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Research Articles

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Research Articles

Selection and Appointment of Higher Education Leaders in Ethiopia: An Assessment of Implementation

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Abstract: The Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (No. 650/2009) states that public higher education institutions have the autonomy to nominate top-level leaders. However, until recently the university community was not involved in the nomination and appointment of top level-leaders. In 2017, the Ministry of Education endorsed a new participatory, transparent and 'merit-based' strategy for selecting and appointing higher education leaders. This study assessed the implementation of the new leadership selection and appointment process mainly based on the experiences of the university community. The study was conducted at Bahir Dar University, one of the public universities in Ethiopia. The participants of the study were members of the search and selection committee, candidates for different leadership positions, and staff representatives who participated in the selection process. Participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through interview and document review and analyzed using deductive thematic analysis. The study revealed that the selection process ensures equality of opportunity and it is transparent from the outset to the end. However, there were issues which created confusion among the community, including eligibility of applicants, terms of office of the search and selection committee, point allocation for experience based on different ranges, number of candidates considered to be sufficient to run the selection process, and the procedure that needs to be followed if there are no enough applicants for a post. The study also showed concerns and discontent of the University community regarding the selection practice including staff underrepresentation in the selection process, the weight given to staff evaluation, and the emphasis given to promote women participation in leadership. It is also understood that the Directive is a necessary but not sufficient condition to promote ethnic diversity given the politicization of ethnicity in the country. The study necessitates the need for early intervention to address discontents and confusions.

Keywords: Assessment, Ethiopia, Higher education, Leadership, Selection and appointment

INTRODUCTION

Education is vital to the prospects of any country. Nowadays, higher education is at the forefront of national development (Kohoutek, Pinheiro, Cabelkova, & Smidova, 2017). The government of Ethiopia has a strong trust on the contribution of education to the economic and social development of the country. This has been clearly indicated in its budget allocation

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to the education sector. The government allocates 24.2% of on-budget total national expenditure and 4.4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the education sector in 2015/16. Higher education has the lion's share which is 48.1% (UNICEF, Ethiopia, 2017). This is happening in Ethiopia while the higher education environment in many parts of the world suffers from "resource reduction, increased stress and increased expectations" (Szekeres, 2006, p 141).

Ethiopia has to ensure greater prosperity and better lives for its people, as it advances from an agriculture-based to an industrial-based economy. At the same time, it is being confronted with significant challenges along this path and society's needs and expectations are growing at an ever faster pace. The government believes that quality higher education is crucial to addressing these challenges and ensuring the country's continued progress towards achieving its vision of becoming a middle-income industrial country by 2030 (Ministry of Education, 2015). The expansion of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia plays significant role in achieving the national development plan, but only if they are determined to focus more on preparing highly skilled personnel rather than on academic concept of education for its own sake (Ross, 1973) and number of graduates. Moreover, HEIs have social responsibilities which they are entrusted. Their social responsibilities are essentially guided by the relevance of the services they offer to the priority needs of their respective society (UNESCO, 1991) including quality of education.

Enhancing quality of education, addressing social responsibilities and thereby contributing to the national development requires HEIs to have strong leadership, because effective leadership is central to a HEI's success (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, Klopper, & Warland, 2015; Braun et al., 2009). Therefore, leadership is one of the most important aspects that need to be taken into consideration for any institution's future (Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership, 2001).

Leading a HEI is becoming more and more demanding and challenging for many reasons, *inter alia*, the loosely couple character of higher education, the expansion of programs and student numbers and expectation of the society, and expectation to deal with not only national but also global issues (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017; Black 2015; Rumbley, Helms, Peterson, & Altbach, 2014; Gilmore, Hirschorn & Kelly, 1999). Informal discussions with colleagues and incumbent and former higher education leaders also indicate that the complexity of leadership role in the Ethiopian higher education has increased with increased complexity in the internal expansion, relationship with the government, and depth of core functions of higher education. In addition to these, addressing issues related to student catering, dormitory and health is becoming more and more challenging to higher education leaders and managers. Coping with such challenges and addressing demands of stakeholders require self-motivated, experienced and knowledgeable higher education leaders. This necessitates higher education leaders to have good knowledge, perspectives and skills and to be visionary but not be lone visionary. They rather need to create shared vision that should not leave out any stakeholders (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017).

Higher education leaders and managers are expected to lead wisely which encompasses a balance between their philosophies, vision, knowledge, and exceed daily challenges and political tussles (Portugal, 2006). It may be difficult to exercise this kind of leadership in situations where effectiveness and efficiency of university operating system has no strong consequence and change has been often dictated by government. However, it is always good to select and appoint the best candidates for each leadership position in higher education.

The selection and appointment of higher education leaders differs from institution to institution and from country to country. For example, in Kenya, generally, the responsibility of appointment of Presidents, called Vice Chancellors, rests on the University Governing Council. However, "appointment of Vice-Chancellors in public universities is skewed towards six major tribes in Kenya, contrary to equal employment opportunities legislations enacted by parliament" (Siringi & Letting, 2016, p. 1). In Nigeria, the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor is the legal responsibility of the Governing Council of each University (Ogbonnaya, 2009). Universities follow predefined selection criteria and inform the outcome to the President of the country who has no direct role to play in such appointment. Here also studies indicate that appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of federal and state universities in Nigeria are politically, ethnically, religiously or sectionally influenced (Ogbonnaya, 2009; Akpakwu & Okwo, 2014). In the US and most European countries, the selection and appointment of university Presidents is the statute responsibility of the universities' highest governing body (Teker, Teker & Sayan, 2013).

