changes in regulations or incentives could be all that is needed. Sometimes simply providing more information so that optimal decisions can be made will be sufficient. Nevertheless, the state in most countries is the major financier of education. (Patrinos 1999 Page No.).

This intervention might range from direct subsidies through other supports to student loans. The following are possible areas of consideration.

- A) Public funding of students going to private colleges is one area of possible intervention. This might take a form of direct subsidy for private institutions that admit poor students as is seen from experiences of other countries. A possible argument to be raised here is whether this recommendation is viable with the already existing constraints of public finance. As is shown in Section 2.2.2 of this paper, from purely cost point of view it is less expensive to send a certain student to a private than public institutions. A student needs about 3, 687 Birr to attend a degree program in the field of business and economics in a public university while the average cost for the same program in private providers is only 355.6 Birr. Though this is something to be explored more, the private and public returns to invest in both institutions are similar. This kind of intervention might be launched gradually by focusing on the very needy. It might, for instance, take a form of scholarships for rural girls and/or for students coming from the very poor family that are unable to pay for their education but have good performance in high school and preparatory studies. This option has a good number of benefits. “If education was provided under market

conditions, only those who could afford to pay tuition fees could enrol. Not only would there be under investment from the social point of view, but also income inequalities would be preserved from one generation to the next since education is itself a determinant of lifetime income” (Ibid).

- B) Provide loans to students going to private institutions. Under the recently launched cost-sharing scheme in public institutions, students that cannot pay their share of the cost at the outset are provided with loan facilities and pay their share of the cost as “graduate tax” with a payment period that extends upto 15 years after graduation. Those going to formal employment to both public and private firms will pay back their loan from their salary according to the terms of agreement they enter into with Ministry of Education. But the loan administration has a clear problem when it comes to self-employed students. It is not clear how the loan repayment is administered in the case of self-employed graduates. (World Bank 2003). As the loan repayment can be administered with similar manner, a mechanism can be created, because there is no logical ground to exclude students going to private higher education institutions. Except for those self employed, the loan repayment can be administered with similar manner. The contract of agreement may not be between Ministry of Education and the students but between banks and students or any other organ established for that purpose.
- C) Other financing mechanisms should also be sought. As it is mentioned above, except some of the extension students whose tuition fee is paid by employers, the channelling of funds through other funding sources is negligible. It is only a single college that has reported to have students sponsored by different organizations other than parents and employers. As human capital development is a priority area, all stakeholders should have a role in this regard. For instance, different local and international NGOs can allocate a certain amount of money for that purpose. Besides, some sort of funding agency can be established. Support given by different individuals such as Ethiopians living abroad could be channelled through this fund.
- D) Investment made by parents can be increased significantly by encouraging special saving for children’s education starting from the early age of the child. This is poorly practiced currently. Banks should provide special incentives to encourage lifetime saving.
- E) The type and number of scholarships might vary, but almost all respondents reported as giving scholarships. This is a trend to be encouraged. The government can indirectly encourage this by providing other supports to minimize the cost of operation for the colleges. One such support could be making practical the import tax exemptions private

tertiary institutions are entitled to the importation of instructional materials and providing loan facilities, which are non-existent now (World Bank 2003).

F) As it is indicated elsewhere in this paper, the tuition fee charged by private tertiary institutions is not affordable. Though this is an issue to be examined through further research, whether the tuition fee charged by private institutions is reasonable or exaggerated, is another area of consideration. Considering the fact that public institutions are more expensive than the private ones and that tuition fee is more or less similar in the majority of the private institutions, this might be highly unlikely but it should be examined. In the case of TVET program, the number of hours students have to take is too many by any standard and this would reflect on the cost. The Ministry of Education needs to consider major revision in this regard.

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Appendix 1: Number of Students in Different Colleges

College A

Department	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	Trend
Accounting	2191	1033	677	282	86	-	Increasing
SSOM	1051	294	237	41	-	-	Increasing
Purchasing &Supplies Management	190	59	166	66	30	-	Up and down
Marketing	972	662	656	191	64	-	Increasing with decreasing trend
General management	1163	179	184	56	20	-	Increasing
Import & Export Mgt	34	9	81	40	-	-	Decreasing
Transport Mgt	59	17	91	30	-	-	Up & down
Computer Science	764	272	214		-	-	Increasing

College B

Department	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	Trend
Accounting	-	91	84	-	-	-	Increasing with decreasing trend
SSOM	-	57	61				Decreasing
Computer Science	-	326	206	-	-	-	Increasing with decreasing trend
Computer Maintenance	-	146	104	-	-	-	Increasing with decreasing trend
IT + Business	290	-	-	-	-	-	-

College C

Department	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	Trend
Accounting	71	84		-	-	-	Decreasing
SSOM	32	42	-	-	-	-	Decreasing
Computer Science	111	125	-	-	-	-	Decreasing
Marketing	52	65	-	-	-	-	Decreasing
Law	32	40	-	-	-	-	Decreasing

College D

Department	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	Trend
Accounting	555	916	400	206	279	25	Increasing then decreasing
SSOM	487	587	184	79	77	-	Increasing then decreasing
Computer Science	505	284	101	-	-	-	Increasing
Marketing Mgt	523	357	118	50	25	8	Increasing
Law	282	262	86	33	16	8	Increasing with decreasing trend

College E

Department	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	Trend
Accounting	847	457	239	-	-	-	Increasing
SSOM	234	58	25	-	-	-	Increasing
MIS	162	-	-	-	-	-	Increasing
Management	171	54	26	-	-	-	Increasing
Marketing	420	56	-	-	-	-	Increasing

Major Problems Impeding the Progress of Private Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Private higher education provision in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon which is at the early stage of development. In the demanding task of building an educational institution, problems emanating from within and without the institutions challenge the efforts of education institutions. However, in order to sustain the efforts for the better, considering the significant contribution the private higher education institutions are making in alleviating the lack of trained human power in Ethiopia, the problems have to be identified and corrective measures should be taken in time. A problem well identified is a problem half solved. Therefore, the purpose of this research paper is to identify and project the major problems encountered by some selected private higher education institutions in this country, and forward likely solutions.

The relevant data is gathered from primary sources through interviewing of the people responsible for the academic management of the selected institutions. The selection of the institutions is done based on the type of training they offer and an attempt is made to incorporate a representative sample. Observation made by the researcher is also incorporated in the identification of the problems and in the interpretation and forwarding of the suggestions.

The results of this study show that private higher education institutions have faced major problems in the implementation of the new curriculum of TVET programs mainly because there has been no sufficient transitional time to make preliminary preparations and also mainly because the new curriculum presupposes no consideration of the condition of the society's readiness and capacity, which has been explicitly evidenced in the implementation of long stretched classes and apprenticeship. Besides, private higher education institutions still experience major impeding problems, though there have been some changes and improvements during the last five years with regard to accreditation, cooperation, resource management and research endeavors.

1. Introduction

Private higher education in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is making significant contributions in alleviating the country's severe shortage of trained manpower. Over the last four years, private higher education institutions have been growing in substantial number and toiling to lay a firm foundation in the provision of higher education. In this effort, noticeable developments have been made and a significant number of them have been able to register promising performances.

However, in this process the institutions have passed through challenging circumstances that have resulted from several factors among which higher education, the new experience and the resource

deprived environment, are the glaring ones. For some time now, some of the problems experienced have persisted and long remained with them while others are newly emerging and threatening the very existence of what has been built so far. When the institutions are about to pass the early stage of laying a foundation and move to the subsequent stage of strengthening themselves, they are being forced to go back and start from scratch anew. Taking the significant contribution they are making in the overall educational development of the country, it is imperative that the major problems be identified and appropriate measures be taken to stop the jeopardy. If efforts are put to identify and check the deterring problems in time, the institutions will continue to play a significant role in upgrading the country's capacity to offer quality education and to train more humanpower.

Hence, the objective of this paper is to identify major challenges experienced by Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) and to forward possible measures that might be employed to put the perils under control.

2. Research Methodology

For the identification of the pressing problems, the relevant data was gathered through interview from primary sources; i.e., PHEIs in Ethiopia. The institutions were selected based on random sampling technique. However, to obtain a reasonable distribution and representation, seven PHEIs were selected based on the fields of specialization they offer. To this end, private higher education institutions that offer basic sciences, business, engineering, distance education, medical science, teacher education, information technology were selected as targets of the study. In the data gathering process, with major problem areas in focus; i.e. TVET curriculum, accreditation, cooperation, research and problems related to management. Data were collected by interviewing the Academic Deans of the institutions and the responses were analyzed through descriptive statistics.

3. Review of Related Literature

In the process of establishing and expanding higher education institutions, there are naturally stumbling blocks encountered in various aspects. The threats could sometimes be disillusioning and disastrous if not well identified and addressed in time. Timely measure could give the actors the chance to change the threats into opportunities that can be explored and used for the better. Therefore, for every concerned party, it is important to consider this important fact and recognize the extent to which each challenge is an opportunity to explore (Carnesale 2000).

The experiences of other countries reveal that the society as a whole is responsible for the alleviation of the problems that private higher education institutions might face since in the final analysis the outcome of the institutions is for the use and benefit of the society at large. Thus, it is

momentous that the stakeholders, users, the society and the government play a significant role in ascertaining the continued existence of PHEIs. With respect to the government's role, the government without being limited to just only the initial stage of popularization of higher education, it should continue to further what has been started by strengthening the education offering bodies. In countries that have established and developed private higher education institutions, efforts have been put towards strengthening private education alongside public education. China in the past years has done this and can be taken as the best example that has benefited from such strategy. Experts have indicated the importance of the strategy of not only establishing private higher education but also nurturing its continued growth. In response to that, the Chinese government supported private higher education and as a result private higher education in China is well expanded and developed (Aijing 1999).

Along this line, what can be mentioned here is that the society at large should free itself from long standing and deep rooted misconceptions. Having realized the outcome of private higher education institutions, in the United States of America the government and the society as a whole have changed their course of actions and rendered assistance to the growth and expansion of the institutions. Albert Carnesale states,

...there was almost an unwritten rule that the private universities wouldn't go after public money and the public universities wouldn't go after private money. That understanding is now gone on both counts. Stanford University would have a terrible time without all the federal support for research and the Cal grants, and UCLA would have a terrible time, if not for private giving and foundation-supported research.

The world has reached a stage of knowledge explosion. To be able to fit into this changing world, educational systems and infrastructures just like other sectors have had to change and are doing so. To this effect, the whole educational milieu has to change along the changing world. Specifically, for private higher education institutions to survive in the competitive world and register successful results, they have to move in line with changing forms of education and knowledge (Duderstadt 2002).

Hence, the conducive environment for change should be made available so that the institutions might upgrade their status to be able to be competitive nationally and internationally. The old approaches such as centralization of the educational system expressed in terms of accreditation, curriculum and working guidelines should cease to function. Referring to Luc Weber, Duderstadt states that the institutions should be granted subsidiarity and autonomy in the sphere of higher education. This implies that the institutions should be allowed to have

... more control over all aspects of their operations, including academic programmes, budgets, student selection, and faculty hiring. Luc Weber, former rector of the University of Geneva, applies the economic term "subsidiarity" to describe this in the sense that it involves pushing authority and decision making down to the lowest possible level. Centralization is a very awkward approach to higher education during a time of change (Duderstadt 2002 Page No.).

In this regard, a very crucial problem to be raised is the fact that private higher education institutions are controlled strictly to the extent of prescribing every thing needed and to be done. Such kind of system is too restrictive and prevents the institutions from being innovative. Public policies will no longer be as effective as they used to be in the new global market competition. James states that public policies and leaders are discarding public policy in favor of market forces to determine priorities for social investment. Higher education can no longer assume that public policies and investment will shield them from market competition (James 2002).

With regard to innovation in higher education, the private institutions and others should have autonomy to fit into the fast growing world. In the Ethiopian case, the Ministry of Education is at the moment making constant change as far as the new educational policy is concerned and at the same time strictly and paradoxically supervising and restricting the institutions. When situations are in constant change, the future is unpredictable and disruptive in many aspects. To wisely tackle such a challenge, what is needed is planning based on experimental approach. Institutions should be allowed to have the authority to be innovative and experimental (James 2002).

Besides realizing the importance of the contribution of the private higher education institutions, the Ministry should create the grounds for the provision of the necessary and timely support. The support could be rendered in various forms one of which is to set realistic accreditation process by taking the country's existing practical situations. Also, the accreditation process should be geared towards creating a conducive, constructive and encouraging environment for the institutions to grow.

What follows from here is that institutions should be able to operate smoothly despite the challenges. This will be practical if all concerned provide them support. The society should be there to support, the institutions themselves have to support one another and the Ministry of Education and government run institutions should also facilitate the conditions whereby the private institutions contribute significantly and meaningfully. James maintains that alliance is significant among those parties. He explains that " the same market forces that drive our colleges and universities to focus on core competencies where they can be competitive also provide strong

incentive to build alliance to address the broader, and more diverse needs of society" (UNESCO 2002 page No).

The alliance should be from all aspects. As the experience of the other countries show that socializing the system of higher education is significant. The society should work in close collaboration with the institutions constructively not negatively as it has been the practice. Jin states

In the 21st century, higher education will also further strengthen the alliance between universities and industrial block by trying to build scientific zones within some of the universities. The aim here is to encourage closer relations between academic institutions and economic society in order to encourage the application of research results in the development of industrial products. Presently, there is separation of the outcome of scientific experiments and their practical application (1999 Page No.).

What Jin has stated has a far reaching meaning that applies to all spheres of knowledge and society. In addition to producing trained workforce that a country needs, this is highly felt in the implementation of apprenticeship and office practices.

Maintaining the importance of inculcating new approaches in every respect, the institutions, both private and government, need to work in collaboration in the areas of research, teaching and resource management. The collaboration has to go to the extent of becoming a formal entity. Experts have stated that "the context of globalization, interdependences of nations and human institutions calls for the private higher educational institutions to form into reputable associations and consortia for maximizing resources, benchmarking of standards, and peer evaluation" (UNESCO 2001 Page No.).

Despite the practical problems, research should make up some part of the institutions' activity. For this, the institutions, the students and the instructors should join hands and register results. The institutions should lay the ground for both basic research and action and management research. As far as basic research is concerned, it is only in universities that it can be carried out (Albert 2000).

For effective management of resources, action research and management research are very necessary for emerging institutions. Besides, these researches might help the institutions to contribute significantly to immediate needs of the society (Albert 2000).

In collaboration with all concerned, the private higher education institutions must work towards curbing major problems that deter their progress and reduce their contributions to the society. This requires an awareness of the real problems and changing them into opportunities to explore and

work for the better. The following section highlights on the major problems impeding the private higher education institutions in this country.

4. Findings and Analysis

In this section an attempt is made to categorize and analyze major and common problems experienced by private higher education institutions in the areas of the TVET curriculum, accreditation, cooperation, research and managerial problems. As it has been evident in the study, the problems expressed by all of the respondents are of a similar nature and, therefore, fall in the same category.

4. Major Problem Areas

4.1 The TVET Curriculum and Its Implementation

4.1.1 Extended Class Hours

In the TVET curriculum, class hours are long and stretched which demand much work from teachers and students. Teachers have to teach for many hours for which naturally they have to be paid. In practice, in private higher education institutions teachers are supposed to teach for a maximum of 15 or 18 credit hours (cr. hrs). If the credit hours exceed this limit, the instructors are entitled to part-time payments. The TVET curriculum has it that an instructor teaches 35 cr. hrs per week and in studies in which there are laboratory classes, the hours could be more. As the respondents pointed out, considering the already existing capacity, the institutions have and the absence of transitional period before the implementation of the TVET curriculum, this new situation is demanding for the institutions. To be able to accommodate the many hours of the TVET curriculum requirement, the institutions will have to maximize their capacity by making a substantial increase in school tuition fee. The applicability of this increment will not be smoothly welcome by users owing to the low economic status of the majority of the society. As it has been tried out in some cases, there have been mass outbursts of dissatisfaction and unwillingness. The society is neither ready nor capable to accept this kind of change which has been observed in the fierce disappointment and resentment expressed so far. In some cases, the users were so disappointed that they failed to understand that this is the government's policy in implementation and in worst cases the users took it as if they were cheated. Practically speaking, if the institutions are going to work as they should work and make increments; it is possible to assume that the number of students who would be able to afford the payment and learn will drop drastically. Unless the institutions do some kind of reform to implement the curriculum in the proper form, the education system will be in a problematic situation. Therefore, on the one hand, the institutions will have to adjust their ways of operation. Doing this is a national responsibility as well as a survival question for private higher education institutions in the country. On the other, the society's capacity is not ready to entertain this kind of adjustment.

4.1.1.2 Unstable Educational Policy

According to almost all of the respondents, the instability of the new educational policy has been a source of complications for the PHEIs. It is known that educational institutions have to operate in accordance with policies and guidelines set by the MOE. However, the guidelines and policies are being altered now and again by the Ministry. This constant change of the policies and guidelines has had adverse effect upon the institutions in all respects. For instance, with respect to admission requirements, curriculum design, teaching and learning process preparation and implementation, evaluation system, etc., the institutions have had to restructure themselves over and over again even up to this very recent time. These aspects are at the heart of the institutions systems of operation which means that the recurrent changes and instabilities are shaking the very base of the institutions in terms of resource and time management.

Private higher education institution is only five years old. A few years before the government encouraged private investors to invest on education and some responsible citizens responded and opted to go through the tedious and challenging process of making education accessible to a significant number of the population. Now that the new educational policy is in operation, the institutions have had to reorganize and start from scratch so to say. They have had to undergo through demanding and frustrating changes in terms of material preparation, accessing expertise, and co-ordination. Rather than building upon what has been established, they have been forced to begin anew which in turn is deterring the refinement process they have had to go through. Hence, they have been deprived of the opportunity whereby they could work to contribute hugely towards upgrading the quality of education they provide.

The respondents pointed out that the instability of the policies not only affects their present performance but it also makes the future unforeseeable for the institutions. What might happen tomorrow can't be positively foreseen because what has been done so far is shaky and there seems to be no fixed terms of reference that can be relied on for some substantial period of time. This lack of reliability reflects the new educational policy's nature of being too dynamic to be permanent.

From this, it can be said that the institutions are facing problems that emanate from the MOE's administration. The MOE restructures its systems of operation over and over again. The restructuring might not be a cause of serious concern for government owned higher education institutions for the reason that they are supported by the government and the Ministry. Nevertheless, the grave consequences of the constant restructuring are highly felt by PHEIs. The impacts have been deterring to their progresses for the MOE has been taking no active role in

providing any support or compensation. Insurmountable though the problems are, the government and MOE simply leave the institutions to wade through the difficulties and fend for themselves.

Another example of reshaping that has significantly affected the PHEIs has been the government's decision to transform some high schools into diploma offering colleges as a result of which the intake of PHEIs almost dried up. In addition to this, the government has doubled the intake of students. In line with this change, the respondents indicated that the PHEIs have had to make dramatic changes in order to continue working. Accordingly, some have begun to offer degree programs even if the chances are very narrow. Some are struggling to fulfill the requirements of the TVET curriculum. However, the tiring efforts don't seem to be promising because of the Ministry of Education (MOE) inconsiderate supervision which is in particular reflected in the accreditation process.

It can be observed from here that the MOE's new direction is hindering the growth of the PHEIs. This is so because in all respects, on the part of the MOE, there is an attempt to accommodate every eligible candidate for higher education by maximizing their student intake capacity which in effect leaves no room for PHEIs to survive let alone expand. It can be said that the MOE's exercise does show an intention quite contradictory from what has been projected before PHEIs came into existence. At the outset it was encouragement to invest on education. Presently, however, the MOE is heading towards amassing every student population into its hold. This monopolizing indicates that the MOE is heading towards a new intention and direction. The given situations do not seem to open a promising future. 14% of the respondents in this regard have the opinion that may be the institutions might have to think of reforming themselves into high schools which calls for an upsetting, discouraging and devastating restructuring again. The time lag and the resource wastage that might result in from this kind of constantly shifting charge is a crucial problem for PHEIs.

4.1.1.3 Rigid Curriculum

In the new educational policy institutions are expected to adhere to the new policy which deprives them of their capacity to be innovative. To compete at international levels in the global market, the institutions will have to have an opportunity to explore innovative ways of providing education. However, the chances that they can be so are very limited as it has been observed in the pre-accreditation process. In fact, as it was reported, in 28% of the situations the curriculum is way behind the practical situations of the country. In the curriculum of the TVET program, particularly in the Secretarial Science and Office Management fields, students are expected to learn typewriting using the old typewriter and yet when students are looking for apprenticeship, offices do not welcome them for they want students who can type using the computer rather than

typewriter. Due to this, it was pointed out that first year students are experiencing difficulties during apprenticeship.

4.1.1.4 Flaws in the Curriculum

14% of the respondents have reflected that they have discovered sequence problems in the courses to be offered. As evident in the curriculum, a course which should be taught at a higher level is supposed to be taught at a lower level and vice-versa. The implications this might have for students in the knowledge acquisition and for the institution in resource management and knowledge provision are grave. Also, there is said to be category problem as stated in the new education guideline. Because of title similarity some courses are categorized in a field of study that they should not belong too. The institutions have suggested that there should be a revision of the courses to be offered in consultation with experts in the specific areas of knowledge. They have also indicated that the PHEIs should be given the opportunity to involve in this kind of endeavor.

4.1.1.5 Apprenticeship

a) Lack of Awareness

From the reports of all the respondents, it is observed that apprenticeship is another major area of problem in the TVET curriculum implementation. The problem in this regard is the readiness of the society which is supposed to provide opportunities for office practices. From the outright refusals of the various offices, it can be said that the society at large is not ready for apprenticeship. The society does not recognize the benefit of the apprenticeship for itself and for its members. The very few that have some awareness about apprenticeship prefer students from government owned institutions to students who come from private owned ones. They open their doors for those students who claim to have come from government owned institutions rather than those who are from private owned institutions.

b) Lack of Resource

The respondents have revealed that the number of students and the offices that are available are not proportional. Private investment is a recent phenomenon in the country. The infrastructure is limited to accommodate the huge number of students who seek apprenticeship. Leave alone the readiness, the physical presence of the offices is also another problem. There are no enough offices to accommodate the huge number of the students' population that seek for apprenticeship.

It is also doubtful to think that apprenticeship is carried out properly in the manner it should be. Added to the above problem even those that might get an office might not be in a position to practice well. Even if they might accommodate the students, as in many cases, the offices won't

provide them with any work to do. This would be a clue to lack of awareness of how apprenticeship would be of value to them, lack of preparedness, and lack of sufficient capacity.

The practical problem forces all concerned to view the TVET curriculum in question. Is the TVET curriculum the only way to curb the society's problems? Why should it be necessary to deconstruct rather than build upon already existing resources and systems? Is it worth for the country to go through this cost to change the prevailing poor educational and economic situations? If the TVET curriculum and the new educational policy are said to be the only means, there, at the center, is the student the future generation upon whose shoulder lies the future of this country. Whose responsibility is to nurture and cherish this most valued treasure?