In Ethiopia, since the establishment of the first higher education institution in 1950, the selection and appointment of Presidents and Vice Presidents had been the responsibility of the government. The 2003 Higher Education Proclamation (Proclamation No. 351/2003) clearly indicates that Presidents and Vice Presidents of public universities are appointed by the government upon recommendation of the University Board (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2003). However, the current Higher Education Proclamation (Proclamation No. 650/2009) states that public HEIs have the autonomy to nominate top-level leaders (President, Vice Presidents and members of the Board), and select and appoint mid and lower-level leaders (directors, deans and heads of departments) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2009). However, until recently the University community had no hands-on the nomination and appointment of top level-leaders. Informal discussions with colleagues and some higher education leaders indicate that most of the University community even did not know whether there is criteria and procedure for nomination, selection and appointment of top-level leaders. Although some universities have developed guidelines for the selection and appointment of leaders including Vice Presidents, deans and head of departments, the implementation was not consistent, transparent and inclusive.

Trends in the last decade show that the higher education leadership appointment in Ethiopia became vindictive when the government embarked on using mainly ethnicity and locality for selecting university presidents. These criteria are not stated or written in any government directives or institutional guidelines. This simply shows government's focus which is more on leaders who often work to address its political mission than the actual missions of

universities. This kind of leadership appointment strategy overlooked academic leadership qualities which include "integrity, courage and passion, trustworthiness, consideration, responsiveness, adaptability, being able to adapt and change, to envision alternative futures, … to create a positive and collegial working atmosphere, … and being able to influence others positively" (Scott, Coates & Anderson, 2008 p.13). It also upended HEIs' autonomy and ignored the role of leadership in enhancing the provision of quality education and thereby contributing to the national development of the country.

The multifaceted problem associated with the selection and appointment of leaders in higher education in Ethiopia was heavily criticized by the higher education community and the society alike. The recent government self-critique which is reflected in different meetings with top-level university leaders also indicated the feebleness of the infamous leadership appointment strategy. Consequently, the Ministry of Education (now Ministry of Science and Higher Education) endorsed a new transparent, participatory and 'merit-based' strategy for selecting and appointing higher education leaders which is referred to as "Directive on selection and appointment of leaders and mangers in higher education institutions in Ethiopia 002/2017" (Ministry of Education, 2017). The Directive focuses only on two major leadership positions – the University Board and top-level university leaders (President and Vice Presidents).

It is now more than a year since HEIs have been using the Directive in selecting and appointing their leaders and mangers in HEIs in Ethiopia (hereafter the Directive). Thus, purpose of this study is to assess the implementation of the new leadership selection and appointment Directive mainly based on the experiences of university community. This in turn helps to further enrich the Directive based on experiences and evidences.

METHODOLOGY

The Directive applies to and governs all public HEIs which are operationally accountable to the Ministry of Education. Although many universities are now using the new Directive, this study focuses on its implementation in Bahir Dar University (BDU). BDU was selected mainly because (i) it is the first University to start using the Directive; (ii) it has more experience than other universities in implementing the Directive (i.e. it used the Directive in selecting its President, and four Vice Presidents); and (iii) it has been sharing implementation experiences to other universities which in a way enables to understand challenges faced by other universities as well.

The study employed phenomenological research design to describe experiences of the University community in relation to the selection and appointment of higher education leaders. Phenomenological research design is often used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). The data were generated from all groups involved in the selection process including nine academic staff, seven administrative staff, one search and selection committee, and seven candidates for different top-level leadership positions. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting participants who

"have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988 p. 150 cited in Groenewald, 2004). The data were collected after the University completed the selection and appointment process of five top-level leadership positions (President, Academic Vice President, Research and Community Service Vice President, Information and Strategic Communication Vice President, Administrative Affairs Vice President). Until the data for this study was collected, the Vice President for Research and Community Service position was not open for application because the term of the leader was not completed. This was according to the Directive which states that decision to continue should be made by vote of confidence of the Senate and Managing council until the current term expires.

The necessary data were mainly generated from participants using in-depth semi-structured interview. Data were also generated from the Directive using document review. These data were mainly used to substantiate the data generated through interview. The data were analyzed using deductive thematic analysis mainly not to miss themes which are important to the description of the phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997).

RESULTS

Results are presented using themes mainly from the Directives including the University Board, Search and Selection Committee, University Leaders, Experience, Strategic plan, Diversity, Grievance and Transparency, Number of candidates, and Performance evaluation. Views from the participants obtained through in-depth interviews and analysis and reflection on the Directive relative to the aforementioned themes are presented in this section.

The University Board

The University Administrative Board is the supreme governing body of the institution (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2009). The 2009 higher education proclamation states that HEIs have the autonomy to nominate University Board members. However, according to the new Directive, it is the Minister (Ministry of Education) in consultation with relevant federal and regional authorities and the existing Board who selects University Board members. The president might be consulted in the selection of Board members other than the Board Chairperson. Although this eroded the universities autonomy to nominate Board members, participants did not complain on this because of two main reasons. First, though the Board is the supreme governing body of the University, they do not see its significant, actual and direct influence in the day-to-day activities of the University. Second, they thought that the appointment is fine as long as the Minister strictly follows the stated criteria for selecting Board members.

The Search and Selection Committee

The selection and appointment of Presidents and Vice Presidents requires the establishment of a Search and Selection Committee (SSC) which facilitates the process. The SSC has five members composed of individuals from the Board, Senate, academic staffs, student union, and the industry or the community. The composition of the SSC and the procedure for

selecting SSC members were considered good except some candidates questioned the knowledge and skills of a student union representative. The SSC and most candidates believe in the importance of student participation provided that they are well oriented about the selection process and what is expected of them.

The SSC has been acclaimed by candidates and the wider university community for its credibility in handling the selection process. However, one of the limitations observed with regard to the SSC is that its effort in searching for potential candidates has been found to be unsatisfactory. For example, the Vice President for Business and Development post was advertised three times because there were no enough applicants. This shows the less effort exerted by the SSC on searching potential candidates and motivating the University community to participate in nominating their future leaders. The SSC accepts this limitation but it argued that this is because of the experience it encountered in the process.

> We started our job with the selection of the President. At that time, we tried to approach some university staff to motivate and encourage potential candidates to apply for the position. …There are also cases where we were suspicious of nominations we received. We thought that it is an individual who submit this nomination with different envelops. Regardless of this experience, we still try to encourage staff to motivate their potential colleagues to apply for different leadership positions which they are good at. (SSCM)

The other issue which was not clear enough among participants was the terms of office of the SSC. The Directive indicates that "the terms of office of the search and selection committees end with the appointment of the posts needed" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 5). In practice, the same SSC, which is established to facilitate the Presidential selection process, also facilitated other posts announced even a year after its establishment. According to a member of the SSC, the duration of their terms of office was extended because of their trustworthiness and success.

> We are selected to facilitate the Presidential selection process. If you look at the composition of the members, it is really very good. We also have good acceptance by the University community. So, it was decided that we continue facilitating other posts which include the four Vice Presidents positions. (SSCM)

What BDU has done might be good and acceptable but that does not necessarily mean it is in line with what the Directive states. The Directive is not clear what does it mean by "the terms of office … end with the appointment of the posts needed". This is mainly because appointment will continue whenever there are vacant posts. Of course, if some vacant posts are announced together, the selection and appointment process may also end at the same time. In such cases, the terms of office of the SSC also ends at that point. However, the Directive does not clearly explain this. As a result, the SSC has continued its task regardless of a time frame or number of posts.

University Leaders (Presidents and Vice Presidents)

The Directive provides opportunities for individuals who are competent and have the requisite qualifications, skills, experience, and behavior to hold the leadership positions (Ministry of Education, 2017). This opportunity has been given believing that potential candidates know that becoming a leader of an institution is a privilege that comes with certain responsibilities and accountabilities (Miller, 2006), and they are morally and professionally obliged to serve the institution and its community rather than their own self-interests (Miller, 2006; Mintzberg, 2004).

In case of presidential selection process, the SSC is responsible for screening presidential candidates and submit five candidates' reports to the Board for review. The Board conducts evaluation of presidential candidates and recommend up to three nominees to the Minister in rank order. Formal confirmation of the selection of a President by a higher authority is common in many African and European countries. However, the level of formality of the confirmation by a higher authority varies from country to country. In Ethiopia, although the Minster may not make use of it frequently, the Directive seems to provide the veto power to the Minister to approve and appoint the candidate based on the ranking (which reflects the Board's suggestion) or appoint one of the other two candidates. Participants agreed on this procedure which gives an opportunity to the Minister to appoint a candidate whom he/she thinks is good to work with him/her as well.

In case of Vice Presidents selection process, the SSC is responsible for screening candidates and submit reports of candidates to the president for review. The president reviews the SSC report and gathers additional information on the candidates and presents the two top ranking candidates to the Board for approval and appointment. In practice, as Senate/Board member the President is also involved in evaluating Vice Presidents based on the given criteria. Thus, it is not clear why the President is involved in evaluation as a Senate/Board member if he/she has an opportunity to review the SSC report and gather additional information on the candidates before sending two top ranking candidates to the Board.

As discussed above, the SSC submits five shortlisted presidential candidates' reports to the Board for review. However, the Directive does not specify how many shortlisted Vice President Candidates' report should be sent to the President for review. Moreover, in case of Vice-Presidential candidates, the Directive states that it is "only those scoring above 70% of the specified criteria can be appointed as Vice Presidents"; however, it does not put any required percentage to be appointed as President.

Eligibility was also one of the issues which are not clear among the University community. Some participants understood that both internal and external applicants are eligible to apply for both President and Vice Presidents posts. On the other hand, there are participants who understood that it is only the president post which is open to both internal and external candidates. The Directive does not have a clear statement on this. It only states that to attract qualified applicants, the SSC openly announces the presidential position both internally and externally, and the Vice-Presidential positions internally to the University community. This

may imply and support the argument that it is only the presidential position which is open to both internal and external applicants.