4.2 Accreditation

In this regard, it was said that the MOE is functioning as a competitor rather than a regulatory body. It seemed at the beginning that the PHEIs were needed to be supportive hands of the MOE which in the due course, however, has turned out to be rather different. The MOE is building and strengthening the government owned institutions by maximizing and upgrading their capacity. However, nothing of this nature is rendered to PHEIs. The MOE is neither working towards maximizing the PHEI's capacity nor is it sharing the country's resources with PHEIs. The privileges, for example, the MOE gets from foreign grant givers is made available to GHEIs whereas PHEIs are allowed to get no share of that.

4.2.1 Rigid Accreditation Process

The respondents have indicated that the MOE has not been flexible in its evaluation mechanism. In some cases, institutions that have launched degree programmes have not been entitled to pre-accreditation on the grounds of having no sufficient qualified staff but is expressed in terms of having MA and PhD degree holders. The reality of the country shows that there are only a few PhD and MA holders. In some fields of study, it is not possible to find sufficient number of graduates holding an MA let alone PhD. On the whole, the practical situations of the country show that the country has not been in a position to train as many scholars as the country might need.

It was also reported by 14% of the respondents that even those that are already trained do not possess a satisfying level of expertise. They have revealed that there are observed problems with regard to subject knowledge mastery, teaching methodology, research capacities and language skills. This shows that the MA programs at the already existing government owned universities have not been strong enough. Given a very limited resource, the private higher education institutions are expected to have a given number of qualified instructors. It is really paradoxical to be demanded to have as many as a certain number of scholars where the source from which the institutions can take is scanty or non-existent. Added to the above mentioned situation, the

institutions have suggested that there might be experienced people who might perform far better than a PhD or an MA holder due to many years of real life work experience. The institutions, therefore, require to be allowed to be given some room for their own decision, selection and action. Accordingly, it could be underlined here that the accreditation requirement will have to be mindful of the existing realities of the country in which the institutions are operating.

In relation to this, the other issue raised by the respondents was the failure on the part of the MOE to consider the practical realities the institutions are working in. The institutions are at the initial stage of establishing the base for the provision of higher education. This means that the expectations from the MOE should not be too demanding to expect the institutions to fulfill every aspect of what is needed of them. The institutions have demanded that they should not be assessed ambitiously. From their responses, it can be observed that for example the institutions are required to have a building which they can't share with other offices. They are expected to have sports field, a quite surrounding which actually means that they have to go to the outskirts of the city to have spacious land at their disposal. Moving to the outskirts of the city is not realistic for the recipients are in the city and, if that happens, the institutions will have literally no student to enable them keep on functioning. What can be said from here is that the MOE doesn't have priority areas in the process of accreditation with due consideration of the existing situations in the country. The institutions are not measured in terms of priority issues — areas that they are expected to fulfill before other matters. An institution might have the necessary curriculum, the qualified staff but might be sharing building with another office. The fact that the institution has managed to prepare the curriculum which is the core of the education will lose its value due to the other aspects. This is not a fair and realistic measurement. In a situation where the government is not supporting the institutions in any way, it is not fair to judge based on this strict requirement. If at all the MOE has thought of giving any kind of support, this could be the situation to be seized; that is, setting priorities for their levels and evaluating them on this ground. This is giving the institutions a grace period. The MOE could check in the other aspects too when the appropriate time comes. Here it doesn't mean that the institutions should not be required to have a play ground, for example. What is meant here is that they should be allowed to make a natural growth and be evaluated stage by stage depending on set priorities. It was also stated that this kind of accreditation process would be a good opportunity for MOE to give a hand to the institutions and to create a realistic ground for growth which will significantly and meaningfully expand education.

What is more, if sharing a building is something that can't be tolerated, and too affecting to the educational provision, 14% of the respondents said that a measure could be taken. However, if the sharing part is not that dangerous some sort of consideration and compromise has to be reached.

It was also reported that in some cases they have been required to have separate buildings for different programs. This is again an issue that should be left for the institutions' management. What should be seen is how they can manage to entertain their students within the existing resource they have. Such requirements are too ambitious for a developing country such as ours and for a country that is doing its best to expand higher education despite its limited resource. It was pointed out that in developed countries there are cases where different programs are run in the same building. Hence, looking at the practical situations of the country, requiring such a condition to be fulfilled will be too farfetched.

4.2.2 Partiality of the MOE

The other problem raised by the respondents was the partiality of the accreditation implementation. It was pointed out that there seems to be a double standard in operation. What is allowed in one institution is not allowed in another. Still more, the respondents have revealed that some institutions that are sharing a building with other offices are allowed to be accredited while others have been denied for the same reason. In relation to the above mentioned fact, what can be said here is that, as the respondents put it, the MOE's credibility in its implementation of the accreditation process is doubtful. It can be said here that the MOE seems to have another set of standard which is not evident for the institutions.

Another aspect where partiality reflected is the stand the MOE has regarding the government and private institutions. What is not required of the government institution is required of the private owned institution. For the TVET curriculum for example, both are now at the same footing. Nevertheless, there is no pre-accreditation/accreditation for the government owned institutions. More specifically, the private institutions are harshly measured against already set criteria even for the TVET curriculum for which there has been no transitional period. It is known that government institutions have not yet produced modules full scale and yet the private institutions are required to have modules ready at their disposal. If not, they would be denied even the pre-accreditation. What can be said here is that may be the MOE has its own reasons for not evaluating the government owned institutions. However, what is really a problem is its stand towards the private institutions. What cannot be practically done even by the government institutions that have rich experience and resource at their disposals is required of PHEIs. What can be assumed to be practically impossible is expected to be done by them and if not, measures that threaten their visions and efforts are taken. At times, exaggerated measurements that belittle their performances and warn the public have been taken. The stand that the MOE has taken towards the private institutions, which is one of the gravest problems for the institutions, is deconstructive rather than

constructive. From this, it can be said that it sounds as if the MOE doesn't want to see them continue to exist which adds up to the MOE's competitive approach.

4.2.3 Status of the Assessors

The other problem regarding accreditation is the assessors themselves. Those people who represent the MOE and who come to evaluate the institutions do not show a good level of maturity in terms of expertise and value judgment. They don't consider the practical situation of the country and are simply guided by the rules. They simply follow the rules from A to Z. 85% of the respondents have also said that the assessors reflect subjectivity and act according to their own interests and wishes. The comments they make on the spot at the institutions site and the results released from their offices or the MOE do not coincide. As was aired out at the site of evaluation, institutions expect those comments to be incorporated in the formal evaluation comment. However, there are cases when such a thing doesn't happen. For instance, an institution is told that there are no enough rooms and yet they are told that they are not accredited because they have not prepared modules.

It was also mentioned by the respondents that there are technical problems in the accreditation process. At some instances, the assessors visit the institutions in a team while in other cases two individuals are sent to carry out the work. Two is a small number to assess an institution which is the result of a painstaking and demanding job. It was said that the reliability of the assessment will be affected by this limited number. Maximizing the number might give the institutions the benefit of being assessed by different minds from various points of views which will contribute much to the reliability of the assessment.

Still more, when the assessors execute the evaluation, they do it in a very casual way. They request casual questions, questions they feel like to ask but which are not in the stated criteria set by the MOE. Some of them come with set minds and already formulated expectations and biases which are reflected in their questions which seek for matters that are totally out of the MOE's requirements to be fulfilled. In a certain case, it was reported that texts with specific titles were requested. The assessors were naming titles and checking the availability of the requested named book. This is against what has been stated in the MOE's criteria. The expectation regarding books is either to fulfill a certain number of similar copies or different titles; which titles there are, no specific prescriptions as such. Besides, there are no clear points of evaluation which are followed and made evident by the assessors at the time of supervision. As the respondents recounted, the assessors just went around and had a casual look, nothing at hand to tick or cross out, and again when the results were released and sent to the institutions, the comments were too generalized and limited. The institutions have neither been told nor encouraged on their strong and weak sides and

have not been shown the method of the assessment in detail. What happened was that they were simply told either they were accredited or not in a formal letter with a very generalized and limited comment.

Moreover, 14% of the respondents expressed that there have been cases when the institutions have to beg the assessors to go through their curriculum. This indicates that because the assessors have come with an already set and closed mind, they shut off their judgment to other important areas such as the curriculum or catalogue. If the MOE believes that catalogue is not a significant matter then the institutions have to be informed of what is expected of them before hand. If a playground is believed to be a priority issue then this has got to be made evident ahead of time. If this is again the judgment of that particular individual then this is something the MOE has got to see into and reconsider.

Furthermore, the institutions feel that the time for pre-accreditation is not sufficient, particularly for the new curriculum; when every concerned party is at a very demanding preliminary stage, when things have not hold a firm and clear stand, and when there has been no transitional period and when things are hazy for everybody and even for the MOE, the time limit is something to consider as 78% of the respondents said.

4.2.4 Bureaucratic Procedures

In some cases the process is long and bureaucratic. 14 % of the respondents believe that they have to be given accreditation at a time they have asked for not at a time the MOE wants it to be granted. Accreditation is survival to the institutions. Therefore, it should reach them immediately when they have asked for it.

4.2.5 Accreditation: a Means to Instruct or Penalize

Regarding accreditation, the other complication that is expressed by the respondents is the understanding the MOE has about accreditation. The practical experiences show that the MOE has exercised accreditation as a means of penalizing the institutions rather than as a means of learning experience. The respondents said that accreditation should be practiced in a way that it benefits the society; in a way where the weaknesses and strengths are identified and the institutions are advised to take corrective measures in time. Nevertheless, the MOE has been harshly criticizing and discouraging the institutions to the extent of going out public over the media to warn the society. This has somehow created a gap between the institutions and the society and the society has considered the institutions as alien powers that work against them. It was stressed that constantly the MOE has been for quite sometime pointing fingers at the institutions and accusing them of lack of concern they have had for the society. It was also stated here that there might be some situations where some negative practices might have been observed and found but this should not

be taken to mean that there are no concerned and responsible institutions at all. Hence, the MOE's criticism that categorizes all PHEIs in one group is not justified and fair. It can be implied here that this mass penalization reflects that the MOE has viewed itself as the only concerned body in the area of education and that this is an exaggerated self understanding and a denial of the existing realities.

In line with this, 78% of the respondents have suggested that the accreditation body should be an autonomous body that could fairly and realistically evaluate the performance of the institutions for the nation's benefit. A Quality Assurance Agency has been established very recently; however, the institutions have indicated their doubts that still the Agency is under the supervision of the MOE. Hence, they doubt the occurrences of similar strategies that have been implemented so far by the Ministry. 14% of the respondents have said that the Ministry has not been in a position to assess its own policies and regulations because of its being a single body that acts two roles at a time. This implies that the MOE should not be doing two things at a same time; and hence, this calls for a separate body to be established to grant accreditation.

4.3 Co-operation

All of the respondents raised the significance of cooperation among the private institutions and the private and government institutions for the growth of education. They have also pointed out that there are promising initiatives taken in this regard. However, the endeavors with regard to cooperation are not well developed and expanded. They are at the early stage of development as a result of which much is not happening to the benefit of every concerned party. It was pointed out that a union of private higher education institutions is established and is working towards bridging the gap between the private and private and government/private institutions. However, the respondents have suggested that much has to be done in this regard.

What has been practical so far has not been much for one thing due to personal reasons. The institutions are tied up with their own personal achievements. Their businessperson's interest outweighs other responsibilities.

It was also reported by the institutions that even in the limited cooperative work that has been started, there are problematic practices that need to be checked in and improved. Some institutions are not willing to be embraced under the umbrella of a union. Some want to propagate only their own interests undermining the cause of other members. The respondents have emphasized that to solve problems and to ease the building up process in a meaningful way which is beneficial to be organized. It is necessary to underline here that the institutions will have to collaborate in resource sharing, research endeavors, and managerial issues. It was also suggested that they develop

positive understanding among them rather than exaggerated competitive spirit. For example, it was suggested that in the time of registration they can help one another by informing customers who knock at their doors and do not get the training they need from their institution to go to other private higher education institutions. They can exchange books that might be more important for one institution rather than the other if there is supportive feeling among them.

Concerning cooperation with government owned institutions, it was said that opportunities for cooperation are not exploited fully. The two entities are operating in their own divided shells making little effort to close up the gap. Because the government institutions are the oldest and experienced, the PHEIs have taken the initiative to approach and establish connection. Though not all the time, in most cases the responses are discouraging. A typical example here is the case of the government owned institution (AAU) that does not make accessible external reader membership to instructors of PHEIs. Those that tried to exploit this opportunity were denied the chance right away saying that they were from PHEIs.

What can be said from here is that the fact that cooperation could be beneficial for both parties is not well felt. Also, when approached, the government institutions do not seem to realize that they have the responsibility to shape up the newly emerging institutions. Though they have different ownership, they are working for the same cause towards the same goal - to produce well-trained, capable and dependable citizens that could build a better Ethiopia for the generation ahead. It is high time that the mistrust on the part of the government owned institutions are ceased and that the feeling of cooperation is cultivated.

4.4 Problems Related to Management

Managing the issues that revolve around the main actors; that is students, teachers and stakeholders has been an issue of concern for PHEIs.

As the respondents reported one of the problems in this regard is the students' capacity. In some areas, particularly in areas where mathematical computations make the base, this problem of capacity is highly pronounced. Coupled with the students' poor background, the intellectual levels of the students have been the sources of challenge to the institutions. The students have to graduate successfully and competently because that is the goal; the country has invested on them. However, with the problems stated above, this has been tedious and time consuming in all respects.

It was also pointed out by respondents that present day college instructor is by far different from what should be in the real sense of the term. Today's instructors are business-oriented rather than academic-oriented. The instructors are on the move trying to make money rather than devoting time to academic development and research engagement. The instructors are too self-involved to

the extent of total denial and disregard of their responsibility for which they are paid. Leave alone produce original and upto the standard work, they are not duty bound and conscious to fulfill their elementary duties such as punctuality, presence in class. The instructors do not differentiate their rights and duties. The instructor who does not recognize and who disregards his duties and responsibilities will not be discharging his knowledge properly. It is suggested here that the money-conscious stance has to change and abusing one's right will only contribute to the country's development negatively and, therefore, there has to be a lot of awareness training on the part of the institutions and other concerned bodies.

Regarding stakeholders, the major issue of concern is their readiness to accommodate graduates of PHEIs. It was revealed that 95% of the stakeholders would prefer government institution graduates. This has its roots in the prevailing bias towards PHEIs. PHEIs are associated with commodity-selling enterprises whose sole concern is believed to be money. Hence, stakeholders, being part of the society that is biased towards PHEIs, believe that PHEIs are not sincerely engaged in the provision of education which leads them to believe that their graduates are not as competent as the Government owned Higher Education Institutions (GHEIs).

4.4.1 Resource Acquisition

In the process of resource acquiring, the PHEIs undergo lots of hardships. As it was stated by the respondents, one area of problem is reading material acquisition. 28% of the respondents stated that it is not possible to have books that students can take for home reading or outside reading. Because the number of books is limited, students are confined to spot reading only.

As it was mentioned, the market within the country does not provide as many and different books as possible for those who want to invest money and buy. In some fields, it is not possible to get books at all. Up to date, books are not available. The educational world is changing and technology is moving ahead. Book publishing is growing rapidly. The scanty market does not allow keeping up with this rapidly expanding knowledge-based world.

It was pointed out that though there are some improvements now compared to the previous years, still there are critical problems in reading material acquisition. For the TVET program, the MOE has not made enough textbooks available. And again from the limited number of those supplied, much of it went to GHEIs. The MOE should have been prepared earlier, and supplied the institutions (GHEIs and PHEIs) in all fields.

In some fields, it is literally impossible to get books. In some streams, there are fast growing changes for which the institutions have to catch up before it is too late. In order to be able to do this, the provision of up-to-date books should be made available. The new technology has made

reference materials available with CD-ROMs. This is now the trend. However, in the Ethiopian situation, this is not happening. The new technology could be a means of accessing a vast number of data in the shortest time possible. The institutions, therefore, have to be tuned in this line and be ready with facilities.

4.5 Research

The importance of research in the development of an academic institution is shared by almost all the institutions. However, 78% of the respondents expressed that the PHEIs don't have the capacity in terms of expertise and resource. Because they are at the early stage of establishment, they have limited resources to be expended in research. To support research, and for example, to allow instructors to work on sabbatical leave is not affordable for the PHEIs. They have other pressing, life and death matters that need attention. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that the instructors are not research oriented. Even if institutions are ready to invest on research, the active participants are engaged in personal matters rather than institutional, academic matters.

The other reason for little focus on research is the realization that the institutions have about the return value of research. The over cautious closely consider the benefit that can be obtained from research. They have said that the returns for research are not immediately felt. If the institutions allow instructors to do research, it will be immediate expense. So for institutions that are at the early stage of establishment, they revealed that extensive engagement in research is problematic. Though they don't deny its significance to some extent, they hesitate to indulge in research for the time being due to resource constraints. They are vulnerable because survival is a determining issue for them. According to the respondents, research is not an immediate answer to survival questions. Given this practical stance of the institutions, it can be said here that support from the government should be rendered to PHEIs in a way that the government is offering to GHEIs for both parties are working towards a common goal of producing trained manpower for the country. Besides, for starters, the institutions can lay the ground for research by putting into practice action research and management research that could significantly contribute to their profitability which in the final analysis empowers them to indulge in full scale, extensive basic research.

5. Recommendations

Based on the discussions and analysis made in the preceding section, the recommendations forwarded hereunder are believed, if put into practice, to redress the major problems that PHEIs are grappling with.

1. On the part of the MOE, there should be a reconsideration of the new educational policy;

2. There should be extensive awareness raising program at a national and institutional level regarding the new educational policy and particularly the TVET curriculum;
3. The MOE should release a stable and permanent curriculum that might at least function for five years;
4. The government and the MOE should render assistance to PHEIs;
5. The MOE should not only make education accessible at a higher level but also work towards raising the standard of education at a lower level (elementary and high school education);
6. Cooperation among higher education institutions should be strengthened;
7. Research should be one component of PHEIs' educational system and particularly at the initial stage of PHEIs' development, action research and management research should be exercised; and
8. Every citizen should undergo behavioral change and develop national sentiment rather than individualistic attitude.

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Gender Differences in Errors in Compositions: Selected St. Mary's College Students in Focus

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Abstract

This study investigated gender differences in errors in compositions. To this end, twenty male and twenty female students were selected from St. Mary's College. A questionnaire was designed to control extraneous and other destructive variables. A standard proficiency test was also used to group the subjects in three different categories of their language ability i.e. high scorers, average scorers and low scorers. However, this study focused on average scorers only.

After selecting the subjects, two composition assignments were given to them. Each and every error was counted and analyzed statistically. From the preliminary investigation, it was found out that there was difference between male and female students regarding the mean scores of the first assignment of male and female composition errors. In the second assignment too, the mean scores were still different. The statistics also showed that male students made more errors than female students did. In line with the findings, it is recommended that teachers should know that female students compose with fewer error rates than male students do, and hence, try to adjust their approach in teaching compositions.

1. Introduction

It has been noted by many scholars that the teaching of language in general and English in particular can be influenced by a number of physical and/or psychological factors. In some instances, these factors might have potential effects that could affect learning negatively despite the practitioners' unreserved efforts. This is true by virtue of the fact that factors, namely gender, motivation, attitude, aptitudes, learning style, learning strategy, background knowledge, and personality, etc. of the learner might constrain the desired outcome.

Common sense holds that gender difference is inevitably reflected in different contexts of human experience irrespective of social status. One aspect of the reflection is academic performance, specifically in learning a language. There seems to be a general belief that female students are better in learning language as compared to their male counterparts. Female superiority in linguistic skills and male superiority in spatial skills have been satisfactorily proved (Waterson and Snow 1979). More specifically, “there is a widespread belief that girls are better at verbal skills than boys, learning them earlier and more quickly than boys” (Bardwick 1981:54).

This research attempted to examine differences in errors that male and female students make in their academic writing. The research will also try to compare and contrast the types of errors made

by female students with those of male students. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine if there is a difference in the degrees of male and female students' composition errors, and
2. compare and contrast the types of composition errors female students make with the type of errors male students make.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Gender and Sex

For social and psychological researchers, "gender" has been used and referred to "sex" because it has to do with socially constructed individuals that are thought to be a vital factor that could ultimately determine or influence the way individuals do in various contexts. Thus, according to Archer and Llod (1985: 14), "gender refers to the characteristic traits and appropriate behavior for members of each sexual category." The term "sex" is restricted to cases where the distinction is made on the basis of biological criteria. A certain biological criterion is required when reference is made to domestic animals, newborn infants and Olympic athletes. However, when we are introduced to a stranger, certain manipulation of gender is reflected in a variety of bodily and behavioral cues because of which, men and women are usually distinguished in everyday life on the basis of social criteria. These social criteria stretch their adverse effect on creating sensible difference between the two genders in the development of attitude, self concept, self belief, and self confidence and most importantly in self-efficacy beliefs. Tiller (1995) for example posits that male generally showed strong self-efficacy expectations than female.

2.2 Gender and Language

2.2.1 Gender and Language Use

Do men and women who speak a particular language use it in different ways? This is the question on which sociolinguistics generates considerable amount of thoughts and discussion. Hence, to be on the safest side, they have used the word 'gender' to refer to socially constructed individuals which classifies members according to their biological specification of being either male or female. It is believed that it is not brains that make us act so different but it is the society and how we are encouraged to act that causes us to act differently (Wareing 1989).

Wardhaugh (1986) states that men and women have been reported to use languages differently. This has been verified by many scholars who have reached a consensus on the existence of a form of females' language. This implies that there are different ways female and male tend to make use of a particular language system. This is true because in most cases female students are said to make no use of certain words and phrases which men especially young men prefer to use among

them. Underlying this, Wareing (1989) states that women usually invent or produce euphemistic words and phrases.

This language use difference has been analyzed from two angles according to Deborah (1990). The first is that women's language reflects their subordinate position. However, this approach doesn't give room for the value and strength of any language use associated with women. This is to say, all the identified features are seen as markers of submission or as lack of assertion. On top of this, the forms identified as typical women's language are considered "weak" because women use them. This is a fallacy because Atkins (1980) witnesses that hesitation, hedging and other indications of self-doubt were not in fact typical of insecure or powerless speakers of either sex.

The second explanation of their language use difference rests on the idea that an important part of our socialization occurs in single sex peer groups and that male and female groups have different norms of communicative competence, boys being based on competition, girls on co-operation (Sheldon 1990). From the second approach, it is possible to deduce that women's language use is not necessarily viewed negatively as the product of powerlessness. In fact it shows the strength of women's language style and sense of social relation and responsibilities (Wareing 1989).

Therefore, language use differences of female and male seem to be documental in research findings carried out in different settings. There are also speculations as to why the differences come to exist though any such differences have not yet been conclusively pointed out. However, it is believed that their language use difference can be extended and reflected in their ability to compose. That is to say, differences in language use are also expected to be observed in their writing performance as well.