The Directive has four major criteria for selecting a President. These include educational qualification (30%), experience (25%), strategic plan presentation (25%) and panel interview on leadership and management skills and competencies (20%). For Vice Presidents, the five selection criteria include educational qualification (25%), experience (25%), brief proposal on improving core functions (20%), interview/survey on leadership skills and competencies (15%) and Senate vote (15%).

The selection criteria *per se* are good, but the minimum educational qualifications/academic rank required for a President and Vice Presidents positions have been criticized. The Directive states that the minimum educational qualification required for a Vice President position is master's degree with the rank of assistant professor but for a President position it is only master's degree (Lecturer). This created confusion among potential candidates and forced the SSC to re-advertise a Vice President position because applicants with the rank of lecture also applied for the position assuming that the minimum educational qualification required for a Vice President position will not be higher than the requirement for a President position. This also happened because most candidates applied based on the information they got from the University, not from the Directive. It is also paradox that the Directive gives more weights for educational qualification/academic rank for President position (30%) than Vice President positions (25%) but the minimum educational qualification/academic rank required for Vice President positions (Master's degree with the rank of assistant professor) is higher than a President position (Master's degree/lecturer).

The participatory nature of the whole selection process has been highly appreciated by all groups of participants. However, candidates and staff are not happy about the representation of academic and administrative staff in the selection process (i.e. their participation in evaluating candidates).

> As you know, we never had the opportunity to participate in the selection of leaders. Now we have the opportunity to participate in the selection of leaders whom we think have the knowledge, skills and attitude to be a good leader. I am not saying we are satisfied with our participation in terms of representation. I am just appreciating the intent. How could someone be happy when only one or two staff represents a college or a faculty? Honestly speaking, staff representation is poor, and it needs to be reconsidered. (SR2)

> First, I want to be frank that my comment on staff representation has nothing to do with my unsuccessfulness in the competition. I think a college should not be represented by one academic staff. There should be a mechanism where staff should have the opportunity to significantly participate in the selection of their leader. For example, representation can be at department level and the number is manageable. (CAN1)

The Directive does not state about number of staff representation and how staff representatives should be selected to participate in the selection process. The University also does not have a clear strategy on this, and thus the number of staff participating in the evaluation of candidates and how they should be selected were tentatively set by the SSC.

Participants also criticized the allocation of points to different criteria, mainly educational qualification/academic rank and the weight given to staff evaluation. They argued that education helps leaders to make rational and good decisions, but qualification does not necessarily show individuals' leadership quality. Thus, it should not deserve more points than the evaluation of the University community which he/she leads.

> I correctly understand the importance of education in leadership, but your qualification and academic rank mainly indicates that you are excellent researcher or teacher or both. So, candidates' educational qualification should not have more point than our [staff] collective voices. Even if we simply say he leads the institute, he is mainly leading the people because without the people the institute does not exist. Moreover, you know how these days some people get promoted [referring to publication on predatory journals]. So, it is not fair to see these people get more point from educational qualification than the voice of the people they potentially lead. This is crazy for me. (SR1)

> I am not sure what the Directive you mentioned says about our participation, but what we have seen in practice is very sad. I think our participation in the selection process should not be symbolic. We are not a side issue; we are at the center of the University. So, we should have a proper representation in the selection process and reasonable weight should have been given to our evaluation. (SR6)

However, experience from the Presidential selection process revealed unprofessional act of the University community in general which includes staff representatives.

> It is very embarrassing when you see some people give 20 to one candidate and zero to the other potential competitor. They are doing this after listening to their strategic plan. There is no way for someone to get zero after a presentation even if it is weak. The evaluation clearly shows the unprofessional act of some staff participating in the selection process. (SR7)

Such practice has been condemned by successful and unsuccessful candidates, SSC and the wider university community alike. One participant argued that asking for increasing the weight for staff evaluation in such cases does not make sense. However, most participants strongly argued that the current malpractice does not justify the properness of the principle which is allocating lower weight to the criterion related to staff evaluation. Moreover, they argued that unprofessional deeds have been improving and this has been seen in the Vice Presidents selection processes which are carried out afterwards.

Experience

Experience matters in good leadership (Brooks, 2018). However, some experiences matter more than others. The Directive identifies leadership and management experience and teaching and research experience as one of the criterion for the selection of leaders. Though it is not unique to this Directive, it is not fair to assume years of experience equals doing a great job. Participants argued that there should be a system which helps to understand the achievement of a leader in the years which he/she assumed leadership position; otherwise, even if he/she did nothing good in those years, he/she could benefit from such criterion.

> Staying a number of years in leadership position alone cannot make you a good leader. For example, let's assume that in your previous leadership positions you were doing nothing except making chaos, but you were not fired because of your political affiliation or you have a relative or someone at the top who likes you very much. Although you are the individual that no one wants as a leader, you still claim those years as experience in leadership. In such cases, your limitations and bad deeds will be in your favor and this is not fair. (SR2)

These implies that the number of years spent in a given leadership position should not be the focus rather what has been achieved (knowledge accumulated, expertise build, results obtained) in those years should matter most. Some candidates also thought that it will be good to have a strategy that provides more weight to previous relevant leadership experiences to the position than leadership experience which is general or not directly relevant to the position.

> Having experience as criterion is good but I think more weight should be given to relevant experience related to the position. For example, when people compete for academic Vice President position, I believe that more weight should be given to a person who has four years leadership experience as academic affairs executive director than a person who has ten years leadership experience in the military. (CAN3)

The distribution of points within experience has been also criticized. Participants argued that the range provided is not inclusive. For example, 15 points are allocated for a candidate who has 3-4 years leadership experience and 6-10 years teaching and research experience. However, it is not clear how much point to give for a candidate with 3-4 years leadership experience and over 10 years teaching and research experience. This is a practical problem that the SSC faced. Other public universities also faced this problem and asked BDU for clarification. The SSC tried to address this problem through discussion which resulted in favoring leadership experience than teaching and research experience. In this case, a candidate with 3-4 years leadership experience and over 10 years teaching and research experience gets equal points to a candidate with 3-4 years leadership experience and 6 years teaching and research experience.

The other problem related to range-based point allocation is that it is unfair to some candidates. For example, a candidate with over 10 years teaching and research experience and 11 years leadership experience gets 25 points but a candidate with over 10 years teaching and research experience and 10 years leadership experience gets 20 points which is equal to a point given to a candidate with over 10 years teaching and research experience and five years

leadership experience. This implies that because of lack of one more year leadership experience the candidate will lose five points. Moreover, his/her other five years leadership experience has no additional value in terms of points because he/she anyways gets points equal to a candidate who has only five years leadership experience.

Some participants also noted that though leadership experience should be one of the criteria for selecting leaders, the weight given to experience should not be to the extent that it disfavors energetic and new blood staff who do not have previous leadership experience. Proponents of this idea argued that the selection criteria in some way should consider not only their previous experience but also their potential to be a good leader. On the other hand, opponents of this idea argued that it is difficult to entertain such a fascinating proposal in a merit-based approach.

Strategic plan

Higher education leaders need to examine the national and institutional context and come up with strategies that fit best the context (Black, 2015). Accordingly requiring candidates to prepare a strategic plan which they think is good for the improvement of the University is very important. Moreover, this criterion helps the Board, the Senate and the community to know more about candidates' vision, knowledge, skills and approaches to leadership. Candidates and other participants also noted the importance of preparing strategic plan. Most of them also indicated that the point allocated to this criterion is reasonable and acceptable.

> If you want to be a leader, you have to show your capacity to the University community, and I think the strategic plan is the best way to do it. Even if I am not successful, I have learnt a lot and it was an interesting exercise. …First, I thought the point allocated to strategic plan is too much, but when I know that it is a key part of the selection criteria in which people get to know you, your plan and also somehow your skills, I said the point is very reasonable. (CAN2)

Staff representatives thought that it would have been good to have the full strategic plan of candidates before the panel interview to know more about candidates' knowledge, skills and preparedness.

Diversity

In a country where public universities are often considered as mini-Ethiopia because of the diverse student population they have (Adamu, 2007; Adamu & Zellelew. 2007), the selection and appointment of leaders needs to consider issues of diversity. Study also indicates that "The association between diversity and leadership is synergistic because diversity promotes change as an emergent agent in the structuring of higher education, while leadership promotes practices that identify diversity as a nested context for achieving balance in the social relations between higher education and society" (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002, p.12). One of the objectives of the Directive is also to "ensure equality of opportunity and diversity are adhered to" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 3). Participants also indicated that the Directive

provides equal opportunities to individual regardless of their political affiliation and ethnic, religious and gender background.

> The procedure in which leaders have been appointed before and now is totally unparalleled. Previously we didn't know how university leaders have been appointed. We just see a letter of appointment on a notice Board and that is it. Now we do not only know the appointment procedure but also participate in the selection process which is open to all individuals who meet the minimum requirements. In principle, if I want to be a leader, I don't need to have a political affiliation or know someone at the ministry level or somewhere in high political leadership. I don't necessarily need also to be a person from that region or vicinity. (SR4)

> I have not seen the Directive but I can see that it is a good one because it gives opportunity to all staff as long as they have the necessary qualification, skills and experience. I think what we are experiencing now shows that political affiliation and ethnic orientation has no place in the selection process. Although I am not successful in my application, I have witnessed the equality of opportunity. (CAN5)

Although the Directive ensures equality of opportunity, practically it is not able to promote ethnic diversity which has been highly politicized for about three decades, even at the expense of national unity. It is understood that individuals from one ethnic group do not have the audacity to apply for leadership positions announced in universities which are located in regions other than 'their own'.

> The Directive is good in a sense that it gives equal opportunity but it does not have the power to attract candidates from different ethnic groups. The main reason for this is the issue of ethnicity is beyond the capacity of the Directive. The ethnic politics in Ethiopia is still a burning issue that needs to be addressed at national level. (SR7)

> If someone expects the Directive to attract candidates from different ethnic background, he must be foolish or he does not understand the problem that this country encountered as a result of ethnic politicization. Look at the candidates applied for leadership positions in different universities. It is always individuals from the ethnic group that is found in the region where the universities are located. It is very sad that it is becoming more and more difficult to work in different regional states. …It is only a political strategy that solves this problem not the Directive. (SR2)

The above excerpts indicate how politicization of ethnicity, which resulted from the ethnic-based political and administrative system, has affected the interest of people to work at and lead institutions that are located in a region other than 'their own'.