2.2.2 Gender Differences in Language Learning

Unlike language acquisition, language learning is a process of language development that takes place through experience and influence of the environment. This is to say, language learning is a conscious activity in which the learners are actively engaged. Mostly, it is carried out in a school setting in a strictly designed procedure in which teachers and students are the prime elements of the process.

Through the process, girls are said to have better performance than boys in many aspects of the language they are learning. According to Howkins (1981) girls do better than boys and have more positive attitudes towards foreign or second language learning. The fact is that in adolescence, girls mature earlier and tend to develop self-confidence and outward looking attitudes earlier than

boys (Ibid). Stewart (1973) also found out that girls were rated higher than boys in language development by teachers.

Language development encompasses the ability to compose or write in academic writing settings. Stewart's finding suggests that girls outperform male in the development of the ability to write with fewer error compositions. He has also noted that girls have better memory for sentences or words after age seven. Girls' verbal ability is positively correlated with reading and writing skills. It has also been observed that females demonstrate more positive attitudes towards language learning (Wright 1999). Gardner (1985) and Tsarna (1987) have found that girls had more positive attitude in learning language than boys. Having a positive attitude towards the language being learnt might make learners active, productive and creative in the course. Girls' positive attitude might facilitate learning and as a result it will enable them to be better in their language performance in general and in their composing error-free writing ability in particular. Clark and Trafford's (1995) qualitative data suggest that teachers of modern languages perceive girls as more motivated than boys because, as it is stated earlier, girls mature earlier than boys and are consequently more serious about their studies than boys. Being more serious in what they are learning, female can extend their ability, of care and caution, in their composition classes. Gender differences in academic motivation are routinely reported (Wigfield 1996). Generally speaking, as studies show girls outperform their male counterparts in mastering skills and sub skills of the target language.

2.2.3 Gender Differences in Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies have won scholars' attention since the late 1970 and of course understanding of them has enhanced the processes learners employ to develop their skills in second and /or foreign languages. According to Reiss (1985), during the past decades, the emphasis on foreign language research has shifted from the teacher to the learner, and educational research has identified a number of factors that account for some of the differences in how students learn.

A lot of attempt has been made to investigate learners' strategies though this has not yet been satisfactorily exploited. The inventory is said to be important for teachers because they will become aware that learners have varieties of strategies to learn different aspects of language skills. For example, no two individuals learn vocabulary of a language in the same way.

However, it seems difficult to understand whether strategies are or can be purposely and deliberately made and arranged by the learner. Thomson (1989) has confirmed that everyone who

has ever learned a language has had a strategy or rather a set of strategies. Besides, most language learners do not have explicit, consciously designed strategies.

These strategies have been technically dichotomized by different scholars differently according to their intuitive behaviors, namely metacognitive, affective, social, memory, cognitive and compensatory (Oxford 1989). According to Oxford, metacognitive strategies involve paying attention, self-evaluating, organizing learning and self-monitoring. Affective strategies include learners' restoring information and recalling it when needed by grouping, imagery and structured review. Lastly, learners overcome knowledge limitations through compensatory strategies by guessing meanings intelligently and using synonyms or other production tricks when the precise expression is unknown.

In line with gender, Oxford (1989) goes further and studies gender differences in language learning strategy use. She found out that girls showed more frequent use of strategies than boys. According to a number of studies (Politzer 1983, Oxford et al 1988, Ehrman and Oxford 1989, Oxford and Nyikos 1989 and others) significant gender differences almost always occurred in a single direction, showing greater use of language learning strategies by female.

Politzer (1983) has reported that female used social learning strategies significantly more than male. Similarly, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) have reported that female use significantly greater language learning strategies in four areas; namely, general study strategies, functional practice strategies, strategies for searching and communication meaning, and self-management strategies.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) found similarly that, female learners used formal rule-related practice strategies, general study strategies and conversational input elicitation strategies more frequently than did male learners. Oxford et al (1993) also found girls showed a number of differences from boys in terms of motivation, achievement and frequency of strategy use on their study.

Generally speaking, employing learning strategies massively and frequently helps female students to grasp important and basic elements of the language being learnt as a result of which females perform language proficiently in general and in writing error-free compositions in particular than their male counterparts.

2.2.4 Gender Differences in Language Learning Styles

Generally speaking, the idea of learning styles is directly brought from psychology. It is agreed among scholars of the field that learning styles refer to the specific ways which individuals use to problem solving. Keefe (1979:36) defines learning styles as:

The cognitive, affective and psychological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment.

The definition implies that learning styles are individuals' or learners' natural, habitual and preferred way of learning.

Oxford (1990) asserts that male and female students might take different styles when learning a language with male tending to favor objective ways (rules, facts, logic) and female subjective ones (feelings, cultural sensitivity and empathy). Female are sensitive to social context and it is bounded by whatever exists around the situation (ibid). In line with this, Deborah (1990) also states that women may be more cooperative, less competitive and more sociolinguistically sensitive than men in the classroom. They may also be more interested in social and interpersonal aspects of the target culture. In general terms, female are said to be context-sensitive, less competitive and cooperative. This might help them to be careful and take a number of factors into account when they are expected to carry out tasks related to language learning such as writing composition.

2.2.5 Gender Differences in Writing Skill

Writing is the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new text, either descriptively or argumentatively (Myles 2002). Needless to say, the ability to write is not a naturally acquired skill because it is usually learned through practice. Omaggio (1993) states that writing is best viewed as a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of writing down, on the one hand, to the more complex act of composing, on the other. Precisely speaking, writing is the act of composing, though it creates problems for students especially for those writing in a second language in academic context. This is true because according to Myles (2002) academic writing requires conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing and analyzing ideas. Formulating new ideas can be difficult because it involves transforming or reworking information, which is more complex than writing as telling. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the researcher engages in "a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text," (Bereiler and Scandinavia 1987:12). Owing to this, it is reasonable to say academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing and analyzing ideas.

Compared to students writing in their native language, however, students writing in their second language have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies,

techniques and skills. Effective and appropriate strategic use is required together with a sound proficiency in the language. Second language writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in many ways from first language writing (Silva 1993). Perceptibly, it is inherently possible to notice differences among individuals in their linguistic ability in general and strategic use for writing in particular. This is so because the ability to compose involves applying psychomotor and various skills in various extents. Myles (2002) also posits that it is incorrect to think individuals perform in the same way while students writing in a second language are faced with many social and cognitive challenges related to second language acquisition. Shen (1989) also emphasizes that language proficiency and competence underlies the ability to write in the second language in a fundamental way. Thus, it is inevitable to have individual differences among the learners in their ability to compose a certain text.

With regard to gender differences, a longitudinal research carried out shows that boys are better in mathematics and in physical sciences whereas girls were better in reading and more significantly in writing (Maccoby and Jackline 1984). This finding was supported by later reviews which used using more sophisticated meta-analyses techniques (Hyde and Linn 1986; Wilder and Powell 1986; Cleary 1992; Willingham and Cole 1997; Willingham and Cole 1997, and Nowell and Hedges 1998). In research findings of gender differences in educational achievement female scored higher than male in writing exercises (Willingham and Cole 1997). Their findings prove that females perform better than male in their ability to write. This might incapacitate them to compose a text in a less error context.

Researchers such as Frank and Valiante (2001) commonly observe that gender differences in motivation and self-belief operate when approaching specific subjects. This is so because differences largely depend on what particular academic disciplines are perceived by male and female students. Researchers notice strong self-belief in girls in language more than there is in boys. This self-belief might help them to perform in language learning more competently than their male counterparts. With regard to writing, research shows that there is a gender difference in motivation and self-beliefs. Wigfield *et al* (1991: 48) state that: "Girls are less anxious when facing writing tasks and have a strong perception of the value of writing, confidence in their ability to write, certainty of the reason they have for actually doing academic work and feeling of self-worth associated with writing." A strong motivation and a high self-belief might help female learners to produce an error-free composition as opposed to their male counterparts.

2.3 Errors and Sources of Errors

In every walk of life, we are willingly or unwillingly subject to making mistakes. Mistakes according to Corder (1973: 256) are not confined to language learners only. More significantly, "mistakes are failures to match the language to the situation." (260) The failures are caused from physiological and psychological or from imperfect knowledge of the linguistic norms of some group.

However, the term "error" tends to be reserved for willful or negligent breaks of a rule which is known, or ought to be known or is taught to be known by the offender (Ibid). That is to say, errors are not physical failures but the sign of an imperfect knowledge of the language codes. Therefore, it is reasonable to refer to errors because people vary in their knowledge of fundamental language rules. In a given study for example, male students made higher error rates than female students error rates (Chen 1996).

2.3.1 Social Factors

Exploration of social factors gives us some idea of why learners differ in rate of second language learning, in proficiency type (for instant, conversational ability versus writing ability), and in ultimate proficiency (Ellis 1994). Research based on direct and indirect measures generally shows that learners with positive attitude, motivation and concrete goals will have these attitudes reinforced if they experience success. In the same way, learners' negative attitudes may be strengthened by lack of success or failure (McGroarty 1996).

Learners' attitudes, motivations, and goals may explain why some second language writers perform better than others. Myles (2002) carried out a research for a long time in order to know whether the learners' enjoyed writing or not. He found that about 92 percent of female students preferred and enjoyed writing in English. If learners perceive writing tasks to be useless, they may approach them in a careless manner, and consequently, it is likely that they will be inattentive to errors (Carson 2001).

2.3.2 Cognitive Factors

According to Myles (2002), academic writing is believed to be cognitively complex. According to cognitive theory, communication, orally or in writing, is an active process of skill development and a gradual elimination of errors as the learners internalize the language.

One model that applies to both speaking and writing in a second language is Anderson's (1985) model of language production, which can be divided into three stages; namely construction, in which the writer plans what he/she is going to write; transformation, in which language rules are applied; and execution which corresponds to the physical process of producing the text.

In the course of the process, language transfer is an important cognitive factor related to writing error (Macloughlin 1988). This is likely because language learners sometimes use their native language when generating ideas.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The Study Subjects

The subjects of the study were selected from St. Mary's College, a privately owned college in Addis Ababa. The subjects were selected and grouped into three different proficiency levels after they were given a proficiency test. These were identified as high scorers, average scorers and low scorers. However, before they were given the proficiency test, some of the intervening variables namely the subjects' background, social status and their age were controlled. Here, statistics was employed to draw lines between each group. This attempt of making a demarcation between the three types of scorers helped the researcher to ensure that the subjects had similar levels of proficiency. However, for the sake of proper handling, only the average scorers were taken for the study. The number of the subjects was forty, twenty each from both genders.

3.2 Instruments

A questionnaire was administered prior to any kind of instrument in order to select subjects whose age, background-learning experience, social status are relatively similar. Secondly, the researcher examined the subjects' recorded grades in order to be certain about the selected subjects. Thirdly, a carefully designed test whose reliability coefficient is 0.82 was used in order to group the selected subjects according to their scores namely, high scores, average scores and low scores from both gender respectively. Lastly, the researcher used non-gender biased writing tasks from which errors of the subjects were selected for major analysis of the research. Their composition errors were analyzed quantitatively in line with the types of errors they made.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

After selecting the subjects, the researcher gave them gender-free topics for their level to do at different times. Two different writing assignments were given, which were to be finished in no time gap. Each and every error was classified statistically across the assignments because the means of the two sexes were of great help to indicate the t-test value for independent samples. Again this was done for the two assignments separately. The t-test was made to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the errors of the two sexes in both assignments.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results of the Study

As it has been stated in the earlier section, the data were made ready for analysis taking the average scorers of the subjects who were given a Language Proficiency test after they had been filtered from the population. The high scorers and the low scorers were not included in the study to control extraneous considerations.

The selected subjects were given two composition assignments. The first assignment was given to the selected subjects to write on "Advantages of wearing school uniform". After the first assignment was given, the students were assigned to write on "problems of college students." The errors of each assignment were counted and analyzed statistically. Below are the findings.

Table 1: Assignment One: Mean Scores of Male and Female Students' Errors

<i>Sex of Students</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Male	213.8500	20	78.6527	17.5873
Female	160.7000	20	46.5155	10.4012

Table 2: Assignment Two: Mean Scores of Male and Female Students' Errors

<i>Sex of Students</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Male	202.2500	20	57.5489	12.8683
Female	125.0500	20	36.4034	8.1400

Table 3: Results of the Paired T-test for Error Scores of the First Assignment

<i>Mean Error Paired Differences</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
53.1500	50.7577	11.3498	4.683	19	0.000

Table 4: Results of the Paired T- test for the Scores of the Second Assignment

<i>Mean Error Differences</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
77.2000	47.1287	10.5383	7.326	19	0.000

As can be seen from the tables, there is a significant difference between the mean of error rates of female and male students. The tables show that female made fewer errors than their male counterparts in all the three assignments. In the first assignment the t-test value is 4.683, which is significant at 1% level. The second assignment is also found to be significant at 1% level with a t-value of 7.326. The t-test value of the three assignments ascertains that female students consistently had lower error rates than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to compare the error types within each assignment. About twenty error types were identified. Each error type was calculated and the mean scores of female students were less than the mean scores of male students. However, only three error types were significant.

Table 5 below shows that there is a significant difference between female and male students' error types. Errors on capitalization, punctuation and conjunction were significant. Table 6 shows that these error types were made by male students because the mean scores of male students exceed the mean scores of female student's errors with regard to the three significant error types.

Table 5: Assignment One: Comparison of Mean Difference on the Types of Errors

<i>Types of Errors</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Article Errors	5.625	1	5.625	0.355	.555
Capitalization errors	372.100	1	372.100	12.880	0.001
Punctuation errors	44.100	1	44.100	1.622	0.211
Spelling error	144.900	1	144.900	2.500	0.122
Double negative errors	36.100	1	36.100	1.397	0.245
Adjective error	5.625	1	5.625	0.235	0.631
Adverb error	20.225	1	20.225	0.899	0.349
Infinitive errors	46.225	1	46.225	2.738	0.106
Comparison error	19.600	1	19.600	1.022	0.318
Conjunction error	65.025	1	65.025	4.942	0.032
Possessive form error	67.600	1	67.600	3.987	0.053
Agreement error	62.500	1	62.500	2.934	0.095
Pronoun error	38.025	1	38.025	1.784	0.190
Relative pronoun error	21.025	1	21.025	0.911	0.346
Run on error	286.225	1	286.225	1.789	0.189
Verb form error	24.025	1	24.025	1.548	0.221
Present participle error	30.625	1	30.625	1.229	0.275
Past participle error	141.000	1	141.000	4.398	0.343
Preposition error	62.400	1	62.400	5.031	0.631
Incomplete error	55.225	1	55.225	2.759	0.105

Table 6: Assignment One: Mean Difference between Female and Male Students Error Types

<i>Types f Errors</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>95% Confidence</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Article Errors	male	20	8.0000	4.3407	.9706	5.9685	.00	16.00
	female	20	7.2500	3.5818	.8009	5.5737	1.00	14.00
	Total	40	7.6250	3.9464	.6240	6.3629	.00	16.00
Capitalization error	male	20	12.0000	6.3412	1.4179	9.0322	.00	21.00
	female	20	5.9000	4.1915	.9372	3.9383	.00	12.00
	Total	40	8.9500	6.1392	.9707	6.9866	.00	21.00
Punctuation error	male	20	10.9000	5.2506	1.1741	8.4427	.00	21.00
	female	20	8.8000	5.1769	1.1576	6.3771	1.00	16.00
	Total	40	9.8500	5.2553	.8309	8.1693	.00	21.00
Spelling error	male	20	17.6500	29.8774	6.6808	3.6669	4.00	143.00
	female	20	6.9500	4.8065	1.0748	4.7005	.00	15.00
	Total	40	12.3000	21.8059	3.4478	5.3261	.00	143.00
Double negative	male	20	7.9500	5.2161	1.1664	5.5088	2.00	18.00
	female	20	6.0500	4.9468	1.1061	3.7348	.00	15.00
	Total	40	7.0000	5.1091	.8078	5.3660	.00	18.00
Adjective error	male	20	8.4000	4.8057	1.0746	6.1509	1.00	18.00
	female	20	7.6500	4.9765	1.1128	5.3209	.00	18.00
	Total	40	8.0250	4.8436	.7658	6.4759	.00	18.00
Adverb error	male	20	48.6000	5.4907	1.2277	6.0303	.00	19.00
	female	20	61.2500	248.286	55.5186	54.9519	.00	1116.0
	Total	40	34.9250	175.385	27.7301	21.1644	.00	1116.0
Infinitive error	male	20	7.2500	4.2658	.9539	5.2535	.00	15.00
	female	20	5.1000	3.9457	.8823	3.2534	1.00	15.00
	Total	40	6.1750	4.1994	.6640	4.8320	.00	15.00
Comparison error	male	20	6.5000	4.8828	1.0918	4.2148	.00	18.00
	female	20	5.1000	3.8100	.8519	3.3169	.00	12.00
	Total	40	5.8000	4.3806	.6926	4.3990	.00	18.00
Conjunction error	male	20	7.2500	3.5522	.7943	5.5875	.00	13.00
	female	20	4.7000	3.7006	.8275	2.9680	.00	13.00
	Total	40	5.9750	3.8061	.6018	4.7577	.00	13.00
Possessive form	male	20	7.7500	4.3755	.9784	5.7022	.00	16.00
	female	20	5.1500	3.8426	.8592	3.3516	.00	12.00
	Total	40	6.4500	4.2725	.6755	5.0836	.00	16.00
Agreement error	male	20	9.8000	4.6971	1.0503	7.6017	2.00	19.00
	female	20	7.3000	4.5318	1.0133	5.1791	.00	16.00
	Total	40	8.5500	4.7283	.7476	7.0378	.00	19.00
Pronoun error	male	20	8.5000	5.1145	1.1436	6.1064	.00	18.00
	female	20	6.5500	4.0585	.9075	4.6506	1.00	13.00
	Total	40	7.5250	4.6629	.7373	6.0337	.00	18.00
Relative pronoun	male	20	7.3000	4.7473	1.0615	5.0782	.00	16.00
	female	20	5.8500	4.8588	1.0865	3.5760	.00	16.00
	Total	40	6.5750	4.7979	.7586	5.0406	.00	16.00
Run-on error	male	20	10.8000	16.8323	3.7638	2.9222	.00	78.00
	female	20	5.4500	6.0478	1.3523	2.6195	.00	19.00
	Total	40	8.1250	12.7745	2.0198	4.0395	.00	78.00
Verb form error	male	20	8.3000	4.1814	.9350	6.3430	2.00	16.00
	female	20	6.7500	3.6832	.8236	5.0262	1.00	13.00
	Total	40	7.5250	3.9677	.6274	6.2561	1.00	16.00
Present participle	male	20	8.2500	4.7337	1.0585	6.0346	.00	17.00
	female	20	6.5000	5.2365	1.1709	4.0492	.00	19.00
	Total	40	7.3750	5.0061	.7915	5.7740	.00	19.00
Past participle error	male	20	8.1000	5.1083	1.1423	5.7092	3.00	19.00
	female	20	5.1000	3.8512	.8611	3.2976	.00	13.00
	Total	40	6.6000	4.7166	.7458	5.0916	.00	19.00
Preposition error	male	20	9.1500	4.9553	1.1080	6.8308	.00	18.00
	female	20	5.9500	4.0194	.8988	4.0689	.00	15.00
	Total	40	7.5500	4.7391	.7493	6.0344	.00	18.00
Incomplete error	male	20	9.3500	4.7047	1.0520	7.1481	.00	17.00
	female	20	7.0000	4.2302	.9459	5.0202	1.00	16.00
	Total	40	8.1750	4.5735	.7231	6.7123	.00	17.00

The table in the previous page illustrates that unlike other error types, the two error types namely errors on capitalization and errors on conjunction were made by male students. Table 7 shows the mean difference of the error scores. But for these error types, the rest of the error types weren't significant despite their differences. In the second assignment, similar error types were observed significantly. However, further error types were also found significant in the second assignment. These error types were preposition errors and past participle errors.

Table 7: Assignment two: Comparison of Mean on the Error Types

<i>Error Types</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Article Errors	.400	1	.400	.034	.855
Capitalization error	65.025	1	65.025	8.845	.005
Punctuation errors	44.100	1	44.100	1.622	.211
Spelling error	1144.900	1	1144.900	2.500	.122
Double negative errors	36.100	1	36.100	1.397	.245
Adjective error	5.625	1	5.625	.235	.631
Adverb error	20.225	1	20.225	.899	.349
Infinitive error	46.225	1	46.225	2.738	.106
Comparison error	19.600	1	19.600	1.022	.318
Conjunction error	65.025	1	65.025	4.942	.032
Possessive form error	67.600	1	67.600	3.987	.053
Agreement error	62.500	1	62.500	2.934	.095
Pronoun error	38.025	1	38.025	1.784	.190
Relative pronoun error	21.025	1	21.025	.911	.346
Run-on error	286.225	1	286.225	1.789	.189
Verb form error	24.025	1	24.025	1.548	.221
Present participle error	30.625	1	30.625	1.229	.275
Past participle error	90.000	1	90.000	4.398	.043
Preposition error	102.400	1	102.400	5.031	.031
Incomplete error	55.225	1	55.225	2.759	.105

The above table shows not only the error types found significant in the first assignment but also other error types. Errors of preposition and past participle were found to be significant in the second assignment. All error types found significant in the second assignment were made by male students as it is shown on Table 8.