Despite the provision of equal opportunity, some individuals with good leadership experience and wisdom are not also applying for different top-level leadership positions. Candidates and some staff stated that the quality of applicants for different leadership position is not up to

their expectation. They thought that there are more qualified applicants who did not apply for different reasons.

> I don't think that the candidates applying for different positions are the one that most people want or expected. Some of them are not known by the University community because they might have joined the University recently or they have not been seen serving the University in different leadership positions. I believe that there are people who have better experience and educational qualification and even who have studied something related to the leadership positions. (CAN2)

> I am not a doomster but I can say that except in case of presidential selection, the people whom I think are good for different leadership positions are not coming forward. I asked some of them and they told me that they don't trust the process. This might be because of lack of awareness about how the new strategy works. I also think there are people who are afraid of not winning the competition. I was surprised that some people felt that I have lost something, and they tried to console me. …There are also people who want to be called, consulted to apply and compete. (CAN3)

> There are good candidates who applied for different leadership positions, but for me most of them are not good enough to be a leader at that level. There are good people but they did not apply. I think this may be because of our culture which does not encourage people to nominate themselves and say I can be a good leader. It is often the case that these kinds of people want to be either nominated or called up and appointed. (SR3)

The excerpts indicate that several individuals with good leadership experience and great potential to win the competition are not applying for different reasons including lack of trust in the selection process, lack of self-nomination culture, and the culture of feeling humbled when he/she did not get the position.

The other diversity issue which is not addressed by the Directive is gender. The number of public universities in Ethiopia had increased from two to 46 in the last three decades. This is accompanied with a steady increase of female enrolments and employment in higher education. When we look at women in higher education leadership in Ethiopia, they are still very much underrepresented. In the 46 public universities in Ethiopia women assume less than 10% of the available top-level leadership positions. A study conducted on commonwealth universities also shows that women do not occupy leadership positions that enable them to be influential decision maker in their institution (Singh 2002 cited in Onsongo, 2004).

The government wants to empower women and enhance the role of women in leadership, and higher education is no exception. However, the Directive does not reflect this discourse and commitment. Aiming to ensure equality of opportunity and obeying diversity is good but not a sufficient condition to enhance women participation in leadership. This is one of the challenges that the selection process has faced with.

> The government, Ministry of Education and even the University talks about promoting gender diversity and brining more women to leadership. However, when you look at the practice that is not how it is. …There was one female candidate for the President position and she had competed like her male counterparts. Whenever the University updates us with the result, they tell us that the result does not include the point that will be given to the female candidate. Even in the final result, we have not seen that point. If there is a point to be added for female candidates, it should be clear from the very beginning and we all should know about that. (SR4)

From experience, the SSC took for granted that female candidates will have some points to be added when they compete for leadership positions. However, the Directive does not provide a clear strategy on this and that is why the SSC often makes open statement in relation to gender when it announces results at different stages of the selection process.

> We [SSC members] believe that there is a point to be added for female candidates but we are not sure how much that should be. So, we called to different offices at federal and regional levels and they were not also clear. They gave us different figures and we did not want to take risk by simply taking one of those figures. Sometimes, I personally feel that if something is not addressed in the Directive, then it should not be our mandate. However, what we practically did was whenever we announce results to the University community we leave this issue open. Still now we don't know what to do in relation to this. This is a problem which other universities are also faced. We came to know this because they asked us how we managed this issue. (SSCM)

The Directive does not clearly address issues related to enhancing women participation in leadership, and the number of women candidates for different leadership positions are negligible. Study indicates that limited number of women applying for top-level leadership positions (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007) is associated with, *inter alia*, lack of women as role models in leadership in the higher education sector and insufficient support for women professional effectiveness and career development (Moodly & Toni, 2017).

The Directive promotes merit-based selection and appointment strategy which is good, but the challenge with selecting and appointing on merit is that it assumes a level playing ground (Norah, 2015). In Ethiopia, women are not only teachers and researchers, but also mothers who have more responsibility than men in taking care of children and family. Their career development is potentially interrupted by pregnancy, birth and the like, which requires them more time than men to achieve the required educational qualification/academic rank and experience in leadership. This clearly shows lack of equal playground for women and men in Ethiopian higher education. Thus, in such situation selecting and appointing leaders only based on merit serves only confirming the status quo. Although the gender imbalance at top-level leadership in higher education is evident in most countries (Shepherd, 2017), the Directive may intensify the situation in Ethiopia, and this has been already noted when there are no women selected and appointed as a university leader since the implementation of the Directive.

Grievance and Transparency

The Directive provides opportunity for applicants to lodge their grievances. However, applicants are not clear about to which office or committee they should submit their complaints and who should handle the case. Some candidates thought that complaints are handled by the Board and the President office when the selection process refers to the President and Vice Presidents respectively. Some others thought that complaints are handled by the SSC by submitting either directly to the SSC or the office of the Vice President for information and strategic communication. It is not logical to assume grievance to be handled by the SSC because the grievance could be on fairness of the SSC itself. However, the SSC member noted that the committee is responsible for handling the case at initial stage, and if the case is difficult to address by the committee, it will be passed to the Board.

The confusion regarding grievance creates concern on the University's familiarity with the Directive and its guidance on grievance handling, because if they read the Directive in details this issue should have not been a problem. The Directive clearly states that the University Administrative Board handles grievances with the help of an independent committee established by the Board.

Until the end of the data collection for this study, there was only one grievance and it was submitted to and handled by the SSC. The absence of grievance might be associated with the transparent selection process which is much acclaimed by candidates, the University community, and the wider society. Some candidates and staff noted that the transparency of the selection process could be taken as a standard which other universities can refer to.

Number of candidates and Performance evaluation

The Directive does not indicate the number of candidates which is considered to be sufficient to run the selection process. It does not also indicate the procedure that needs to be followed if there are no enough applicants for a post. This problem has been practically faced when there are no enough applicants for the Business and Development Vice President position even after three advertisements through print and electronic media. In such cases, the university will be forced to appoint someone because it cannot keep the position open indefinitely. However, appointing a leader without clearly set strategy may obscure the open and transparent selection and appointment system.

The Directive states that both the President and Vice Presidents have the opportunity to continue for one more term if their performance has been rated very good or excellent by the Board and Ministry of Education (in case of President) and by the Board, Senate and President (in case of Vice Presidents). This is against the participatory nature of the Directive which denies the wider university community the opportunity for reflecting their satisfaction on the performance of their leaders through evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The selection process is very transparent from the outset to the end. This has been found to be one of the reasons for the trust among the University community on the selection process and absence of complaints from candidates. However, the performance evaluation is not inclusive. The study identifies different issues that create confusion among the community in the selection and appointment process. These include eligibility of applicants, minimum educational qualification/academic rank required for President and Vice Presidents positions, the terms of office of the SSC, number of shortlisted Vice President candidates to be sent to the President for review, point allocation for experience based on different ranges, number of candidates considered to be sufficient to run the selection process, and the procedure that needs to be followed if there are no enough applicants for a post. This implies the need for limiting terms of office of the SSC either to a defined number of posts or year(s). It also implies the need for a strategy for discounting ineffective and inefficient years of leadership as experience, and setting a clear point allocation strategy for experience which may include allocating points for each year of experience. It also necessitates the need for clear applicant eligibility criteria.

The result also provides important insights about concerns and discontents of the University community regarding the selection practice. These concerns and discontents include staff underrepresentation in the selection process, the less weight given to staff evaluation, the less emphasis given to promote women participation in leadership in higher education, and lack of participation on leaders' performance evaluation. This implies that either the Directive or universities need to develop a strategy for ensuring considerable staff representation, a procedure for selecting staff representatives and possible code of conducts for staff representatives. It also implies an urgent need for a strategy that promotes women participation in leadership and redresses the current gender imbalance in leadership; otherwise the selection process ends up in catching the same fish because that is what one gets when he/she is always fishing in the same pond. The selection and appointment process will also be considered as men's club where women are rarely invited.

The Directive promotes equal opportunity as one of its objectives. This is a necessary but not sufficient condition to promote ethnic diversity given the politicization of ethnicity in the country. This implies that if there is no political solution at national level or a daring strategy that promotes ethnic diversity in leadership in higher education, at least for a foreseeable future, individuals may not have the courage to apply for a leadership position in universities that are geographically located in "other" regional states.

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Manifestations of Hidden Curricular Messages in the PGDT Program: Covert Tasks in Focus

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Abstract: This study describes the experiences of student-teachers in the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) program. The aim was to explore the hidden curricular messages within the program, covert tasks in focus, by answering two central questions: 1) What do student-teachers' experiences in the PGDT program tell us about their task compliance in their training 2) Do student-teachers' task compliance vary significantly with their background characteristics? Exploratory sequential mixed methods study was conducted in three public universities over the course of three academic terms. Data consisted of transcribed interviews and questionnaire survey. In the first phase of the study, data was collected and analyzed relying on the assumptions of phenomenological inquiry from purposively selected 25 student-teachers (male=15 and female=10). In the second stage, survey was conducted on a relatively large sample size consisting 356 student-teachers (male=216 & female=140) selected using systematic random sampling. The qualitative data were transcribed, coded and interpreted thematically; and quantitative data was reduced into descriptive statistics such as t-tests and one way ANOVA. Main findings from this study indicated that, various elements of covert tasks were manifested in the PGDT program and these elements of covert tasks attested superficial task compliance of the trainees. The results also indicated that hidden curricular messages in the PGDT program were experienced by student-teachers similarly regardless of their differences in gender, department, and university generation. Therefore, this study raises questions and concerns about the vigor of PGDT program in enabling student-teachers exhibit the minimum competency thresholds espoused by the secondary school pre-service teacher education program.

Key Words: Hidden curriculum, Hidden Curricular Messages, Covert tasks, PGDT program

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of teachers training in Ethiopia, various reforms were introduced to improve the quality of teacher education in the country.Studies trace the beginning of formal teacher education in Ethiopia to the mid-1940s (Tekeste, 1996; Kelemu, 2000; Kassahun, 2006; & Ayele, 2010) with the preparation of primary school teachers at Menelik II School in Addis Ababa. As a historical note, Tekeste (1996) has also mentioned that before this time there was

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no teacher education system in the country, and western teachers and principals populated Ethiopian schools.