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Table8: Mean Difference on the Types of Errors for Assignment Two

<i>Types of Errors</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Article Errors	Male	20	10.7500	4.3875	.9811	8.6966	2.00	18.00
	Female	20	10.5500	2.0894	.4672	9.5721	6.00	14.00
	Total	40	10.6500	3.3934	.5365	9.5647	2.00	18.00
Capitalization errors	Male	20	14.4000	3.4550	.7726	12.7830	9.00	21.00
	Female	20	11.8500	1.6631	.3719	11.0717	9.00	15.00
	Total	40	13.1250	2.9716	.4698	12.1747	9.00	21.00
Punctuation errors	Male	20	10.9000	5.2506	1.1741	8.4427	.00	21.00
	Female	20	8.8000	5.1769	1.1576	6.3771	1.00	16.00
	Total	40	9.8500	5.2553	.8309	8.1693	.00	21.00
Spelling error	Male	20	17.6500	29.8774	6.6808	3.6669	4.00	143.00
	Female	20	6.9500	4.8065	1.0748	4.7005	.00	15.00
	Total	40	12.3000	21.8059	3.4478	5.3261	.00	143.00
Double negative errors	Male	20	7.9500	5.2161	1.1664	5.5088	2.00	18.00
	Female	20	6.0500	4.9468	1.1061	3.7348	.00	15.00
	Total	40	7.0000	5.1091	.8078	5.3660	.00	18.00
Adjective error	Male	20	8.4000	4.8057	1.0746	6.1509	1.00	18.00
	Female	20	7.6500	4.9765	1.1128	5.3209	.00	18.00
	Total	40	8.0250	4.8436	.7658	6.4759	.00	18.00
Adverb error	Male	20	8.6000	5.4907	1.2277	6.0303	.00	19.00
	Female	20	61.2500	248.2869	55.5186	-54.9519	.00	1116.00
	Total	40	34.9250	175.3805	27.7301	-21.1644	.00	1116.00
Infinitive error	Male	20	7.2500	4.2658	.9539	5.2535	.00	15.00
	Female	20	5.1000	3.9457	.8823	3.2534	1.00	15.00
	Total	40	6.1750	4.1994	.6640	4.8320	.00	15.00
Comparison error	Male	20	6.5000	4.8828	1.0918	4.2148	.00	18.00
	Female	20	5.1000	3.8100	.8519	3.3169	.00	12.00
	Total	40	5.8000	4.3806	.6926	4.3990	.00	18.00
Conjunction error	Male	20	7.2500	3.5522	.7943	5.5875	.00	13.00
	Female	20	4.7000	3.7006	.8275	2.9680	.00	13.00
	Total	40	5.9750	3.8061	.6018	4.7577	.00	13.00
Possessive form error	Male	20	7.7500	4.3755	.9784	5.7022	.00	16.00
	female	20	5.1500	3.8426	.8592	3.3516	.00	12.00
	Total	40	6.4500	4.2725	.6755	5.0836	.00	16.00
Agreement error	male	20	9.8000	4.6971	1.0503	7.6017	2.00	19.00
	female	20	7.3000	4.5318	1.0133	5.1791	.00	16.00
	Total	40	8.5500	4.7283	.7476	7.0378	.00	19.00
Pronoun error	male	20	8.5000	5.1145	1.1436	6.1064	.00	18.00
	Female	20	6.5500	4.0585	.9075	4.6506	1.00	13.00
	Total	40	7.5250	4.6629	.7373	6.0337	.00	18.00
Relative pronoun error	Male	20	7.3000	4.7473	1.0615	5.0782	.00	16.00
	Female	20	5.8500	4.8588	1.0865	3.5760	.00	16.00
	Total	40	6.5750	4.7979	.7586	5.0406	.00	16.00
Run on error	Male	20	10.8000	16.8323	3.7638	2.9222	.00	78.00
	Female	20	5.4500	6.0478	1.3523	2.6195	.00	19.00
	Total	40	8.1250	12.7745	2.0198	4.0395	.00	78.00
Verb form error	Male	20	8.3000	4.1814	.9350	6.3430	2.00	16.00
	Female	20	6.7500	3.6832	.8236	5.0262	1.00	13.00
	Total	40	7.5250	3.9677	.6274	6.2561	1.00	16.00
Present participle error	Male	20	8.2500	4.7337	1.0585	6.0346	.00	17.00
	Female	20	6.5000	5.2365	1.1709	4.0492	.00	19.00
	Total	40	7.3750	5.0061	.7915	5.7740	.00	19.00
Past participle error	Male	20	8.1000	5.1083	1.1423	5.7092	3.00	19.00
	Female	20	5.1000	3.8512	.8611	3.2976	.00	13.00
	Total	40	6.6000	4.7166	.7458	5.0916	.00	19.00
Preposition error	Male	20	9.1500	4.9553	1.1080	6.8308	.00	18.00
	Female	20	5.9500	4.0194	.8988	4.0689	.00	15.00
	Total	40	7.5500	4.7391	.7493	6.0344	.00	18.00
Incomplete error	Male	20	9.3500	4.7047	1.0520	7.1481	.00	17.00
	Female	20	7.0000	4.2302	.9459	5.0202	1.00	16.00
	Total	40	8.1750	4.5735	.7231	6.7123	.00	17.00

As it is shown in the above table, about four error types were found to be significant. The mean scores of these error types prove that male students made composition errors more than female students.

4.2 Discussion of the Results

The results show that female students make less error than their male counterparts across the two assignments. It also has come up with findings that support the hypothesis which states that female students are believed to be endowed with a potential to learn language faster than male students.

The results suggested that female students are better in performing writing tasks than male students. Researchers agree that female students learn language faster than their male counterparts. Pajaras and Valiante (2001) and Howkins (1981) also posit that female students do better than boys and have more positive attitudes towards foreign or second language learning. As it is known, language learning encompasses the ability to compose or write in academic writing settings. That the female students wrote with fewer errors than the male is consistent with theories and research in the area. For example, Maccoby and Jacklin (1984) found out in a longitudinal research that female students were better in reading and more significantly in writing indicating that they had fewer writing errors.

Girls seem to make fewer errors than male students may be because of their learning strategies. According to Oxford (1989), female showed more frequent use of strategies than boys. Thus, employing language-learning strategies might have helped female students to write compositions more competently than male students. Furthermore female make less error rates than their male counterparts may be because their learning styles are more effective than the styles male students employ. Thus, female students were found to be more cooperative, less competitive and more socioinguistically sensitive than male counterparts. Female students being cooperative and less competitive might have helped them to concentrate on important elements of the target language and consequently perform better in different language related tasks such as composition.

Regarding different error types, errors on capitalization and conjunction were observed significantly across the two assignments. Despite the fact that the textbooks in different levels have provided the learners with topics that emphasize appropriate uses of capitalization, and conjunction. They were consistently observed in both assignments because they were not satisfactorily internalized. Surprisingly, these error types were made more by male students. Though research is recommended, male students might not give appropriate focus to it or they might underestimate them. Very likely, the male students might have assumed that they have had enough input concerning these language elements.

It is, therefore, recommended that language teachers must adjust or revise their approach in teaching compositions at different levels. Besides, they should give credit when credit is due.

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The Challenges and Prospects of Textbook Acquisition in PHEIs: The Views of College Administrators

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Abstract

Textbooks remain an important element of knowledge creation and ownership. That is why the book industry is regarded as the bedrock in the promotion of literacy and education, and the book itself central to education and development (Darko - Ampem 2000). Though the importance of books for education and development is well-established, the situation of textbook acquisition in developing countries is fraught with problems.

This small research was designed to investigate the views of college principals and library heads of Ethiopian PHEIs with regard to the problems related to textbook acquisition. The study was made on 34 private colleges both in the capital and in the Administrative Regions. The findings indicate that currently PHEIs have a limited resource of books. The acquisition process is highly demanding and at times frustrating. Books are expensive; and in some cases unavailable on the local market. Acquiring books from abroad has not been an easy matter for PHEIs. As the demand for textbooks will undoubtedly rise in the future with the expansion of both public and private HEIs, it is imperative that the country develops a national book policy that governs the development, printing and dissemination of books. Moreover, the mechanisms for encouraging and supporting the growth of local publishing industry should be sought. The needed support for private higher education institutions in assisting their efforts of acquiring books both locally and from abroad should be rendered. In addition to allocating a significant portion of their income to the acquisition of books, PHEIs should also create resource sharing mechanisms among themselves and/or public institutions of higher learning in order to share the existing meagre resources, experiences and expertise in the area.

I. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the last six years private higher education has shown a remarkable growth in Ethiopia. It is now regarded as a rapidly expanding part of Ethiopia's higher education system increasing by 40% in between 1999 and 2002 alone (World Bank 2003).

In the current quest for rapid national growth, private providers constitute an essential component of the governments' higher education expansion strategy with an increasing role to be ascribed to them in the future (Cf. ESDP II 2002/02 - 2004/05).

In order for private higher education to grow, policies that promote its proliferation are not the only thing that matter. Among other things, the availability of facilities that are needed for the

sector are factors that need to be considered. This research identifies one such factor i.e., the availability of textbooks as one of the essential ingredients of the workings of private colleges.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The research is an exploratory survey that aims at investigating:

- a) the current status of private higher education institutions in terms of the type and volume of books they have;
- b) major problems in the efforts of PHEIs to acquire books and strategies used to cope with the problems; and
- c) the elements that PHEIs view as solutions to the existing problems.

1.3 Design of the Study

This study was made on private colleges both in the capital and the Administrative Regions. Thirty five PHEIs participated in the study. Among the private colleges studied, two focused exclusively on medicine, 2 on technical training and the rest offered a combination of business, law, IT and Teacher Education.

Two types of questionnaire were set for college administrators and library heads. The questions focused on eliciting responses on the objectives set earlier. Four publishers (Mega, Shama PLC, Macmillan Publishers, OUP) were also given an open-ended questionnaire to elicit responses on the publishing business in general and PHEIs in particular.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Book Situation in Developing Countries

In developing countries in general, and in Africa in particular, books assume centre stage due to their accessibility, approachability and the tendency to sustain a lasting impression on their audience (Saunders 1996). The importance of books for development is also a well-established fact. In the debates on developing economies, improving education has been considered the key to a better life (Askerud 1998). Among those concerned with improving education, there has never been disagreement on the fact that books are the primary tool (Ibid). Zeleza argues,

Books and libraries are not a developmental luxury but are essential, especially in our so-called information age where knowledge and information have acquired the materiality of capital and commodities, whose uneven accumulation dictates the wealth and poverty of countries, communities and classes (N.D.: 1)

Although the role ascribed for books is very high, the situation in developing countries is distressing. A UNESCO report in Evans (N.D.) notes that despite the phenomenal increase in world book production, the demand in developing countries remains unfulfilled.

In terms of book production, Africa rates very low. With the exception of Egypt, South Africa, and to a lesser extent Nigeria and Kenya, African nations produce few books and their publishing industries are largely limited to textbooks for schools (Darko-Ampem 2000). As noted by Limb (2001) and Land (2002) Africa imports 70% of its book needs; produces 1- 2% of the global output of books; and exports less than 5% of its total output. Over 80% of total book production in the world remains scattered in about 34 industrialized countries, which represent only 30% of the world's population (UNESCO Report in Evans: N.D.)

With the growth and expansion of education at various levels, the problems are obviously set to continue. Altbach and Rathgeber note, "The challenges are even greater where higher education has expanded because large numbers of different books are needed to supply diverse student populations" (1980 Page No.).

2.2 Factors That Impede the Growth of the Book Industry

Though the demand for a vibrant book industry is high in developing countries, this demand has not been met due to several reasons. Some of the major factors are related to low levels of literacy and reading cultures, shortage of capital and skills, poor marketing and distribution infrastructures including libraries, and prevalence of repressive or unfavourable state policies (Zezeza: N.D).

In an environment where literacy and reading culture are at a dismal rate, the book industry cannot be expected to grow easily. In Africa, less than 5% of the population constitutes active readers and demand for books has generally been limited to small elite (Land 2002; Askerud 1998). For many people in Africa, reading is associated with utilitarian purposes and is not regarded as a leisure activity (Altbach and Rathgeber 1980).

With very little disposable income, readers in Africa cannot also buy the books they need due to the unaffordable cost of books. Shortage of capital and skills also abounds in those who would like to involve in the publishing industry.

Like book publishing the financial risks of book distribution are big. Inefficiencies in distribution, accompanied by such factors as the lack of adequate bibliographic control, inadequate publicity, and the tender system are common problems for book sellers (Altbach and Rathgeber: Ibid).

Though some governments have offered their assistance to the proliferation of the book industry, in many African states government neglect is regarded as the major feature and continues to be a significant reason for the very slow progress of book development industry or project.

Both in Africa and elsewhere book development projects require concerted efforts and policies to counter current problems. Below are discussed factors that assist the development of the book industry.

2.3 Practices that Allow the Development of the Book Industry

1. National Book Policies

One of the measures that need to be taken in the development of the book industry is the promulgation of policies which promote this objective. Experience in both developed and developing countries has shown that a national book policy that governs the development, printing and dissemination of books while providing a favourable condition for publishing industries is needed (Askerud 1996). Sow identifies the importance of such a policy as follows:

A national book policy will ... clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties concerned with the book sector: government (national education, finance, culture, communication, etc), private sector (publishers, printers, and distributors), NGOs and donors. In addition, it will define the place of materials in national languages, and promotional strategies for them, at the same time as providing a logical framework for collaboration between partners in the public and private sectors (1998:3).

As argued by Land a national policy also allows "the development of reading and writing skills; supports the development of a diverse community of writers; develops skills of people required by the book sector; improves sectoral co-ordination so as to grow the book sector as one of Africa's economic and cultural industries" (2002:16). This requires policy considerations for different sectors involved in the development of the book industry. That is, policies are needed for authors, publishers, the printing and production sector, the trade and distribution sector, etc. It is to be noted that "the formulation of a national book policy should be part of a national plan based on co-operation among government departments that would enable the publishing industry to shift from its bias towards and reliance on the school book trade towards a form which could make a more general contribution to growth and development" (Land 2002:16).

Evans suggests that in order to put such policies into practice, a national book development agency is needed being charged with implementing and improving the book development policy. Land (2002) also proposes an independent coordinating body funded by both the state and private sector that would have a mandate and the necessary credibility to bring together all stakeholders first in the process of generating policies with wide acceptance, and secondly in monitoring their implementation.

Cognizant of the advantages of such a policy, countries like Tanzania, Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya and South Africa have developed book policies to make books more accessible to ordinary people, to shift book provision from the state to the private sector, and to promote local involvement in the book industry. However, many developing countries have not conceived a clear policy regarding the development of the book industry (Darko -Ampem 2000).

2. Promoting Local Publishers and Writers

As argued by Askerud (1998), a literate society is not conceivable without a market-based publishing sector. In the words of Cudworth (1996:1), "The development of a successful and useful publishing industry in Africa depends on a strong internal publishing trade, which will be provided for by indigenous publishers".

In many developing countries, involvement in the publishing industry is not regarded as the first choice of potential investors. As outlined by Altbach and Rathgeber (1980), the profit margins of indigenous publishing houses do not exceed 10%. Because of the large initial capital required, especially when they establish their own print shops, indigenous publishers are reported to experience a high rate of business failure. Furthermore, "Because of the unpredictability of foreign exchange regulations and the vagaries of exchange rates, it is often impossible to control or even realistically predict production costs. It is equally difficult to predict sales income because of limited markets and inadequate distribution systems" (Ibid: 45).

Lack of skill in the form of business training or previous business experience is another problem commonly observed in third world publishers. This is "a particularly serious problem in countries that do not have an infrastructure of managerial support services - accounting firms, marketing agencies, and so on - that could much - needed expertise" (Ibid: 46).

The growth of local publishers is highly dependent on the support they get from the government. However, this has not been the case in Africa. Darko-Ampem (2000) argues that government neglect of the area is one of the significant factors for the slow progress of book development industry in Africa. According to Faye (1998) support for the publishing infrastructure is generally negligible; and very little is given in terms of incentives such as tax concessions, book studies and subsidies. In similar vein, Sow (1998:3) notes, "There have been very few institutional measures to facilitate publishing, nor has there been much concern towards encouraging writers, providing banking concessions or tax relief for imports, price regulation ..."

In order to promote growth in the book industry, it is thus imperative that governments should assist the efforts of local publishers. Evans (N.D.:3) suggests, "Assistance in directing publishers towards the various funding alternatives needs to be given. Another possibility is for education of

national banking interests in the rather unusual circumstances of the book business. Tax relief for the endeavour of publishers ... should also be applied."

Governments in many developing economies are thus faced with the challenge of developing the industry and a market. In addition to those measures cited above, such a task requires addressing issues such as lack of editorial skills, paper shortage, equipment deficiencies or distribution (Askerud 1998). As outlined by Evans (p.3), while journalism courses exist, courses for book sellers, publishers, editors, designers, translators are rare in developing countries. Governments could offer fellowships, grants for travel and research in this area. A system of providing subsidy for advertising books could also be introduced. With a non-existent or limited assistance from the government it is very unlikely that the book industry will develop.

3. Book Promotion Activities

It is to be noted that the ultimate goal of developing literate societies cannot be attained only by addressing the issue of textbooks to the education sector. If people are to stay literate, they must continue reading throughout their adult lives (Askerud 1998). This does not require book development projects related to schools alone. It rather calls for the development of reading culture in the community. Among other things, this could be done through a variety of book promotion activities that are carried out in a sustainable and continuous manner.

According to Askerud, such activities should address themselves to making people read outside of school; generating a general desire for books; creating appreciation of books; and persuading people and governments to spend money on books in preference to other commodities (1998:6). Book fairs are one of the most common activities that are organized to promote book publishing activities and to encourage reading. Though rare in Africa, Darko-Ampem (2000) notes that book fairs in Africa have been held since the mid-1970s with the Ife Book Fair of 1973 as the first in Nigeria and that of Ghana in 1977. The first Nairobi book fair in Africa - The annual Zimbabwe International Book Fair - was held for the first time in 1983. The first Ethiopian Book Festival was also held from June 3 - 5, 2004 this year.

The additional advantage of book fairs is that alongside the book exhibitions activities such as seminars, workshops, cultural events, and commercial transactions take place. For instance, the Southern African Book Development Educational Trust organized a training workshop on the publication of scholarly research for African graduate students at the 1999 Zimbabwe Book Fair (Ibid). The Ethiopian Book Festival also had a conference on publishing in which individuals from the various sectors concerned with publication presented papers and held discussions.

4. Professional Associations

Professional associations of individuals involved in the book industry is an important element in book development strategies. This is because such associations add to professional efficiency, solidarity and allow exchange of ideas and discussions on professional matters.

As noted above, one of the major advantages of professional associations is the possibility of creating a forum for establishing a meaningful dialogue between different interest groups involved. As argued by Askerud, "Agreeing on a common conceptual framework will enable people that previously could not talk together to do so and to strengthen coordination of the very diverse activities that are needed to boost book sectors" (1998:5). Among other things the establishment of such associations would help to:

- create a co-operative framework for publishing development and book promotion;
- promote reading and a sustainable literate environment;
- instigate the formation of a national book policy (where this does not exist);
- develop training programmes for all branches of the local book industry; and
- facilitate the availability and accessibility of books to as many readers as possible (Sow 1998:3).

Though not in all, allocations are being founded in different parts of Africa. Among such associations are the South African PASA (The Publishers Association of South Africa), The Guinean REPROLIG (The Reseau des Professionnels Guiniens du Livre), and the Kenya KPA (Kenya Publishers Association). The leverage that such institutions have in terms of influencing governments and coordinating national publishing efforts cannot be underestimated. KPA is for instance, cited to have fought and won recognition on the issue of a national book policy in Kenya (Darko -Ampem 2000).

5. Short-term Strategies

Though the answer to the book development industry resides in long-lasting measures as identified above, countries in Africa should also make use of short-term strategies until there is a vibrant book industry. One such measure is importing books at a reduced price. Experiences with Macmillan and Indian practices could be cited as a case in point.

Macmillan is subsidized by various aid programmes (i.e CODE) on the agreement that a certain number of books go towards Third World education (Saunders 1996). This allows for the reduction of book prices in developing countries.

One of the major problems in the growth of the Indian higher education has been the non-availability of reasonably priced quality books in various fields of studies. In order to solve this problem the Indian government has sought the inexpensive publication in India of foreign books of reference and other standard works. For this purpose an Inter-Ministerial Committee was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, comprising representatives of other ministries (Cf. [http:// Shikshanic. nic. in](http://Shikshanic.nic.in)).

With a similar intention, the government of the UK has also initiated a scheme for the production of low-priced books of reference and standard works for use in India with particular focus to university textbooks. There has also been an offer from the Soviet Government under the Soviet Agreement for Technical Assistance for the development of the Institute of Technology in Bombay to make English translations of Russian books of reference in Science and Technology available, without cost for publication and distribution in India (Ibid).

3. Major Findings of the Study

To reiterate, this research was conducted to identify

- (a) the status- quo in PHEIS with regard to the volume and type of books they have;
- (b) the problems that PHEIS have in acquiring books and the strategies they employ to tackle the problems; and
- (c) the solutions which college administrators view as useful in countering the problems.

The discussions in this section are presented in a manner that answers the above objectives.

3.1 The Volume and Type of Books in PHEIs

One of the major objectives of this research was to identify the volume and type of books in PHEIs. This was done in order to determine current status and see where PHEIs are.

It was found out that in terms of the number of books available in these sample colleges the least number was 500 while the highest was 30,000. As to the number of titles (type of books available) the least figure reported was 150 whereas the highest is 5,000.

An attempt was made to determine the number of copies on each title available. The following table indicates the results obtained.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Available Number of Books and Available Number of Book Titles in Private Colleges

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Available Number of Books	500.00	30000.00	7977.65	8670.3
Available No of Book Titles	31	5000.00	1297.06	1415.72

Source: College heads

The average number of books available in the colleges is 7977.65 while that of available book titles is 1297.06. This indicates that, on average, there are about 6 copies of books on each title with the possibility of serving only six students at a time. It should be observed that the standard deviation for available number of books and available number of book titles among the private colleges is huge indicating that there are tremendous variations among the surveyed private colleges with regard to possessions of books under various book titles.

Having determined the above, an attempt was also made to see how many books would be available to each student. This required information on the total number of students available in each college. On the basis of Education Statistics Annual Abstract (MOE: 2003) it was only possible to determine the figure for four private colleges which stated the number of books they have and for which the data was available in the abstract. The results are shown in the table below. The names of the Colleges have not been cited for the purpose of keeping them anonymous.

The figures shown above do not look encouraging, except for College 3 perhaps. They are also far below the requirements of the Ministry. In the following table, a comparison has been made between the requirements of the Ministry and the current book acquisition of private colleges.

Table 2. Available Number of Books, Book Titles and Books per Student for Selected Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

<i>Name of the College</i>	<i>Available Number of Books</i>	<i>Available Number of Book titles</i>	<i>Total Number of Students*</i>	<i>Book per Student</i>
College 1	19,107	2,530	2,953	6.5
College 2	12,119	1,159	2,436	5.0
College 3	18,684	425	858	21.8
College 4	25,000	3,14	2,891	8.6
Overall Average	18,725.5	1,782	2,284.5	10.5

* Total Number of Students is for 2002/03 obtained from Education Statistics Abstract (2003)

Having determined the available number of books and titles in the sample colleges, the researcher was also interested to see how these institutions fare as per the requirements of the MOE. The results are shown below.

Table 3: Requirements of the Ministry of Education as Compared with Current Acquisition of Books in Private Colleges

<i>Item</i>	<i>Ministry Requirement</i>		<i>Current Acquisition by PHEIs for both Programs (Average Figure)</i>
	<i>Diploma Program</i>	<i>Degree Program</i>	
No. of Books	10,000	25,000	7977
No. of Titles	5,000	15,000	1297

Source: MOE Abstract and Accreditation Requirement

If we consider that all private colleges provide only diploma training, the average number of books available may appear acceptable. However, considering the fact that a number of the sample colleges provide degree level training (which requires 35,000 books on average) the need for more books at the private colleges is very big.

With the problem of availability of books in mind, the sample colleges were further asked to identify the areas of training for which they think it is difficult to acquire books. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Level of Difficulty to Get Books by Subject Areas/Fields of Studies

Ser. No	Subject Areas	Level of Difficulty					
		Most Difficult		More Difficult		Difficult	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Accounting	5	19.2 (33.3)	4	15.4 (26.7)	6	23.1 (40.0)
2	Management	1	3.8 (7.1)	5	19.2 (35.7)	8	30 (57.1)
3	Law	8	30.8 (72.7)	3	11.5 (27.3)	-	-
4	Marketing	2	7.7 (22.2)	2	19.2 (22.2)	5	19.2 (55.6)
5	Computer Science	3	11.5 (50.0)	3	11.5 (50.0)	-	-
6	Medicine	5	19.2 (100)	-	-	-	-
7	Economics	1	3.8 (50)	-	-	1	3.8 (50)
8	Technical fields	1	3.8 (33.3)	-	-	2	7.1 (66.7)
9	Teaching	-	-	6	23.1 (60)	4	15.4 (40)
	Total	26	100.0	14	100	14	100

Remark: Figures in parenthesis are row percentage values

Source: Private College heads

It is observed that the most difficult subject areas to acquire books are Law, Accounting and Medicine, Computer Science and Marketing in that order. As might be further shown in the above table, out of those who described the level of difficulty to get books for Law, 71.4% identified it as the most difficult area. Out of those who described the level of difficulty to get books for Accounting, each of the respondents gave equal weights (33.3%) for all of the three levels of difficulty measurements. Out of those who described the level of difficulty to get books for Computer Science, 66.7% identified it as a "More Difficult" area to get access for library materials. Though responded by few institutions, the fields of medicine and Technical training also seem to have difficulty.

3.2. Major Problems of PHEIs in Textbook Acquisition and Coping Strategies

As has been noted earlier, the second major focus of this research was to see what the private colleges cite as their major problems with regard to book acquisition, and the mechanisms they have used to tackle their problems. Information was extracted from both Library and College heads, supplemented by what has been obtained from publishers and distributors.

To begin with, as the major beneficiaries of books, library heads were asked to identify what they regard as their major problems. The results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Major Problems of Private College Libraries (n = 26)

Ser. No.	Description of Library Problems	Frequency	Percentages
1	Shortage of Adequate Books in the Library	23	88.5
2	High Cost of Books for Purchase and Shortage of budget for Book Purchase	10	43.5
3	Unavailability of Books in the Market	7	26.9
4	Absence of Internet Service	1	3.8
5	Limited Library Service Hours	2	7.7
6	Problem of Reading Rooms, Tables and Chairs in the Libraries	9	34.6
7	Poor Library Management	7	27

Source: Library Heads

It might be seen from the table that shortage of adequate books is the most serious problem, followed by budget shortage and high cost, and unavailability of books in the market. As might be shown in the table, the observation of the library heads go far beyond the areas of this investigation. Issues related to service hours, library management and reading room could be cited as examples.

In order to visualize how college heads view the magnitude of the shortage of adequate books, they were asked to rate the seriousness of the problem on a scale from 'Not at all' to 'To a very great extent.' The results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Magnitude of Problems of Private Higher Education Libraries (Responses from College Deans)

S. No.	Problem Description	Description of Magnitude of the Problem									
		To a Very Great Extent		To Great Extent		To Some Extent		To a Limited Extent		Not at All	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Absence of Yearly Budget allocated to the Acquisition of Books in the Colleges	2	7.7	6	23.1	7	26.9	5	19.2	6	23.1
2	Inadequacy of the Budget to the Acquisition	4	15.4	5	19.2	8	30.8	6	23.1	3	11.5
3	The Unavailability of Books for Purchase in the Local Market	13	50.0	9	34.6	3	11.5	1	3.8	-	-
4	The Expensiveness of Available Books in the Market	16	61.5	6	23.1	4	15.4	-	-	-	-
5	Lack of Government Support to Private Colleges in the Acquisition of Textbooks	19	73.1	2	7.7	5	19.2	-	-	-	-
6	Lack of Instructors' Readiness in Producing Materials for their Students	5	19.2	1	42.3	5	19.2	5	19.2	-	-
7	Lack of Instructors Who Prepare Teaching Material	3	11.5	7	26.9	8	30.8	7	26.9	1	3.8
8	Lack of Resource Sharing Practices among Private and Public Institutions	18	69.2	3	11.5	3	11.5	1	3.8	-	-
9	Securing Donation from Local/Foreign Source	12	46.2	6	23.1	3	11.5	2	7.7	2	

Source: College Heads

For the college heads, the factors that affect the problem investigated seem to be mainly outside the reach of institutions. As shown in the above table, these factors are: lack of government support, lack of resource sharing practices, and the high cost of books available in the market.

With regard to the availability and cost of books for higher education in the market, the responses given by a limited number of the publishers and distributors examined seem to correspond with what is noted above.

According to the responses of publishers and distributors, neither the buying capacity nor the readiness on the part of private higher education institutions is encouraging.

Two organizations disclosed that their focus on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is limited because of factors like the lack of readiness on the part of PHEIs to spend on quality books, lack of capacity in specification preparations, and lack of capital allocated to book purchase. One publisher expressed his/her plan to go into the higher education market but noted that "the conditions are not yet fulfilled."

One should also note that even if there was the readiness and the financial muscle on the part of PHEIs, the existing publication and distribution industry does not seem to have the capacity to respond to such demands - by the admission of respondent organizations themselves.

Though they foresee the possible development, all respondents characterized the industry as immature, discouraging, and requiring serious attention. The major factors they identified as an impediment to the success of the industry are:

- high cost of publishing (due to taxes and duties);
- lack of capital and expertise;
- poor/low purchasing power of the population;
- low literacy rate and low reading culture;
- absence of commercial publishers; and
- unavailability of book policy and sound copy-right law.

In view of their existing problems, college heads and library chiefs were also asked to identify the strategies they used to cope with existing problems. The coping up strategies identified by college heads are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Extent of Adopting Different Coping up Mechanisms

Ser. No	Coping up Strategies	Extent of Adopting Coping up Strategies							
		Very Often		Often		Rarely		Never	
1.	Purchasing Books from Local Market*	11	42.3	11	42.3	3	11.5	-	-
2.	Purchasing Books from Abroad*	3	11.5	8	30.8	9	34.6	5	19.2
3.	Securing Donations**	1	5.5	3	11.5	12	46.2	7	26.9
4.	Photocopying/Duplicating Books*	12	46.2	11	42.3	2	7.7	-	-
5.	Using Materials Prepared by College Instructors*	2	7.7	5	19.2	17	65.4	1	3.8
6.	Getting Books through Exchange with Other Institution*	1	3.8	2	7.7	5	19.2	17	65.4

Source: College Heads * One respondent didn't answer the question ** Three respondents didn't answer the question

As might be shown in the table, the most popular strategy used is photocopying or duplicating available books. An extensive use of photocopying is obviously an issue of concern for the publishing industry. Though a short term strategy, if not addressed it could eventually stifle the growth of the publishing and distribution trade by reducing the need for books.

It should also be noted that more helpful practices like exchange of books with other institutions, and material preparation by college instructors do not appear high on the list suggesting the practices of resource sharing schemes, and scholarly publishing are literally non-existent in PHEIs.

Among the coping up strategies identified, the response about donation which is regarded as the least used strategy is a bit surprising. This is because to the knowledge of the researcher, the institutions which reported the biggest acquisition obtained a significant portion of their books from Ethiopian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society (EKTTS)- a local NGO committed to massive book derive. In a bid to check this, an attempt has been made to draw the difference

between the acquisition of five of the PHEIs (which have larger acquisitions) and the books donated by EKTTS to these same institutions. Table 8 shows the results obtained.

Table 8: Comparisons of Donation and all other Modes of Books acquisition

<i>Name of College</i>	<i>Books Available</i>	<i>Books Acquired from EKTTS</i>	<i>Difference (Books Acquired from all other sources)</i>	<i>Proportion from EKTTS</i>
College 1	19107	13882	5225	72.65
College 2	6000	3446	2554	57.43
College 3	18684	9028	9656	48.3
College 4	29367	13908	15459	47.36
College 5	15000	13737	1263	15.8

Source: Data obtained from EKTTS and College Heads

The above figures indicate that a substantial portion of the book acquisitions in the PHEIs comes from EKTTS suggesting that what has been obtained through other means is limited. The fact that donation is regarded as the least popular strategy may be explained in light with the mistaken belief of college heads who might have considered the processing fee they paid for donated books as purchase fee.

When asked about the use of additional alternatives in the acquisition of readable materials the library heads identified a few more choices. These alternatives are shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Frequency of Use of Electronic Media by Private College Libraries (n = 26)

<i>Ser. No.</i>	<i>Alternatives</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	Don't use any	7	27
2	Use Internet only	9	34.6
3	Use both CD-ROMs and Internet	5	19.2
4	Use CD-ROMS only	6	23.1

Source: College Library Heads (Multiple Response)

Although the extent and pattern of using the suggested alternatives requires further research, the results in the above table indicate that PHEIs are exploring alternative routes to tackle their existing problems and/or to supplement current acquisitions. Whether the use of the electronic media is a challenge or prospect for textbook publication is also a question one might wish to ponder at least in the future.

3.3 What PHEIs View as Solutions for Existing Problems

The third major objective of this research was to identify what college heads and chief librarians think to be the major ways of addressing their problems in textbook acquisition. The results are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Multiple Responses on Solutions as Suggested by Private College Librarians

Ser. No.	Suggested Solution	Mentioned as Solution	
		Frequency	Percentages
1	Government should equally make available books for PHEIs as it does for Public Higher Learning Institutions	5	19.2
2	Allow Private College Students to Use Libraries of Public Colleges/Universities	2	7.7
3	Make Price of Books Affordable	6	23.1
4	Facilitating by Concerned Bodies the Acquisition of Books by PHEIs through Donation	9	34.6
5	PHEIs should create link among themselves for book exchange and loan	11	42.3
6	PHEIs should allocate adequate budget for books procurement	13	23.1
7	Creating mechanisms for duplicating books	11	42.3

Source: Library Heads

As might be shown above, college librarians forwarded multiple solutions. The major concern for the librarians is the issue of creating linkage among PHEIs for book exchange and loan, and for creating a mechanism of duplicating and publishing books. For college librarians, short term solutions seem to be more important than long term and sustainable solutions like allocation of adequate budget for book procurement.

In order to identify the sense of urgency that might be attached to the use of the various solutions suggested, institution heads were also asked to put in order their solutions from priority 1 (Very Urgent and Highly Essential) to priority 3 (Not Urgent but Essential). The results are shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Suggested Solutions in Terms of Level of Urgency by Private College Heads

Ser. No	Suggested Solutions	Very Urgent and Highly Essential		Urgent and Essential		Not Urgent but Essential	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Allocating Enough Budget by Colleges**	11	61.11	5	27.8	2	11.1
2	Establishing Resource-Sharing Schemes among Private and Public Institutions**	8	44.4	9	50.0	1	5.5
3	Local Text Book Publications**	11	61.11	5	27.8	2	11.1
4	Securing Donations**	5	27.8	4	22.22	9	50.0
5	Encouraging College Instructors to Write Text Books**	6	33.3	9	50.0	3	16.7
6	Copying Books**	7	38.9	7	38.9	3	16.7
7	Government Support for Private Colleges to Acquire Textbook***	11	61.11	4	22.22	3	16.7

Source: College Heads

** and *** Two and three respondents didn't answer the question respectively

Remark:

f stands for frequency, and

% stands for percentage values

Although the need for allocating enough budgets is high on the agenda for college heads, equally important are the need for local textbook publications and government support. What is listed 'very urgent' next to these solutions are the establishment of resource-sharing schemes among institutions and encouraging instructors to write textbooks. The priorities that the respondents identified are in line with what requires bringing sustainable development to the publication and distribution industry. The fact that they suggested strategies like local textbook publication might also indicate that the other strategies used are either short-term alternatives and/or supplements to what should be done.

On the other hand, under the column for 'not urgent but essential' we observe donations to be popular. This may be due to several reasons. One may be the difficulty of securing donations and importing acquired materials. The other could be the limited importance of such materials due to the impossibility of selecting what is to be donated.

4. Conclusions

This small research has shown that currently PHEIs have a limited resource of books. The acquisition process is highly demanding, and at times frustrating. Books are expensive. Even when the financial capacity is there, the books required are not usually available on the market. The publishing industry is just at its infancy stage and cannot answer current requirements both in the form of quantity and variety. Acquiring books from abroad has not been an easy matter for PHEIs. Since these institutions are mainly filled with young and inexperienced staff, material preparation cannot be expected to serve as a panacea for their quest for textbooks.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this research is exploratory in nature and does not claim to be exhaustive and conclusive. Although indicative and in some ways enlightening, a more detailed understanding of the area warrants further research.

5. Recommendations

With an increase in the higher education enrolment, the demands for books will obviously augment. This research has shown that these demands are already strongly felt and need to be addressed quickly. The following recommendations are made in light with the need to grapple with the existing and possibly ensuing problems. In this regard,

- 5.1. It is high time that Ethiopia has a national book policy that governs the development, printing and dissemination of books while providing favourable conditions for publishing

industries. Such a policy should clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties concerned with the book sector. It should also provide a logical framework for collaboration between partners in the public and private sectors.

- 5.2. The textbook problem could be regarded as the missing link in Ethiopia's current higher education expansion program neither the problem nor the strategies for tackling the problem has been mentioned. Thus, the government should find ways of redressing the problem.
- 5.3. The ultimate goal of developing literate societies cannot be attained by addressing the issue of textbooks to the education sector only. Since the growth of the publishing and distribution industry is highly dependent on the existence of a literate society, book development projects that would generate a general desire for books, create appreciation of books, persuade people and the government to spend money on books should be widely initiated, supported, and rigorously practiced. The creation of public awareness about local publishing and distribution through book fairs, book prizes, etc should also be made.
- 5.4. The mechanisms for encouraging and supporting the growth of local publishing industry should be sought. This should be done by creating the necessary conditions for local industries to grow and for international publishers to be attracted. The latter need to be encouraged to invest on local book development as they have the experience, expertise and capital required. Measures tested and found successful elsewhere should be considered. This might include a gamut of incentives like fellowships, grants for research and travel, awards and prizes, tax concessions and relieves, easy terms of credit, etc. These measures require the involvement and commitment of the government. In the words of Altbach "Private publishing operates in the context of governmental policy".
- 5.5. National associations of writers, publishers, booksellers, librarians, etc should be established in order to work jointly in the improvement of the status-quo with regard to textbook publication and distribution.
- 5.6. Support for private higher education institutions in assisting their efforts of acquiring books both locally and from abroad should be made. Taxes levied on books should be scrapped; relevant donations should be quickly handled at customs, (and conditions for encouraging scholarly publications in higher education institutions should be created.)
- 5.7. Private higher education institutions should allocate a significant portion of their income to the acquisition of books, and should create resource sharing mechanisms among themselves and/or public institutions of higher learning in order to facilitate sharing the existing meagre resources, experiences and expertise in the area.

- 5.8. PHEIs should encourage scholarly publishing in their institutions by designing policies and arranging reward systems that motivate their staff to involve in material preparation.

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Psychosocial Problems of Female Students in Private Higher Institutions

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Abstract

The study attempted to see the psychosocial problems of female students at private higher institutions. More specifically, it was designed to explore the level of their general self-esteem and problems they faced in the formation of intimate friends. The study also examined the association between psychosocial problems and academic performance. Sample female students from Saint Mary's and Royal Colleges were the subjects of the study. The paper was grounded in qualitative analysis.

The results of the study indicated that female students seemed to have favourable self-esteem. However, they appeared to rank themselves below average in social skills. Lack of professional supports, inconsistent treatments, perceived assumptions and reflected appraisals were some of the major factors that might affect the psychosocial states of female students in private institutions. Furthermore, the study suggested that there might be certain association between psychosocial problems and academic performance.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

It is a well recognized fact that Education plays a significant role in the development process. However, in Ethiopia, education is not accessible to all people. The overall level of education is very low (Trufat 1999). The literacy rate is 41 and 21 percent for male and female respectively (Befekadu 1998). Asmaru (1998 cited in Guday 2003) further stated that in grades (1-6) boys are 50.3% whereas girls are 29.3%, in grade (1-8) boys are 43% and girls are 26%, and in senior secondary schools girls are 14% and boys are 17.9%.

One can observe from the above review the numerical value that the participation of girls in the Ethiopian education system is limited. The participation rate, performance and gender stereotype is even worse at tertiary level education, and gender inequality in education widens as one goes up higher on the educational ladder (Seyoum 1991; Trufat 1999; Befekadu 1998 and Haregewoin and Emebet 2002). Further Atsedo (1991 as cited in Guday 2003) reported that girls' enrolment and performance, their participation as researchers, teachers, lecturers and engineers is in most instances less than one-tenth of that of men.

Gender disparities are prevalent in Ethiopia. The existing gender imbalance dates back to ancient Ethiopia. In Ethiopia women had been excluded from getting church and koranic education (Seyoum 1986) which has not changed much even today.

As commented above, the number of female students admitted to higher institutions is negligible compared with the number of male students. According to Genet (1991), it was only 5% of female

as compared to 14% male students who were reported to have scored a GPA that could qualify them for higher education. Having understood the reality, the government of Ethiopia has tried to take some affirmative actions such as admitting them to join higher institution with a GPA of 2 which is less than that of male students. Despite this attempt of gender responsive policies, the participation and enrolment rate of female students in higher institutions has been minimal (Fentaw 2001; Anteneh 2000 and Seyoum 1986).

The problems of female students are quite different from that of male. They are overburdened with household chores; they are exposed to the deep rooted inequality with men and they have social, cultural and economic discrimination and stigma. These impede their limited educational opportunities and those who got the access cease their studies due to academic and non-academic reasons (Fentaw 2001). These problems create special difficulties in terms of self concept and interpersonal relations and this study attempts to find out the psychological and social problems of female students in selected higher institutions of Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia a growing body of studies and statistical reports have revealed the low participation rate of female students in Education (Genet 1991; Almaz 1991 and Atsede 1991 as cited in Gudaye 2003; Adugnaw 1995; Negat 1995 and Asmaru 1998). This shows that half segment of the population contributes little for the development of the country for gender discrimination affects not only women but also the overall growth of the economy.

It is argued that the limited participation of female students in education is mainly due to economic, cultural and societal factors (Guday 2000). Over the years, the low participation of females in education is highlighted, documented and recorded but their psychosocial problems as per the knowledge of the researcher, is not thoroughly considered.

Some local researchers (Efrem 1999; Solomon 1999; Bahiru 1999 and Demewoz 1997) conducted research in connection with self concept and the formation of peers. However, none of the previous studies was addressing the specific psychosocial problems of female students in private higher institutions. Thus, this study aims at filling this research gap.

Thus, the focus of this study will be on the psychological and social problems of female students. More specifically, the study will attempt to answer the following basic questions.

1. What are the psychosocial problems of female students?
2. Is there any association between psychosocial problems and academic performance of students?

1.3 Objectives of the study

In trying to answer the above research questions, the study attempts to achieve the following specific objectives to:

1. explore the level of their general self-esteem;
2. identify their specific social challenges for the formation of intimate friends; and
3. see the association between psychosocial problems and academic performance.

1.4 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Psychosocial: represents intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics of a person.

Psychological problems: are emotions related to general self esteem

Social problems: are interpersonal barriers for social relations particularly in the formation of intimate friends.

Friendships: are social agents who share one's feelings and avoid loneliness in a particular social milieu.

Self esteem: is the judgments we make about the worth of ourselves.

Peers: are students of the same maturity level and consist of a few friends of the same sex or a large group of both sexes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychological Development

2.1.1 The Nature of Self

Berk (1991) pointed out that social cognition has a multifaceted nature and it comprises the behaviour and inner characteristics of the self and other people. Berk (1991) further explained that the concept of self, of other people and of relationships between people is the three facets of social cognition development.

Under social cognition, we find the notion of self concept. Self concept is a general term covering self esteem. In relation to this, Derlega and Janda (1986) indicated that the feeling, attitudes and values people have in regard to their behaviour, abilities and worth are defined as self concept.

According to Rogers(1959) self concept refers to the organized, consistent, and whole perceptions that each of us has about ourselves through reflected appraisals of others whereas self esteem is more specific than self concept, and it is the way we think about ourselves whether in a generally negative or positive fashion (Derlega,1986). According to Owens (1993), self esteem is what you feel about yourself and it is the extent to which you admire and value the self. In other words, it is the evaluative side of self concept or it is the judgment we make about the worth of ourselves (Berk 1991). For some researchers self-concept and self esteem have similar meaning (Green *et al*

1975 and Derlega and Janda 1986) but, others treat them separately (Coopersmith 1967 and Messey *et al* 1984).The researcher of this study perceives them differently.

2.1.1.1. Formation of Self Esteem

Researchers like Owens (1993), Pervin (1984) and Fox (1993) indicated that the origin of self esteem is in social interaction. However, the formation of self esteem is not purely a social product. It can be seen from two dimensions - outer source of self esteem and inner source of self-esteem. In connection to this, Rosenberg (1981) explained that the outer source of self is derived from reflected appraisals of others. Further, Rosenberg (1981) showed that the impact of others depends on the degree of crystallization of the self-esteem component under consideration. If the component is firmly fixed and the person has preformulated view of himself or herself regarding that specific component, other's view may have little impact.

Rosenberg (1981) further indicated that the inner source of self esteem is the result of individuals' beliefs about their ability to succeed in a particular task. Although the individual's view of himself is internal, what he sees and feels when he thinks of himself is largely the product of social life (Coopersmith 1967 and Efrem 1999).

2.1.1.2. Components of Self Esteem

The concept of self esteem has multidimensional nature. That is the components of self esteem are different since people have different perception and judgment about themselves in different interaction and situation. Rosenberg (1981) revealed that an individual's self esteem varies from situation to situation; as a result, the person has many different social selves.

Under the general self esteem, Berk (1991) explained some of the components of self-esteem. These are: social self-esteem, academic self esteem, physical self esteem, etc. Battle (1981) indicated that social self esteem is related to social value and it is the individual's perceptions of the quality of their relationship with the society whereas academic self esteem is the individual's perceptions, capability and evaluation to succeed academically. Further, Berk (1991) indicated that each classification may have other components. For example, academic self could be arithmetic, language, science, art, etc. Physical self esteem includes - physical ability and physical attractiveness.

2.1.1.3. Gender and Self-Esteem

Regarding sex, females show lower self-esteem than males do (Lips 1997). Their low self-esteem may result from the influences of others in the immediate environment. In connection to this, Gearheart *et.al* (1988 Page No.) address the following adage which indicates by contrast the need for an objective and sensitive attitude.

- What you think of me
- I will think of me
- What I think of me
- Will be me

The perception and attitude of others in the immediate environment have profound effect on the psychological make up of students with orthopaedic impairments. Psychological support service and supportive environment at home and in school can help relieve this feeling.

Freiber (1991 cited in Lips 1997) suggested that the gender-gap in self-esteem widens during adolescence and the subsequent stages of development. When females move from childhood to adolescence and to adulthood, they become aware that there is a conflict between the way they see themselves and the others (teachers, authorities) view them. They confront a message of female inferiority, exclusion and subordinate (Galligan 1990 as cited by Lips 1997). Significant others such as peers should see female students positively and make them see as worth while individuals with many valued abilities.

There are different variables that influence women's self esteem; the following are some.

2.1.1.4. Factors Affecting Self Esteem

Body image, others and social standard are some of the factors that can play a role in affecting self-esteem.

2.1.1.4.1. Body Image

The way physical attractiveness is viewed has profound effects on personal adjustment. Derlega and Janda (1986) stated that people who are satisfied with their appearances are well adjusted and are comfortable in social situations while those who feel they are unattractive are likely to experience anxiety in social situation; they tend to be less effective in interpersonal relationships and they have fear of being criticized and rejected so they have poor self esteem.

Feeling of dissatisfaction with one's body is more common among women than men. Lips (1997) noted that physical attractiveness is more central part of the self concept for femininity than to masculinity.

2.1.1.4.2. Significant others

Derlega and Janda (1986) indicated that people are bound to develop feelings of worthless, worthwhile, lovable and unloved according to the degree of acceptance accorded to them; i.e., they learn to define themselves on the basis of others treatment. In other words, one's self-esteem is developed through interaction with other people.

Although there are many people with whom we interact, we don't accept all their views of us since they may not be significant to us. Derlega and Janda (1986) noted that significant others such as peers, parents, siblings and teachers play a part in how we think of ourselves. Concerning this, Rosenberg (1981) proposed two foundations of interpersonal significance-valuation and credibility. Valuation refers to giving credit to the opinion of those people who matter most to us - whose opinion we care for greatly should have strong effect on our self esteem than the views of those to whom we are indifferent. Credibility - the impact of other's opinion of us depends on the degree of faith, trust or confidence that we repose in that person's judgments.

Thus, if one is accepted by important others, the relationship is likely to have a positive effect on the individuals; self-esteem; on the other hand, if peers or teachers show lack of acceptance, the relationship may have unfavourable effect on the individual's self esteem.

2.1.1.4.3. Social Standard

It is the universal desire of mankind to be recognized as a worthwhile individual since society has placed standards on academic performance, strength, ability, wealth and physical beauty. Social standard which regulates public image limits self esteem and adjustment (Derlega and Janda 1986). And it is easy for female students to devalue themselves because they do not have the qualities. In other words, not having the qualities expected by the society, the discrepancy between the expectations and standards set by the society and the inability of the person to meet these expectations create poor self esteem. By internalizing the attitudes of the community as a whole, female students view themselves from the perspectives of the broader society that is negatively and stereotypically (Rosenberg 1981).

2.2. Social Development

Socialization is a very intricate process. Everyone is not born with sufficient survival skills but he/she acquires them through socialization. This implies that our lives are interwoven with the lives of others (Garwood 1983).

A variety of social agents participate in the socialization process. The process is controlled by significant agents such as friends, teachers and parents. Garwood (1983) further noted that prolonged acquaintance with peers and peer contacts are the primary vehicle for shaping and developing more complex adaptive social interchanges. This shows that the quality of interpersonal skills among friends tend to interfere with spontaneous social activity and interactions.

2.2.1. Friendship

Friendships are interpersonal social relationships which serve many human needs and help us grow and develop as individuals (Derlega and Janda 1986). Derlega and Janda (1986) further explained that friendships provide mutual protection, avoid loneliness, gain approval for ourselves and increase our certainty about our own behaviours.

According to Garwood (1983), friendships have developmental trends - situational, contractual and empathic. Situational friendships are based on shared activities whereas contractual are based on adherence to socially sanctioned rules; on the other hand, empathic friendships rely on mutual understanding.

Derlega and Janda (1986) and Garwood (1983) pinpointed five major elements that enhance healthy relationship among friends - genuineness, warmth, empathy, self-disclosure and altruism.

Genuineness: - a relationship between friends deepens only if both persons, without hiding and denying, are honest in what they say and feel toward one another.

Warmth: - refers to seeing the other peer as a unique person with his/ her own thought, feeling, experience; accepting both goods and bad qualities and offering unconditioned positive regard.

Empathy:- denotes recognizing the nature of their friend's private worlds and understanding both cognitive components (knowledge of what another is feeling) and affective components (sharing in another's emotionality).

Self Disclosure: - is an index that shows the growth of a relationship is a building block of friendship. Persons who are able to reveal their thoughts are more likely to have intimate friends whereas persons who are unable to disclose their innermost thought are isolated and they couldn't learn about themselves. Although the depth of disclosure depends on the intimacy and the quality of the friendship, self disclosure may be inappropriate and self defeating if it is not done at the correct time, in the correct context and to the correct person (Derlega and Janda 1986).

Altruism: - is offering aid or giving comfort to others in time of distress or it is a behaviour that is intended to help others without anticipation of personal gain as result (Garwood 1983).

The formation of friendship is as varied as its intensity; however, Berk (1991) and Derlega and Janda (1986) proposed four major cases in which friendship is founded.

2.2.1.1. Origins of Friendship

Friendships seem to be based on attractiveness, proximity, similarity and reciprocity (Berk 1991 and Derlega and Janda 1986). Physical attractiveness is one of the most powerful reasons why people like each other. Berk (1991) asserted that according to the matching principle, people tend to be attracted to others with similar physical characteristics such as attractiveness, height and weight. Regarding the reason for doing so, Derlega and Janda (1986) stated that the strong driving motive for selecting attractive individuals as friend is to increase status; being seen with a physically attractive persons seem to enhance our own social appeal and our own image. In relation to this, Sigall and Londy (1973 cited in Berk 1991) reported that man seated with an attractive woman was viewed positively by others but if he was with unattractive woman, he was viewed negatively. Moreover, attractiveness has a strong impact on our evaluation and makes us sympathetic. For instance, Derlega and Janda (1986) explained that adults make excuses for an attractive child who has misbehaved.

Along with this, beauty drives women crazy when they reach early adulthood. For example, one female student addresses the following "I thought of myself that if I were an ugly girl, I would consider killing myself" Derlega and Janda (1986). This tyranny of beauty informs that women give much credit for physical attractiveness.

Proximity: - physical proximity or closeness is the most important factor in forming a friend or getting to know someone. Derlega and Janda (1986) indicated that repeated contact tends to increase social attraction and the more we meet someone, the more likely we are to like that person. But proximity is limited by a number of social influences. Berk (1991) forwarded that social filter established by parents, peers, cultural groups lead people to have a strong tendency to make friends (marry) with members of the same race religion, social class and education. In connection to this, Behru (1999) concluded that college students seem ethnically biased in peer relation.

Similarity: - refers to having the same interest, physical characteristics, attitudes and other personality characteristics. Researchers (Berk 1991 and Derlega and Janda 1986) showed that people who are more similar to each other are more likely to get together particularly at the early stage of their relationship but when the relationship such as close friends advances need complimentary may be important.

Reciprocity: - is the tendency to like others if we think they like us. However, Berk (1991) indicated that insincere and ingratiating demonstration may produce disliking if it is perceived as a phoney attempt to gain some advantage.

Research Instruments

The study was basically qualitative and it attempted to present the psychosocial problems of female students in PHEIs. It was also the purpose of this study to see the impacts of psychosocial problems on the academic performance of female students.

Three methods of data collection techniques were used; these were questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The questionnaire was developed in a form of scale. The adapted general self-esteem scale GSES (Rosenberg 1981) is a 17 item questionnaire. The response scale was a five point Likert format ranging from always to never in which higher scores reflecting positive self esteem and lower scores denoting negative self esteem.

Open-ended interview guide was also employed in order to assess the attitude and personal experience of female students. Further, focus group discussions were made with small representative groups. The FGD was designed to collect information in connection to the general experience they have had.

Ninety five sophomore students from St. Mary's and Royal Colleges took part in filling the self-esteem scale. Eighteen out of the ninety-five female students were selected randomly and participated in the focus group discussion. In addition, ten of them were interviewed.

3. Results and discussions

3.1 Psychological Development of Female Student

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Positive Self Concept Items

<i>Item</i>	<i>Positive Self Concept Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
1	I am happy most of the time	95	1	5	2.21	1.01
2	I usually can take care of myself	94	1	5	1.76	1.17
3	I am as happy as most girls	92	1	5	2.60	1.34
4	I am as nice looking as most girls	92	1	5	2.08	1.29
5	I know myself very well	93	1	5	1.61	1.01
6	When I have something to say, I usually say it	94	1	4	2.12	1.07
7	People can depend on me to keep my promises	92	1	5	2.10	1.25
	overall mean	95	1.00	3.50	2.063	0.5856
	Valid cases	87				

As might be noted in the above table, the mean of the self esteem item was 2.0629 which shows that the sample female students had favourable self concept about themselves. The means of the second and the fifth items were 1.76 and 1.61 respectively; this in turn depicts that the subjects could probably take care of themselves and they seem to know themselves very well. This was compatible with the theoretical concept which stated that taking care of oneself for the sake of physical attractiveness is more central part of the self concept for femininity than to masculinity (Lips 1997).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Negative Self Concept items

<i>Item</i>	<i>Negative Self Concept Factors</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
1	I spend a lot of time daydreaming	95	1	5	2.66	1.23
2	I like to spend most of my time alone	95	1	5	3.02	1.08
3	I have very little trust in myself	95	1	5	3.15	1.55
4	I like being a boy	95	1	5	3.58	1.61
5	I usually fail when I try to do important things	93	1	5	3.09	1.28
6	I often feel ashamed of myself	91	1	5	3.97	1.35
7	I often feel that I am no good at all	91	1	5	3.60	1.20
8	Most girls are better than me	93	1	5	3.94	1.28
9	I would change many things about myself if I could	90	1	5	2.33	1.31
10	I worry a lot	92	1	5	2.60	1.29
	Overall mean	95	2.00	4.90	3.1938	.7007
	Valid cases	82				

The table above revealed that the negative self-esteem items had a total mean of 3.1938, which exceeds the average value. This shows that female students had probably better self-esteem about themselves.

Furthermore, the observed mean values for the first and the tenth items were almost on the average line. According to this, it was reasonable to expect that the sample students possibly spent some of their time daydreaming and they sometimes tended to worry. On the other hand, the ninth item had a value of 2.33, which is below the average line. This revealed that some subjects would probably change many things about themselves if they could. In a nutshell, female students had favourable self esteem.

This is contrary to the theoretical concepts stated under the literature, which stated that female had low self esteem (Lips 1997). The likely explanation is that education, the environment in which the subjects were found and the gender advocacy might be some of the factors that account for the favourable self-esteem that the subjects had. Or, the degree of crystallization of the inner self might be so concrete that the subjects had such favourable self esteem score.

Despite the fact that female students showed positive general self-esteem in Rosenberg's scale, the subjects' endorsement of social stereotypes had strong effect on their social identity. This might be the reason for the subjects' need to change many things about themselves if they could.

It was outlined that self-esteem was twofold - inner and outer sources of self esteem (Rosenberg 1981). The study shows that the subjects' belief about their ability, worth, feeling and values seems to be positive. However, the culture, people's treatment and attitude towards female tend to lower their self-concept. Results of the interview about the factors that affect the psychological conditions of female students revealed that the following are the predictors that affect their identity.

Societal attitude towards female, myths about women, fear of success and risk taking and sex role orientation are some of the factors that affect our psychological states.

The way feminine is viewed by the society has profound effects on the subjects' personal adjustment since the outer source of self is derived from reflected appraisals of others (Rosenberg 1981). The society's view towards females had impacts on their identity because the subjects are bound to develop their self-image according to the degree of treatment and acceptance accorded to them. From the interview results, it was found out that those parents of few subjects uttered before their daughters about their male sex preferences. This type of utterances might unknowingly hurt the subjects' psychological feelings. Below are the responses of some female that could show the point clearly.

In different occasions my father said "Had you been a son, I would have felt an everlasting happiness. This has a telling effect on my identity. Furthermore, when I made an error, my mother often said, "I was cursed while I gave birth to a baby girl."

In view of the above points, parental attitude appears to be important. This is because personality structure and the nature of social relations are formed as reflected in the attitude of the parents towards their daughters. The statements of the parents and the treatments they received from the society seem to complicate the matter. This could lead the subjects to have a poor psychological states. Had culture, people's attitude and situations been conducive to female students, they would have even shown high self esteem score than what is found in the study.

3.2 Social Development of Female Students

Friendships are one of the building blocks of interpersonal ties. Friends share important information and feelings that become a source of love. The development of friendship depends on the participation in positive interactions. The subjects' participation in healthy social interaction seems to be positive. The following responses of the subjects consolidated the point above.

I have many friends but not intimate; I have a lot of friends but few close peers.

According to Garwood (1983), friends are important milestone in the development of personality. Despite the fact that sharing information is generally seen as a hallmark of common friendships, sharing of intimate feelings, discussing a wealth of information, defusing everyday frustration and understanding the desires of partners are only qualities of close friendships. However, female students did not have many close friends to whom they counted on to be themselves. The following description has brought this point out.

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I could not trust people and I would not be completely myself with them since it is hard to find people who disclose personal secret and understand your thought. I behave in a more neutral way instead of expressing the real excitement, sorrow and happiness with friends. On the other hand, few of them explained as follows: I could completely be myself when I have been with my mother, sisters or brother.

In view of the above facts, majority (77%) of female students did not have many intimate friends to whom they share warm, affectionate and happy excitements.

The culture, female socialization and personal style might be some of the factors that impede the existence of warm interpersonal relations and real social bonds.

Although items referring to the culture of the sample students were not taken into account, socio-metric peer nominations were a product of culture. All the subjects taking part in the focus groups discussion stated as follows.

The way we are reared restricts the area of social interactions. This undoubtedly limits the number of friends formed as it narrows the opportunities of forming friends in different social gathering.

It is quite conceivable that being uninvolved actively in social interactions emerged as a significant factor that could reduce the opportunity of making friends. In connection to the impacts of feminine in the realm of social relation, the subjects participated in the focus groups discussion stated their common experiences below.

Female socialization process forces female to think about ourselves as less competent. The role standards of female lead us to internalize this cultural though. Thus, feminity increases the vulnerability of female to interpersonal and interpersonal relations.

This finding was also compatible with the theoretical concepts and empirical reports discussed under the literature (Guday 2000 and Almaz 1991). According to the respondents, female socialization process has followed strict system of upbringing. The role standards of female guided the way they are supposed to behave in a particular society.

Female were socialized to think about themselves a bit lower than male. This assumptions might provide them the under grid on which they erected their personal identity i.e. there seemed to be a kind of general consensus about the way female behave. In other words, there was a positive correlation between the normative beliefs and the subjects' endorsement of social stereotype. The subjects' personal experiences revealed that gender role was culturally rooted in the general belief of the society.

Both the family and the public at large did never consider female as equal as male. The views of interviewees given below could provide a vivid picture of the point under discussion.

Some people treat female as equal as males but the majority of the people look down upon us. People in general do not have consistent judgments for women. Even my parents never allowed me to do something alone because they thought that I always need safeguard. Moreover, they are not pleased to spend my time with friends.

As per the responses of the subjects, they received inconsistent treatment from the community. This implies that the treatments they get do not remain fixed on account of which their conception of their identity might also be changed along with the kind of treatment they experienced.

For self-conception is to be responsive to environmental fluctuation (Rosenberg 1981), female students are likely to show momentary fluctuation in their self identity. The public image about feminine was unfavourable and it was found out that most people undermine their ability and potential to perform tasks similar to their male counterparts.

Due to the assumptions sustained by the society and the undesired treatment imposed on them the subjects might not be in a position to initiate friendship and they would make attribution from the stand point of others. The response below is compatible with the point under discussion.

We rank ourselves in the same way with respect to the conventional standards of the society and we act according to the norms of the society. It is the society's attitude that affects our social relations.

The responses of the subjects correspond with the theory of reflected appraisals which state people come to see themselves in terms of appraisals other made about them (Rosenberg 1981). Reflected appraisals seem to show their structural location in the society. According to the respondents, they were socially viewed as less competent and this would lead them to view themselves in terms of the views of others.

In addition to the point discussed above, the absence of genuineness, empathy, altruism and self-disclosure might be some of the factors that could hamper the formation of close friends. Although self-disclosure might be self-defeating if it is not done in the correct time, context and person, individuals who do not disclose their innermost though have fewer opportunities for making deep friendship (Derlega and Janda 1986). The culture in which the subjects are socialized does not help them to disclose themselves. Females do not have guts to violate the cultural moral code, which restricts them to be secretive.

From the psychological point of view, it is understandable that females' earliest experiences, the emotional responsiveness of caregivers to a developing baby's wish have profound influences on the quality and nature of interpersonal interactions because all these might be relatively fixed early in childhood (Freud 1917 cited in Berk 1991). This is further accentuated by the culture in which females are immersed.

3.3 Psychological Problems and Their Impacts on Females Academic Performance

The psychological conditions of the subjects are determinants of their academic performance. For example, level of self-concept could have some effect on their achievements. In line with this, Rosenberg (1981) explained that self-esteem could be both a consequence of academic performance or a cause for it.

The subject also explained that psychological conditions would have impacts on their academic performance. The summary given below illustrated this point.

To begin with, lack of courage to raise questions in the classroom for instance has influenced our understanding. Further, poor psychological state such as being shy, dependent, lack of achievement motivation, becoming over sensitive not to make errors have marked effects on our school achievements.

The psychological conditions of females have a prominent influence on their academic achievement. Learning needs active interactions between teachers and students and among students too. However, females' active participation is constrained because of their poor psychological states of being shy and lack of courage, which might be the product of sheltered upbringing.

In relation to this, Rosenberg (1981) explained that the confidence with which one approaches a task and the freedom from anxiety might also influence academic achievement. In the classroom situation, it was a common experience to see that the majority of female students did not have the courage to talk and participate actively in the classroom interactions; if they talked at all, they might talk only in whisper. This happened because they are fearful of getting disapproval and they are more vulnerable to criticism. Thus, it was reasonable to conclude that shyness and lack of encouragement and courage might be some of the factors that could hinder the academic performance of female students.

In the same vein, the subjects' perception of their capability might also be influenced by the reflection of dependency. Misconception awareness of their ability might be the major factor that determines effective outcomes. In relation to this, Bandura (1982) stated that self efficacy is a strong predictor of subject specific academic performance and goals.

From the explanation they made, female students appeared to be more concerned with others' reactions to them. Being over sensitive towards the opinion of others and a fear of failure might retard the course of their active interactions in the classroom. And insufficient involvement or classroom interactions undoubtedly limit the students' achievements.

This finding reconciled with the theoretical issue which stated that both social and cultural factors are the major causes that lead to differences in academic performance (Tony 2003). The study subjects noted that social problems would also have impacts on their academic performance. To mention but few, the following sample presentation clearly showed the case under discussion.

Household chores restrict our studying time. In addition, we are not allowed to spend the whole day in the library since we are over safeguarded. Further, sexual harassments from male classmates and teachers, low estimation of females' performance are some of the factors that affect our academic achievement.

Social factors may account for their academic performance. As it was mentioned above, female students were requested to spend their time at home – doing household tasks. Underling this was little attention might be paid to their studying time. Restricting them at home limits the opportunity to acquire the skills and experiences with their classmates through interactions. In such a way, they could not cover lessons given in the classroom let alone exploring unknown course related issues with enthusiasm and curiosity that are the major accountabilities of students in PHEIs.

As per the responses of subjects, the people's orientation of females' made the subjects be over safeguarded. This tended to show the social structure of females. The extremes over protection, over appreciation and underestimation have their own impacts on their identity development and poor identity development might also give rise to affecting academic achievement.

According to the data, the sample female students were exposed to sexual harassment from teachers and classmates. Such harassments were likely to generate tension, feelings of fear, insecurity and problems of interpersonal relations. To avoid the subtly hidden desire of such male, the interpersonal interaction and discussion to which the respondents are subjected would be restricted. In other words, the subjects would facilitate the avoidance of situations and persons in which they were likely to face treating incidents because there is a tendency of people to avoid potentially self-devolving situation (Rosenberg, 1981). Due to all these, it is not difficult to envisage the young female students' feelings that undergo in such situations. And attending lessons with such kind of psychological conditions might inhibit the academic performance of female students in PHEIs.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Since a fuller understanding of problems that female students experience is a fertile step in finding solutions, the overall aim of the study was to explore the psychosocial problems of female students and see the effects of the problems on their academic performance.

The data mirror that the society tends to underestimate feminine and they experience inconsistent treatments. As a result, the subjects of the study view themselves according to the views of others and they internalize this cultural assumption. Due to this, they are poor in social skills. The study also indicates that female socialization process is likely to be a major factor for the absence of forming intimate friends. Further, they lack confidence, courage and they develop a feeling of shyness. In spite of all these, as the study shows, female students have favourable self-esteem.

The study also reveals that there is an association between psychosocial problems and academic performance. Poor psychological conditions such as shyness, lack of encouragement and courage, restricting female at home, low esteem for female students' achievement, unwanted sexual attention and harassment are some of the barriers to their academic learning.

The recommendations rendered have been twofold one is to change society's attitude towards female; in doing so, consciousness-raising and gender advocacy tasks have prominent roles. Both the family and the society should be enlightened about gender equality. As a result, positive sustainable and desirable attitude could develop. Furthermore, female students should not be restricted at home because restricting females at home is potentially hazardous for their academic performance. For females tend to be more concerned with people's reactions to their classroom activities, they appear to have low academic self-confidence. To overcome such embarrassment, instructors have to play a key role in enhancing their participation in the classroom activities. Moreover, professional supports such as counselling service could foster their psychological wellbeing. Academic staff in particular and the society in general have to treat female students equally as their male counterparts. In addition, unwanted sexual attention and harassment must be curbed.

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Inside a College Owner's Soul

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Feelings, thoughts, words and deeds are said to be in harmony when these entities within the inner-self have the due synchrony. Dissonance on the contrary occurs when words filter and censor what we actually feel or think, and all the more when deeds go against volition, words and commitments.

Under certain circumstances, we may have “reasons or justifications” when our acts or omissions go against our feelings, thoughts and words. This occurs when words are hedged or modulated for the purpose of courtesy or civility to such a magnitude that would not amount to an outright lie, and when deeds are adjusted to current realities in order to avoid the risk of “*being right at the wrong time*”.

We may imagine some sort of dialogue that represents the various shades of feelings and thoughts inside a private college owner's soul. For the purpose of convenience soul refers to the *mind-emotion-spirit* nexus within us.

In Plato's dialogues, various ideas and perceptions are expressed through different characters. But we may imagine an inner dialogue inside a college owner's soul before the triumphant thought develops into verbal expressions and then deeds. We can thus create a hypothetical setting that *Entone*, after some toss and turn in his bed (one Sunday morning) harbours an intense contemplation whereby competing thoughts and feelings undertake a heated conversation on issues related to his daily endeavours.

P and *Q* within *Entone*'s soul represent, respectively, the motives and desires of *Profit* and *Quality*. And at a later stage of the dialogue a third entity may participate in the conversation. The dialogue starts while *Entone* still lies in his bed, his eyes glued on the æsthetic design of his bedroom ceiling.

* * *

- Please don't nag me *Q*. Our college is not a welfare organization. Nor is it an NGO established with a non-profit objective. It's a simple demand-supply phenomenon. The demand for higher education is there. And here we are, with a college, which is engaged in the supply of services.

- If we are short-distance runners, what you say is correct. We will run as fast as we can, sprint at every possible juncture, make fast and easy money, and then quit gasping and breathless. But P, rest assured that this trend will backfire someday.
- Meaning?
 - Most of our graduates will be far below the professional and academic height expressed by the diplomas or degrees we affix our signatures and seal on. The current rate of unemployment coupled with compromised quality of education will inevitably have repercussions someday. I hope you can understand what I mean. Ultimately, what you say “demand” will shrink and dissipate.
- Easier said than done. Have I ever said that I don’t strive towards quality? The problem boils down to practice, practice and practice. I am sure you don’t have some magic formula towards an action plan.
 - Decision and commitment are the initial steps towards every journey.
- Don’t forget that we need money for our efforts towards Quality. I’m afraid you haven’t given enough thought to the practical aspect of the issue.

Q paused for a while and responded:

- I am not preaching altruism. Let’s reallocate most of our profit to inputs until such a time that our college stands on its feet confident with its quality performance.
- You mean our current performance is inadequate.
 - We should not compare our college to those behind us, but instead to the ones that are ahead of us and in particular against our own potential. We ought to steadily march towards excellence because there are always better ways of doing things. Ultimately, quality brings about sustained and deserved profit, not in the sense of ordinary business, but deserved return to enable us to live our private lives comfortably and pay more attention to the enhancement of the teaching and research endeavours of our college.
- You are a dreamer Q. This reminds me of a certain quotation I had read decades back. “The easiest way to get into trouble is to be right at the wrong time”. Can you think of an action plan which is pragmatic and not ahead of the actual realities on the ground?

- I don't have ready made prescriptions. All we need is the *Will* and determination. If we agree on principles, we can easily work on the details.
- Come-on. Of course, we share the same principle. Who doesn't like quality? And, who hates profit? I'll be glad if we can blend quality education and profit. Just tell me what you recommend as initial steps towards enhancing quality.

Q opted not to go into details, and replied:

- Let's check out our net profit, and then allocate X percentage of it for quality education and research inputs.

P's response was prompt:

- What does X percent stand for?
 - Any figure you might feel appropriate provided that the percentage of the profit that goes into our wallet is far below the amount that finds its way to the personal account of the average businessman.
- By the way, what do you mean by inputs? Does that include further investment in terms of extending the scope of our activities?
 - Reinvestment is another issue. By inputs I mean the reallocation of a greater portion of our profit towards the enhancement of quality education and training.
- You mean the customer is the King.
 - Yes indeed. Our current students are among tomorrow's scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, leaders ... *et cetera*.

P took a deep breath and replied:

- Be realistic Q, and don't forget the standard of our students. Assume that we allocate our entire profit to fill our libraries and employ the best instructors available at attractive salaries and benefits. The books we buy as textbooks and references should be read and comprehended. And the instructor's lectures and responses during class discussions should be understood.
 - You seem to throw the blame to another factor. I mean English language proficiency level of our students.

- I had been an instructor for quite a long time, and the language barrier is apparent. True, the Chinese and the Japanese have fared well by using their own languages as a medium of instruction. In our case, however, this seems unimaginable because we cannot stand still and wait until the infinite heritage written in the European languages is translated into one of our languages. To be honest, our languages would not at present be able to express every abstract and technical concept or idea published in the various spheres. Besides ...

P continued despite a gentle knock at the door.

- Besides, our professionals would be unable to compete and serve in the international skilled manpower market if our colleges use national languages as a medium of instruction. By the way, certain African countries are currently benefiting much from the remittances of their professionals working abroad. And the inevitable wave towards African union and globalization doesn't allow us to diverge from but to converge towards the international community.
 - You are right P. I share your view with regard to the language barrier. But it doesn't only involve students, but many instructors as well. Current college classes in Addis are “*guramaile*”, I mean, partly English and partly Amharic. Some instructors do it to go down to the comprehension level of their students, and others because they are unable to consistently lecture and hold discussions in English. They shouldn't of course bear the blame because they are yesterday's students who went through the “*guramaile*” classroom tradition. Our public schools have for decades reduced their facilities to the half-day shift system, thereby considerably reducing the amount of time and resources allotted to each student. Moreover, our practice of using national languages as a medium of instruction has been stretched up to higher grades, and the number of students per class is steadily rising.
- So Q, I'm glad that we have started to share many views. In fact, reason is now prevailing over your emotion. Our country is in the midst of the poverty trap. The mismatch between the number of students and schools from Grade One onwards has inevitably resulted in compromised quality in favor of quantity. And I think we can't do much under the circumstances other than bringing about some modest improvements.
 - We definitely share the same view with regard to English proficiency and comprehension level of our students. This factor doesn't, however, justify disregard to quality. In fact, we need to allocate classrooms, facilities and instructors to enhance the

reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of students who are below the language proficiency level required by the courses they are registered for. In addition to the compulsory English courses, sustained non-credit English courses ought to be given to those who need them. And we can encourage our students to take supplementary independent studies on their own and private tutorial English language classes.

* * *

It was at this juncture that a third entity in *Entone's* soul intervened and started participating in the heated conversation. P and Q couldn't help attentively listening to what R (Realist) was saying in calm voice. P opted to listen while Q pursued the dialogue.

- I'm afraid your dialogue is heading towards "the chicken-egg" paradox. Inevitably, most private colleges at the initial phase incline towards repayment of investment cost and towards material return. Many colleges can gradually elevate themselves to the higher-level need of *self-actualization* through quality education, research and publications. Some, however, might remain enslaved by an insatiable material greed and lack of vision and in effect end up as "degree mills" rather than credible academic institutions.

R hesitated (for a few seconds) to speak out his mind, and then continued after some pause.

- I don't dare say it to any other person, but just between us, there is a thought that has been crossing my mind for quite some time.
 - What's it R?
- It may sound radical, but how do you see the advantages and disadvantages of adopting English as Ethiopia's second national language?
 - Come-on, you must be kidding.
- I'm serious Q; we need not be colonized to accept a foreign language. After all, English was initially foreign to the English themselves. Don't forget that it developed from a Germanic language and blossomed through borrowing, coining and many other factors. Our ego aside, what's wrong in using it as our *runner-up second* language next to our national language. If the key to development at this information age is *knowledge*, and if the information and data in every sphere of knowledge is best available in English, should we remain fenced by our language fidgeting in the vicious cycle of educational mediocrity and poverty? I think this is one of the minimum ego-concessions that we ought to make to come out of the depth we are in. Such a paradigm shift may be criticized from political angles. But, even in the arena of

politics, the more quality education takes root, the more would governments be unable to *rule* but to *govern*. None of us can feel satisfied, proud and happy until we, as a nation, regain our dignity (*thymos*) and until Mother Ethiopia ceases to be a beggar nation, way below the status she had until few decades back.

* * *

A phone call interrupted the dialogue in *Entone's* soul. It was a call from a friend. *Entone* couldn't thereafter focus on the inner conversation he had enjoyed so much, as his thoughts travelled elsewhere.

* * *

Minutes of the Presentations and Discussion

1. Report on Papers Presented at the Plenary Session of the Second National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

This is a report of the morning's plenary session of the presentation of papers by different scholars with Ato Dagnachew Yilma, Academic Dean of Micro Link College, as the chairperson, and Ato Fekadu Begna, Lecturer at St. Mary's College, as rapporteur.

Three papers were presented in the morning's plenary session. The first was the paper entitled "Private Higher Education Sector: A Journey through India and China" by Dr. Tessy Kurian and Murali Manhor of Debu University, was presented by the latter.

The paper's main objective is to share the experiences of India and China, so as to get some lessons that can be used in the Private Higher Education sector in Ethiopia. The paper noted that both India and China are the world's fastest developing economies, and are also providing quality higher education to millions of their nationals, in their many universities and colleges, of which some are world class (institutions). It is also noted that students coming from Asia and Africa attend some of those universities and colleges. The study underlined the importance of quality assurance, accreditation and certification given by national agencies, even media accreditation, for instance, in India.

The study points out that Ethiopia can learn from Indian and Chinese experiences in order to:

- increase student enrolment;
- provide for more financial investment for higher education by the government, so that further growth can be scored by public and private higher education institutions;
- use government funds only for necessary and relevant programmes/courses that the society and/or the nation need and leave out the remaining programmes to the private sector;
- work for quality, since quality assurance is the gateway to success;
- learn self- management and generate resources; and
- come up with and use sound evaluation and accreditation systems.

The second paper was presented by Dr. Abebe Haile Gebriel, Academic Dean of Ethiopian Civil Service College, and is titled "Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships for the Development of Competitive Higher Education in Ethiopia: Some Reflections on Private Higher Education".

The paper was concerned with what the presenter aptly called "matters beyond the public/private divide" or dichotomy, which is an attempt to provide a general framework for public and private partnership as an instrument for the development of competitive higher education in Ethiopia.

Dr. Abebe discussed various issues pertinent to his research, under the following categories:

- Points of Departure
- Outstanding Issues
- Framework for Partnership, and
- Building Blocks of Public-Private Partnerships.

He concluded by underlining the need to move beyond the dichotomy (divide) of the Private /Public Sectors, so as to help develop the country's competitiveness in the global market, which can be done by various means.

The third paper was presented by Professor Kate Ashcroft and Dr. Philip Rayner, both VSO volunteers presently attached to the Ethiopian MOE. The title of their paper was "Promoting Quality in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges for the Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia".

The two scholars have used their experiences in England, and with the Higher Education System Overhaul/ and Quality Assurance Agency activities in Ethiopia, in order to examine the issue of promoting quality higher education by private higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

The paper pointed out that waiting for the accreditation process alone is not enough by private higher institutions. Rather, they should apply their own various methods of quality assurance (methods that can also be used by the Quality Assurance Agency in the accreditation process), so as to enhance quality in their endeavours. Dwelling on the nuts and bolts of their subject, Professor Kate Ashcroft and Dr. Philip Rayner suggested a list of methods that can be put to good use by private higher education institutions, in order to succeed in their endeavours of providing quality education for the good of all concerned.

After the three papers were presented, questions were raised from participants. Among the problems raised were the place of unquantifiable moral issues in the provision of quality higher education, the need for a holistic and integrated approach among the disciplines and the question of assessment with emphasis on creativity and entrepreneurship.

All of the presenters warmly responded to the queries made by participants and the session came to an end.

2. Report on Papers Presented at the Panel 1 Session of the Second National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

Rapporteurs: Eskender Ambachew and Nuru Jemal

The Panel one was held in the main conference room and altogether six papers were presented. Following are the salient concerns of these presentations.

Topic: The Role of Research in Promoting Quality of Education in PHEIs

Dr. Berhanu Matthews

Introduction: It was said that teaching and research are inseparable, and the objective of conducting research is to enhance excellence in education. However, as faculty become pre-occupied with teaching and administrative matters, the mission of conducting research is too often set aside.

Objectives: The main objective of the paper was to look into the state of research in private higher education institutions.

Methods employed: Interviews and surveys were used to collect relevant data. The higher education proclamation was also examined. Moreover, Sunderland's 1998 check list of the manifestations of a thriving research culture was used.

Findings: It was found out that the output of research in PHEIs at present is quite scanty.

Recommendations: The researcher recommended the following:

- ◆ conducive research atmosphere should be created in PHEIs;
- ◆ research grant schemes should be developed;
- ◆ incentives should be provided; and
- ◆ teaching loads of the teachers should be considered.

Questions Raised and Answers Forwarded

1. Can there be priority to research in PHEIs?

Yes, we can at least talk about classroom research in PHEIs.

2. As PHEIs are not full flagged, do you think Sunderland's check list is appropriate?

Yes, though some of Sunderland's check list of a thriving research culture may not be applied, most of them could be.

Topic: Quality of Education in Private and Public Higher Education: A Comparative Analysis.

Bekalu Atnafu and Maru Shete

Introduction: Education has undergone new changes along with political changes here in Ethiopia. University and college graduates seem not to have been able to meet the expectation that graduates should be creative, innovative and problem-solving.

Objectives: The main objective of the paper was to make comparison between public and Private Higher Education Institutions regarding quality of education.

Methods employed: Structured and semi-structured interviews were employed for randomly sampled three private and one public institutions, 1 and analysed through chi-square analysis. These were Queens, St. Mary's, Royal and KCTE.

Findings: There is a significant difference between public and Private Higher Education Institutions in terms of the number of qualified instructors. That is, the public instructors are by far better.

Private institutions are better than public Higher Institutions in terms of availability of materials, especially computers.

Both public and private instructors seem to have been loaded and this could influence the instructor's contribution to the different sectors of material preparation, research activity and continuous assessment.

Questions Raised and Answers Forwarded

1. In what context did you treat the concept quality in your research?

Based on the available literature, we assessed quality in respect of input and process.

Topic: Patterns of GPA in Higher Institutions: Towards the Development of Standardized Quality Parameter in Ethiopia

Dr. Daniel Kassahun.

Introduction: Cumulative GPA has long been used as a yardstick in competitions: for securing job, enrolling at higher educational institutions. There seems to be heterogeneity on the part of graduates cumulative GPA either from similar departments of different institutions or from different batches of the same institution. This heterogeneity has induced skepticism from stakeholders and it needs a systematic standardization scheme.

Objectives: The objectives of the paper were to:

- ◆ identify the patterns of grade inflation across departments of government and private institutions;
- ◆ identify patterns of grade inflation at government institutions through time;
- ◆ sort out major and approximate factors that contributed to CGPA differentials across space and time; and
- ◆ generate a new standardization technique that enables cross-college and cross-batch evaluation.

Methods employed: Sample business related departments were chosen and a semi-structure questionnaire was used.

Findings: Results of the study confirmed the following. There is a:

- ◆ slight trend of grade inflation as one moves from the government to private owned institutions;
- ◆ growing trend of grade inflation as one moves from the government to private owned institutions;
- ◆ growing trend of grade inflation through time within government owned departments themselves.

The study developed an index called Normalized CGPA which looked into account of the ESLCE result and the CGPA attained.

Questions Raised and Answers Forwarded

The paper was criticized for having limited itself to only very few institutions.

In responding to this, the researcher said that this happened for other institutions were unwilling to cooperate. Moreover, the study has recommended further study so as to validate the research on several other un-sampled institutions.

Topic: Determinants of Student Performance in Private Higher Education Institutions

Samson Jemaneh

Objectives: The paper aimed at finding - out the factor that can predict the difference between PHEIs students whose academic performance decreased during-their period of attendance in the institutions and those whose academic performance increased during this period. It also looked into gender differentials influencing academic performance of students in PHEIs.

Methods employed: Randomly selected 200 students from five accredited PHEIs in Addis Ababa were given a questionnaire and a binary logistic regression analysis was used to predict the difference.

Findings: The data analysis indicated that learning-motivation, class participation, starting time of study during a semester and living condition of students have statistically significant effect in predicting the difference between students having increased and decreased academic performance respectively.

Recommendations: The research made the following recommendations.

- ◆ Female students should be encouraged;
- ◆ Counselling service should be rendered regarding employment; and
- ◆ Progressive evaluation should be experienced.

Questions Raised and Answers Forwarded

How would female students be pessimist to get jobs while they are highly motivated?

In answering this, the researcher said that the female students' motivation emanated from being deprived in the ESLCE. Thus, being motivated in learning and being pessimist in getting a job should not be considered contradictory.

Topic: An Analysis of Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Private and Public College Students: Implication for Better Teaching Strategies

Maru Shete and Bamlaku Alamirew

Objectives: The study aimed at identifying the factors that affect the academic performance of college students and suggest possible solutions.

Method employed: 100 students from the Addis Ababa Commercial College and 103 students from St. Mary's College, both groups being 2004 prospective graduates of the Accounting Department, were sampled through random and stratified sampling techniques. Structured interview was used and the data were analysed through paired T-test, chi-square test and levels regression model.

Findings: The researcher found out that there is no statistically significant difference in male and female students' academic performance in the case of St. Mary's College. Factors like study style, study programme, time of starting study, financial problems and use of reference materials were found to affect students' current academic performances.

Topic: The Project Package for Middle Level TVET Programme: An Assessment of the Situation in PHEIs

Eyob Tekalign and Bamlaku Alamirew

Objective: The research attempted to take a look at the major project packages launched in the Middle-Level TVET programme in a bid to assess positive indications, if there are.

Methods employed: The study used primary and published materials, interviews and extensive discussions with course instructors and department heads and a was questionnaire filled out by randomly selected students.

Findings: The study found out that there are serious gaps ranging from attitudinal to technical problems that need to be fulfilled to expect tangible results from the project packages launched.

Recommendations: The researchers recommended the following:

- ◆ Organizations should be willing to provide information to students;
- ◆ The MOE and the ministry of capacity building should create awareness on the society.

Questions Raised and Answers Forwarded

As the project package accounts to only 100 hrs of the total 1392 hrs of one year TVET programme, can it be an issue of research?

In responding to this question, the researchers said the project package is obviously an issue of research though generalization is hardly possible at this stage.

3. Report on Papers Presented at the Panel 2 Session of the Second National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia ***Chairpersons***

Morning session Dr. Eyayu Leulseged

Afternoon session Ato Matthew Gichele

Rapporteurs

W/ro Haregewoin Fantahun

W/rt Yetnayet Teklwald

W/ro Haregewoin Fantahun

In panel 2, six research papers focusing on the roles and prospects of PHEIs were presented and very lively discussions were made.

The first paper was presented by Ato Kassay from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The topic was: ***“The Role of Private Higher Education Institutions in Reducing Urban Youth Unemployment”***

In his presentation, Ato Kassaye said that the Ethiopian youth are confronted with massive unemployment problem and the severity of the problem is said to be aggravated by the mismatch between the type of education/training offered and the labour market.

Regarding this problem, Ato Kassay's study indicated that the PHEIs in Ethiopia are playing great roles. They have been contributing a lot in meeting the needs for educated humanpower and providing educational opportunities for the youth. The study also showed that the PHEIs are making their national share to empower and enable the youth to be self supportive and productive citizens.

However, as the problem is serious and national, the PHEIs should go further. In order to make a better contribution to the reduction of poverty and unemployment, they should make national needs assessment on related issues. It is also indicated that the PHEIs should adapt themselves to the changing political, socio-economic, technological and environmental situations. Furthermore, they need to reorient themselves into a direction where they can narrow the mismatch between the training offered and the labour power needed in the market. Ato Kassaye, at last supported that this can be successful if the PHEIs are able to develop apprenticeship.

At the end of the presentation, a question was raised by a participant:

Q. Apprenticeship is obviously vital for the required development, but how can it be feasible in the present situation of the PHEIs?

The answer was that the PHEIs might find it challenging but the MOLSA and the MOE have been working together to introduce new regulations and procedures helpful for the employment of apprenticeship. So, what is expected of the PHEIs will be working jointly with the two ministries and supporting one another.

The second presenter was Dr. Yalew Ingdayehy from A.A.U. on the topic:

“A Survey on the Provision of Distance Education in PHEIs: A Comparative Case Study”

In his presentation, Dr. Yalew stated the history of distance education in Ethiopia and tried to compare the provision and organization of distance education at public institutions and at the PHEIs.

Based on his findings, Dr. Yalew first pointed out factors/issues common to both the PHEIs and the public institutions.

- Reasons for participating in distance education
 - a) for better education opportunity;

- b) for learning in one's own pace;
- c) reaches learners;
- d) less expensive;
- e) saves time;
- Distance education delivery system
 - a) correspondence c) computer/internet
 - b) mass media d) tel-lecture
- Later, the major problems that the PHEIs mainly face as indicated by the researcher are lack of:
 - a) awareness and commitment;
 - b) well developed infrastructure to reach the centers;
 - c) prepared modules/teaching materials;
 - d) qualified/trained instructor/tutors; and
 - e) access to modern ICT education.

Finally, Dr. Yalw forwarded possible solutions and recommendation so as to minimize the problems, and to overcome them through time. He said since the PHEIs have already taken the initiatives to face the challenges in the provision and organization of distance education, they should also be courageous to: review their mode and media of delivery; address the challenges related to the administration and institutional constraints; involve qualified and experienced experts in distance education, introduce and launch the current ICT to assist their provision of distance education. In general, Dr. Yalw recommended that the PHEIs involved in distance education should aim at promoting the quality by working together and sharing their experiences.

Here also some questions were asked. One of them was:

- Q. ICT education has now become a key for quality education and better learning, but demands require a large amount of money. Again, the poor infrastructure is another problem for the expansion of ICT education. So, how can it be possible to secure quality in distance education through the use of ICT?

The presenter gave his answer and was supplemented by the participants. It was said that these days, there have been great improvements in the expansion and construction of infrastructure. If the PHEIs work together and develop their financial position, they can use ICT to support their educational provision.

The third and the fifth papers were on the role of ICT in education. The third presenter, Ato Zelalem Wudineh who came from Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission examined

“The Status of ICT Education in PHEIs” while Ato Leul Woldu from St. Mary’s College tried to look at the *“The Role of PHEIs towards Strengthening ICT in Ethiopia”*. Their topics seem different but their findings indicated similarity.

They both explained that ICT has become decisive for economic, political and social development. Globalization of ICT could bring the world together. An Entrepreneurs can break encrustation in the economy through innovation for information and communication technology. Moreover, appropriate information technology that is grounded firmly in curriculum goals, incorporated in sound instructional processes and deeply integrated with subject matter content is proving to be a useful instrument in facilitating learning. It is also a key to develop advanced thinking and reasoning.

As a result, Ato Leul’s study revealed that there is a high demand for ICT training in the country. There is, however, limited place for applicants in ICT training at public institutions. Therefore, the PHEIs are offering options and playing important/significant roles in meeting the needs of the trainees. It is said that the growth of PHEIs fills the gap between lack of place in public institutions and the growing demand on the part of the learners and employers. Even, it could be said that most PHEIs are in favour of ICT training programs.

Nevertheless, the researchers indicated that lack of adequate reference materials on ICT, shortage of personal computers, limited lab access hours, lack of previous exposure to computers and theft of computers accessories are some of the major problems that hinder the development of ICT education in PHEIs, as well as in Ethiopia.

These points were also supported and further explained by the participants. It was mentioned that not only the above problems, but also lack of professional and financial support and poor electric power supply were major obstacles for ICT education.

5. The fourth presentation was made by Professor Kate Aschcraft and Dr. Philop Rayner, VSO Volunteers on the topic:

“Opportunities and Implications of the Higher Education Systems Overhaul (HESO) Projects for the Leadership of PHEIs in Ethiopia”

In their presentation, Prof. Kate and Dr. Philip described some of the opportunities and implications for the private higher education sector of the Report of the Higher Education Strategy Overhaul Committee of Inquiry into Governance. They said the report suggests/shows the opportunities for the private sector to increase its influence, demonstrate how it can help to meet

the Government's development agenda, contribute to the higher education reforms, improve its management and leadership, and to gain access to various public goods.

Prof. Kate and Dr. Philip further discussed that

i. The private sector as a whole through its association can:

- develop as effective lobbying body;
- act as a forum to share experience, information and resources amongst members and with the public HEIs; and
- develop and recommend a qualification framework and credit accumulation system to create a ladder of opportunity for learners.

ii. In order to provide effective training, individual private HEIs need to improve their:

- strategic planning;
- organization and operational effectiveness;
- communication and decision-making;
- human resource management;
- staff development; and
- system review and cost effectiveness.

At the end, it was mentioned that in order to support the private sector, the government and its agencies can:

- develop more incentives for the expansion and support of the PHEIs;
- provide access to training; and
- access to QRAA and EHESI Boards.

5. The last paper was presented by Ato Shimelis Tesgaye who came from Canadian Physician for Aid and Relief, and his topic of presentation was:

“Ethiopian Private Higher Education and the Pursuit of Social Responsibility”

Ato Shimelis said that higher education is a public service and education is a social good. Thus, HEIs have a public duty to go beyond their academic agenda and broaden their extra-curricular services deep into the realm of social and community life. HEIs aim to advance and protect local cultural, intellectual and scholarly traditions.

To the contrast, Ato Shimelis's study revealed that though some private colleges have been fulfilling their social responsibilities, there is a big gap between the number of graduates and current employment with huge social costs. In other words, the training offered by the HEIs and

the qualifications needed by employers do not match. There have been a great overlapping in the fields of studies provided by most HEIs. In addition, the graduates do not seem to have the efficiency required of their qualification and this in turn leads to a large number of unemployed graduates.

Ato Shimelis's findings showed that unemployment of graduates causes social instability, brain recycling and deterioration of human knowledge. Again, this might be due to curricular frailure to create graduates who cherish a sense of patriotic sentiments.

So as to overcome such problems, Ato Shimelis recommended that the HEIs should work a lot to make their

- Curriculum employment-oriented, and
- Instructions client-oriented.

Above all, they need to make continuous attempts to revise the curriculum, provide opportunities for work practice and apprenticeship. HEIs, it was also suggested, should assess the needs of employers and establish strong partnership among themselves and with other organizations.

In relation to Ato Shimelis's suggestions, a question was raised:

Q. Do you think curriculum revision made by only HEIs can help to alleviate such problem of mismatch between the training offered and the required efficiency?

The answer given was that, to overcome the problem there must be coordination among HEIs, MOE, MOLSS and employing organizations. The MOE is responsible to design a suitable curriculum, to support and follow up the HEIs while MOLSS should act as a bridge between the HEIs and the labour market. Employing organizations should also learn to express their needs and give important feedback to the training institutions. However, since the goal of HEIs is to produce graduates that can satisfy the demand for the labour power, they need to give priority for designing and implementing appropriate curriculum, i.e. the key for quality education.

3. Report on Papers Presented at the Panel 3 Session of the Second National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

Chairpersons: Ato Yibrah Girmay and Dr. Haile W/Michael

Rapporteur: W/rt Nasise Challi and W/rt Meskerem Gestu

In panel three, six papers were presented and discussions were made.

First presentation:

Topic: Demand Side Constraints in Private Higher Education in Ethiopia

Presenter: Eyob Tekalign, St. Mary's College

Chairperson: Ato Yibrah Girmay

Rapporteur: W/rt Nasise Challi

The major objective of the paper was to identify and present the major demand side constraints in the market for private higher educational institutions.

Referring to his findings, the researcher stated that the substantial increase in private investment in higher education coupled with increased public investment has led to significant expansion of the institutions. In relation to this, he commented on researchers' and policymakers' due attention on supply side problem ignoring the demand side of the story, which led to failure in matching the demand proportionately across all members of the society.

Finally, having presented the major demand side constraints in the market for higher education in Ethiopia and indicating demand side financing mechanism, the writer argued that if proper financing mechanisms (such as government intervention regarding funding or provision of loans) are put in place, there is a possibility to overcome the demand side constraints.

Second presentation:

Topic: The Role and Problems of PHEIs in Human Resource Development

Presenter: Ashenafi Zeleke, Ethiopian Customs Authority

Chairperson: Ato Yibrah Girmay

Rapporteur: Nassise Challi

The paper is aimed at answering major questions:

- 'What is the role of PHEIs in supporting and enhancing the process of human capital development?' and
- 'What are the major obstacles that the Ethiopian private higher institutions face?'

In answering these questions, the researchers mainly used published and unpublished documents obtained from the Ministry of Education.

In addressing the first question, the researcher indicated that PHEIs are playing significant role in producing educated human resource following declaration allowing for profit private higher educational institutions, though the quality of the service they are rendering is still in question mark. Here, the researcher indicated and underlined the need to work towards quality service.

Regarding major obstacles that impede growth of PHEIs in Ethiopia, a number of problems were indicated. The main problems according to the research are problems raised in relation to:

- the curriculum → unsatisfactory curriculum;
- teaching staff → student-teacher ratio is small as per the standards in most PHEIs and the educational qualification of teachers is not satisfactory; and
- infrastructure → most PHEIs provide service in rental buildings and this increased their operating cost.

In light of the findings, the researcher recommended that PHEIs have to work on increasing their teachers' quality, use cost minimizing mechanism (E.g. eliminate lease buildings which maximize their operating cost) and facilitate coordination between PHEIs and public higher education institutions.

Third presentation:

Topic: Major Problems Impeding the Progress of Private Higher Education Institutions

Presenter: Selamawit Negassi, St. Mary's College

Chairperson: Dr. Haile W/Michael

Rapporteur: W/rt Meskerem Gesti

The objective of the paper was to identify and project major problems impeding PHEIs progress so that corrective measures might be taken in time.

The data for the study was generated through interview with selected PHEIs. According to the findings of the study, one of the major problems impeding PHEIs progress is problem in the implementation of the new curriculum of the TVET program which is resulted mainly because there has been no sufficient transitional time to make preliminary preparation and rigid curriculum imposed by Ministry of Education (MOE).

The other major problem indicated by the researcher is the problem of getting accreditation. The rigid approach which didn't compromise realistic situation of the private sector and bureaucratic assessment followed by MOE are factors that make accreditation problematic as findings indicate.

Lack of cooperation among PHEIs is also mentioned as one of the major problems. Here, the researcher underlined lack of willingness and lack of awareness as contributing factors to this problem.

The researcher also mentioned problems regarding resource management and research endeavours as the other impeding factors to the progress of PHEIs.

Finally, with regard to the findings, the following recommendations were forwarded by the researcher:

- MOE has to reconsider its policies;
- MOE should revise its system of giving accreditation;
- MOE should also work towards raising up the level of education - especially in elementary and high schools; and
- PHEIs should work together on different aspects.

Fourth Presentation:

Topic: Gender Difference in Errors in Compositions: Selected St. Mary's College Students in Focus

Presenter: Hailemichael Tesfaye, St. Mary's College

Chairperson: Dr. Haile W/Michael

Rapporteur W/rt Meskerem Gestu

The objective of the paper is to determine if there is a difference in the degree of male and female students' composition errors and to compare and contrast the type of errors female students make with that of male.

According to the findings of the study there was a difference between male and female students regarding the mean scores of their composition. The statistics show that male students make more errors than female students.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should know that female students compose with fewer error rates than male students, and thus try to adjust their approach in teaching composition.

Fifth presentation:

Topic: The Challenges of Textbook Acquisition in PHEIs: The View of College Administrators

Presenter: Wondwossen Tamrat (Assistant Professor), St. Mary's College

Chairperson: Dr. Haile W/Michael

Rapporteur: W/rt Meskerem Gestu

The paper is aimed at identifying the current status of PHEIs in terms of the type and volume of books they have. To this end, the researcher has tried to investigate views of college principals and library heads of PHEIs using a questionnaire.

In the course of the research, the researcher tried to find out major problems in the efforts of PHEIs in acquisition of books and identify the solutions to these problems.

The findings of the research indicate that currently PHEIs have limited resource of books. The acquisition process, according to the researcher, is highly demanding and at times frustrating. The reasons given for this are: Books are expensive and in some cases unavailable in the market and acquiring books from abroad is not easy.

The coping up strategies suggested by administrators of PHEIs, as presented by the researcher, are:

- urging instructors to write books;
- working to secure donation.
- very urgent and essential allocation of budget to ensure local textbook publishing; and
- urgent and essential resource sharing;

Adding to the above suggestions, the researcher pointed at photocopying/duplicating and local purchase as additional coping strategies.

On the basis of the findings, the researcher recommended:

- designing national book policy is preliminary;
- encouraging local publishing industry and attracting international publishers;
- establishing national associations of writers, publishers, book sellers, librarians, etc;
- creating public awareness on publishing and distribution through book fairs;
- supporting PHEIs to get books tax free;
- designing ways of encouraging PHEIs staff to involve in book development; and
- developing habit of resource sharing among PHEIs.

Sixth presentation

Topic: Psychosocial Problems of Female Students in Selected Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs)

Presenter: Bekalu Atnafu, St. Mary's College

Chairperson: Dr. Haile W/Michael

Rapporteur: W/rt Meskerem Gesti

In his paper the researcher attempted to see the psychosocial problem of female students at private higher educational institutions. More specifically, the paper aimed at exploring the level of female students' general self-esteem and problems they faced in the formation of intimate friends. It also

tends to examine the association between psychosocial problem and academic performance of female students in PHEIs with special reference to St. Mary's College and Royal College students.

The findings indicate that female students seem to have favourable self-esteem; however, they appear to rank themselves below average in social skills. This result is said to be explained by lack of professional support, inconsistent treatment, perceived assumptions and reflected appraisals.

Finally, it was concluded that there might be certain association between psychosocial problems and academic performance.

Discussions on the Papers Presented

After the presentations, the participants discussed on different issues some of which are:

- The fact that PHEIs are facing problems in different aspects because the number of students that enroll in these institutions is always determined by the entry criteria set annually by the Ministry of Education.
- Suggestions were given on number and quality of teachers in PHEIs. Some points of discussion in this regard were:
 - Teachers' lack of technical qualification and knowledge of teaching methodology;
 - Teachers' lack of commitment;
 - Teachers' lack of experience; and
 - Problem of accountability especially in the case of part time teachers.
- It was indicated that the growth and contribution of PHEIs is being affected by the attitudes of both the society and Ministry of Education (MOE). Thus, PHEIs has to work towards building positive image.
- The necessity of coordination among PHEIs and between PHEIs and public higher education institution is underlined.

Appendix 1: The Profile of Paper Presenters

Ser. No.	Name of the Researcher	Background and Experience
1	Zelalem Wudneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working at Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission • B.Sc. in Information Science • Has taken several additional courses in Technology abroad • Has published research articles • Has interest in Networking and Security
2	Bekalu Atnafu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching at St. Mary's College Mary's College, Department of Education • B.A in English • M.A. in Psychology (Special needs Education) • Has interest in Language Learning
3	Kate Ascroft (Prof.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Management Advisor to EHESI • Previously Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Wales • Author of 9 Books • Has conducted several research works • Area of interest in Quality and Management in HE
4	Eyob Tekalign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A. in Economics • Post Graduate Diploma in Globalization and Development • Teaching in the Department of Marketing and Management, St. Mary's College • Has written a number of articles in newspapers • Presented research paper at the 2nd International Conference on the Ethiopian Economy
5	Wondwossen Tamrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.A. in TEFL from AAU • M.A. in ELT from Warwick, England • Has taught at KCTE, Department of English for 8 years • Is serving as President of St. Mary's College • Has conducted research on ELT per se and on Teacher Education with a specific focus on teaching practice • Has research interest on PHEIs
6	Leul Woldu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.Sc. in Information Science • Teaching in the Department of IT, St. Mary's College • Has research interest on ICT
7	Samson Jemaneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics • Teaching in the Department of Marketing and Management, St. Mary's College • Has written Modules • Has interest in Development-Oriented Research
8	Kassaye Tikuye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A. in Sociology from AAU • M.A. in Employment and Labour Studies from ISS, the Netherlands • Is working at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs • Has participated in several national research activities and has produced a number of research papers • Has served as part-time instructor in Civil Service College
9	Philip Rayner (Ph.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A in PGCE

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.Ed and Ph.D. • Has worked as teacher and manager in UK further education and higher education since 1980 • Education /Department manager • Senior vocational A level examiner • Has background in Media/cultural studies • Has written 3 text books
10	Daniel Kassahun (Ph.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working at St. Mary's College, Department of Social Studies • Has 6 years of teaching experience • Has published several articles on reputable journals • Has interest in spatial aspects of educational parameters
11	Yalew Engdayehu (Ph.D.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching at the Addis Ababa University • Has 38 years of work experience (10 years MOE and 28 at AAU) • Has produced several articles
12	Selamawit Negasi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.A. in Literature • Has taught English Language at AAU and is teaching the same at St. Mary's College • Has presented a paper on PHEIs quality assurance at the 1st National Conference, Organized by St. Mary's College • Has interest in Quality Management, Language and Literature
13	Maru Shete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.Sc in Agricultural Extension • M.A in Regional and Local Development Studies • Five years experience in Agricultural Research • Has taken a number of short term trainings in research methodologies, participatory techniques, micro-finance and the like. • Serving as Head, Research and Evaluation Unit, St. Mary's College since July 28, 2003 • Has research interest on development oriwented and educational research
14	Bamlaku Alamirew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Geography • B.Ed in Geography • M.A in Regional and Local Development Studies • Has taken two short term trainings in micro-finance and project management • Has five years of teaching experience • Currently working in the Research and Evaluation Office, St. Mary's College
15	Hailemichael Tesfaye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M.A in TEFL • Lecturer at St. Mary's College, Department of Languages
16	Berhanu Matthews (Ph.D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 20 years teaching experience at the AAU • Ph.D at AAU and University of London • Certificate in English Language and Literature, University of Aberdeen, Scotland in 1991 • Certificate in American Literature, University of New School, New York City in 2000. • Certificate in Ph.D supervision University of Lancaster, England in 1997.

Appendix 2: Lists of Participants on the Second National Conference

Ser. No.	Participant Name	Organization/Institution
1	Eshetu Yohannes	Addis Ababa University
2	Berhanu Malkdos	Addis Ababa University
3	Yalew I	Addis Ababa University
4	Merge Beleam	Addis Ababa University
5	Assefa Worku	Addis Ababa University
6	Zealelem Birhanu	Addis Ababa University
7	Tsige Gebremariam	Addis Ababa University School of Pharmacy
8	Zerthun Asf	Addis Ababa University, ICS
9	Laxmikasmtham	Addis Ababa University
10	Tadesse Dadi	Addis Ababa University Commercial College
11	Takele Teferi	Addis College
12	Fekadselassie A	Admas College
13	Sisay Asgedom	Admas College
14	Yibrah Girmay	Admas College
15	Israel Kassa	Africa Beza College
16	Lulesgged Zewdie	Alem Business College
17	Ashenfi Assefa	Alpha H.I.D.S
18	Abera Tilahun	Ambo Micro Business College
19	Boki Tola	Asella T. College
20	Berta Filote	Asella T. College
21	Shiferaw Abiy	Atlanta College
22	Eskezia Mengiste	Atlanta College
23	Dr. Bogale Worku	Atlas Dental College
24	Yosef Ayele	B/Hiwot
25	Berhanu Gizaw	ITIT
26	Azene Workign	Bethel Teaching Hospital
27	Bruk Feleke	Brhan Tibeb
28	Abenet Girmaye	Central Health College
29	Solomon Berhe	Central Health College
30	Tesfaye Solomon (Dr.)	Civil Service College
31	Mulugeta Hailu	CPU College
32	Dugassa Mulugeta	Dandi Boru University College

33	B.Murali Manchor	Debub University
34	Kebede Kenea	Enat Ethiopia
35	Berahnu Kiros	Enat Ethiopia
36	Asehlulhim Gizaw	Eprom Tech. College
37	Gezahegn Chalchise	Eprom Tech. College
38	Tsegaye Gebissa	Gage Information Technology College
39	Nega Alamega (Dr.)	Infonet College
40	Solomon G/Mariam	Infonet College
41	Bekele Urgaa	Karamara
42	Tigist Yeneges	Karamara
43	Mahider Ziku	KEAMED Medical College
44	Gezahegne Mitebue	Kisame Africa University College
45	Tadesse Berge	Kotebe College Teacher Education
46	Kedir Jemal	Kotebe College Teacher Education
47	Mekbib A.	Kotebe College Teachers Education
48	Abdurahman Almelh	Kotebe College Teachers Education
49	Sefie Hassen	Kotebe College Teachers Education
50	Gessesse Tadesse	Kotebe College Teachers Education
51	Taddese Terefe	Kotebe College Teachers Education
52	Gizachew Atnaf	Kotebe College Teachers Education
53	Asrat Tafsce	Kunze College
54	Ahmed Batole	Lucy College
55	Alemayehu Nefusa	Medico Bio Medical College
56	Zerabruk Gigau	Medico Bio Medical College
57	Abraham Neguse	Meskerem 1
58	Kindie Yilak	Meskerem 1
59	Dagnachew Yilma	Microlink IT College
60	Nestanet Solomon	National
61	Taye Amsalu	New Generation University College
62	Getachew Tigi (Dr.)	New Generation University College
63	Temesgen Zawdiw	New Generation University College
64	Murutse Desta	New Millennium College
65	Melsew Wubic	Nur Selam College
66	Ezedin Negash	Nur Selam College

67	Abdurahman Miki	Nur Selam College
68	Dr. Assede Assefu	Queens' College
69	Truneh G.	Queens' College
70	Hagos H/Mariam	Royal College
71	Tesfaye Abebe	Tana Haik College
72	Tewodros Desta	Tana Haik College
73	Haile Goola	Tesfa Kokeb
74	Tesfaye Kidane	Tesfa Kokeb
75	Taffesse Asfaw	Unity University College
76	Dr. Eyayu Leulseged	Unity University College
77		Yenegaw Sew University College
78	Kebede Yodetu	Zega Business College
79		AA City Government
80	Mekedes Yilma	AA Health Bureau
81	Kassahun Alemu	AAMA
82	Ousman Mohammed	AAMMA
83	Desalgn Berhanu	AAMMA
84	Mulugeta	ABC
85	Yalew Massled	ABC
86	Haile W/Michael	ABC
87	Dr. Kebede Kara`	African Union
88	Gemetchu Gutta	AIB
89	Mulu Solomon	Almeta IMPEX
90	Tarekegn Assefa	Bank of Abyssina
91	Tesfen Yeshaw	Bank of Abyssina
92	Michael Kassa	Book World
93	Netsanet Demeoz	British Council
94	Solomon Meryesha	British Council
95	Amsalu Abebe	British Council
96	Girmu Balene	British Council
97	Menna Worde	British Council
98	Alemayehu Minas	British Embassy DFID
99	Ephrem Belai	Chebridg University College
100	Shimelis Tsegaye	CPAR - Ethiopia
101	Ashenfi Zeleke	ECA

102	Abebe H/Gabriel	ECSC
103	Gezahegn Aych	EDRI
104	Kate	EHESI
105	Worku Alemayehu	EMA
106	Selamawit Wube	EMWA
107	Zelalem	ESTC
108	Alemayehu Ketseh	ET CON
109	Tadege Alemnew	Ethiopian Insurance Corporation
110	Akalu Makonne	Global Insurance
111	Kiddest Beseket	ITRR
112	Hailekiros Alemu	Knowledge Ethiopia
113	Solomon Hebstu	Lutheran Hour Ministry
114	Sitayehu Endirs	Mega Publishing Eng.
115	Yared T/Gachew	Mega Publishing Eng.
116	Digate Awoke	Mega Publishing Eng.
117	Kassaye Tikuye	MOLSA
118	Wudinen Zeneb	Nature N.P.
119	Phlip Rayner	QRAA
120	Hirut Adamn	United Bank
121	Tgeahye	US Embassy
122	Abate Lakew	St. Mary's College
123	Abiy Mesfin	St. Mary's College
124	Amarech Manasbo	St. Mary's College
125	Ayalew Abebe	St. Mary's College
126	Ayenew Tessera	St. Mary's College
127	Bamlaku Alamirew	St. Mary's College
128	Baye Nigatu	St. Mary's College
129	Bekalu Atnafu	St. Mary's College
130	Belay Mebrat	St. Mary's College
131	Belayneh Tilahun	St. Mary's College
132	Berhanu	St. Mary's College
133	Berhanu W/Hanna	St. Mary's College
134	Biniam Melkamu	St. Mary's College
135	Brook Kefyalew	St. Mary's College
136	Dagnachew	St. Mary's College

137	Daniel Kassahun (Dr.)	St. Mary's College
138	Daniel Meriad	St. Mary's College
139	Daniel Tolesa	St. Mary's College
140	Dereje Kissi	St. Mary's College
141	Ellieni Tadesse	St. Mary's College
142	Eskender Ambachew	St. Mary's College
143	Eyob Tekalign	St. Mary's College
144	Fanta Ayalew	St. Mary's College
145	H/Michael Tesfaye	St. Mary's College
146	Haregewoin Fantahun	St. Mary's College
147	Hiwot Asrat	St. Mary's College
148	Kebede Tadesse	St. Mary's College
149	Kidist Mulugeta	St. Mary's College
150	Leul Woldu	St. Mary's College
151	Major Tesseme	St. Mary's College
152	Meaze G/Medhin	St. Mary's College
153	Mehabaw Alemu	St. Mary's College
154	Mehari Haile	St. Mary's College
155	Mekedela Mekuria	St. Mary's College
156	Mekonnen Tadesse	St. Mary's College
157	Meseret Kinfe	St. Mary's College
158	Meskerem Geset	St. Mary's College
159	Mikiyas Minda	St. Mary's College
160	Nasise Challi	St. Mary's College
161	Nisan Zekci	St. Mary's College
162	Samson Jemaneh	St. Mary's College
163	Selamawit Negasi	St. Mary's College
164	Sewalem Tsega	St. Mary's College
165	Seyoum Bekele	St. Mary's College
166	Shimekit Lemma	St. Mary's College
167	Solomon Benor	St. Mary's College
168	Taddese Gucho	St. Mary's College
169	Terefe Feyera	St. Mary's College
170	Tesfahun Berhane	St. Mary's College
171	Tesfaye Ayalew	St. Mary's College

172	Tesfaye Deneke	St. Mary's College
173	Tibebu Tulu	St. Mary's College
174	Tsige Taf	St. Mary's College
175	Yamrot Nigussie	St. Mary's College
176	Yetinayet Tewold	St. Mary's College
177	Yihune Abate	St. Mary's College
178	Yisrak Kebede	St. Mary's College
179	Yohannes Gashaw	St. Mary's College
180	Yonas Alem	St. Mary's College
181	Alemayehu Balecha	Not Mentioned
182	Gigitom Abraha	Not Mentioned
183	Elizabet	Addis Admas
184	Zerihun Mulugeta	Addis Zena
185	Dagnachew Teklu	Daily Monitor
186	Andargachew	ENA
187	Andualem Asat	Equatorial Medio
188	Girma	ETV
189	Derese Nigatu	Fortune
190	Kedishabt Belachew	Lisan Hizeb N. Paper
191	Tadesse G/Mariam	Reporter
192	Abebe Tadesse	Reporter
193	Helen Mohamed	VOA