Following this development, the first Faculty of Education that explicitly concentrated on the preparation of secondary school teachers emerged at the then Haile Sellassie I University, now Addis Ababa University, in 1959 (Tesfaye, 2014). Following this trend secondary school teacher education program, particularly at a bachelor degree with four years duration, was made part of many higher education institutions in Ethiopia until the espousal of a new teacher education reform called Teacher Education System Overhaul (Egne, 2014).

Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO), initiated in 2003, changed both the structure and content of curricula through reductions of programs from four to three years and by moving away from subject to vocational emphasis that includes practicum (MoE, 2003). Lack of professionalism and ethical values in the Ethiopian teacher education was one of the major reasons that initiated TESO (MoE, 2003).

However, studies (e.g., Kedir, 2007; Dawit, 2008) concluded that the rhetoric of TESO and the practice were not aligned. The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2009) has also reported, amongst others, that professional commitment and work ethics which TESO was meant to address were not demonstrated as desired. Hence, reforming the structure and content of secondary teacher education program was in order (MoE, 2009). To that end, in 2009, the Ministry replaced TESO with a new modality of secondary teacher education program entitled Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT). In this new modality, after finishing their undergraduate studies in applied disciplines, student-teachers undergo professional courses for one year to obtain a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching (MoE, 2009).

The curriculum framework for PGDT (MoE, 2009) indicates that student-teachers are expected to accomplish lots of tasks in the university as well as in practicum schools for the attainment of minimum competency thresholds at the end of their training. However, literature puts forward that students' competence is not only the function of the official curriculum. Hidden curriculum, which is always and everywhere tied to all academic settings and always coexists with the official curriculum (Mariani, 1999; Rennert-Ariev, 2008; Rose, 2005), tacitly operates and result in hidden effects on students learning (Apple, 2004; Bayanfar, 2013;Snyder, 1971;). Apple (2004) for instance, demonstrated that behind the screen of official educational practices there is unofficial curriculum that tacitly operates and plays a significant role in resulting hidden effects. Apple cautions that educational theory and policy making without the recognition of this aspect of schools may have less of an impact than one might hope from education.

In spite of all these potential influences, researchers who are concerned with curriculum development practices are seen to stay talking and/or writing more about the official curriculum than the hidden curriculum, and hence it seems to me that hidden curriculum is a topic rarely spoken about in academic institutions in general and in teacher education programs in particular. Impliedly, therefore, several specific concerns could be emerged.

A first specific concern could be with regard to the message content being learned. Certainly, what hidden curricular messages are created and transmitted to students represents one concern. If hidden curricular messages are created and transmitted to students and do influence their learning (Apple, 2004; Bayanfar, 2013; Snyder, 1971), then it would seem important to document it. Besides, if we could document the hidden curricular messages being learned, then, it would be possible to make a decision on whether those messages should either be accepted or rejected.

A second specific concern could be with regard to the difference in hidden curricular messages across student's background characteristics, assuming that messages may vary across students' background characteristics (Gordon, 1984; Hanushek, 1998). It has also been my personal experience as a teacher educator in the PGDT program that many student-teachers have no particular interest for the training, and this appears almost the same across departments, gender, and university generations (year of establishment). Therefore, once the hidden curricular messages are explored, teacher educators need to do some kind of analysis based on differences so that they can change their practices, procedures, and factors in the learning environment to rule-out differential treatments they consider undesirable.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to explore the manifestations of hidden curricular messages in the secondary school pre-service teacher education program, covert tasks in focus. To that end, the study attempts to answer two central questions:

1) What do student-teachers' experiences in the PGDT program tell us about their task compliances in the training?

2) Do student-teachers' task compliances vary significantly (statistically) with their background characteristics?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hidden Curriculum

The idea of hidden curriculum is not new. Barrow (1976) mentioned that the idea of a hidden curriculum has a recorded history since the time of Plato. Brady (1995) cited in Dewey (1916) who said, "We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment". Similarly, Cornbleth (1984) referred to the work of Dewey dating back to 1938 referring to the "collateral learning of attitudes" that occurs in schools that may have more long-range importance than the explicit school curriculum.

The term hidden curriculum came into academic discourse in 1960s through the work of Jackson in his book "Life in Classrooms" (Portelli, 1993), and it came into the realm of higher education in the early 1970s. Snyder is credited as the first scholar who brought the term "hidden curriculum" into the attention of higher education practitioners when he studied the formal curriculum in Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1971 (Rabah, 2012).

The concept of the hidden curriculum has been used to analyze the experiences of teacher education programs since the late 1970s. In this regard, Rennert-Ariev (2008) has mentioned the works of Bartholomew (1976) and Dale (1977).

The term curriculum is conceptually seen to be analogous with an iceberg (Rose, 2005). According to Rose, the tip of the iceberg that we can simply see is metaphorical with the official curriculum and part of the iceberg that we do not easily spot out because it is submerged is, metaphorical with the hidden curriculum.

Hedge (2000) defines the hidden curriculum as the learning which goes on in covert ways beneath the surface of what the teacher sets out to teach. It encompasses the shaping of learners' perceptions about learning, their own role in it, and the nature of the subject they are studying, their teachers and so on, and their attitudes towards all of these.

As literature depicts, there seems a common conception among scholars that hidden curriculum encompasses two major dimensions although the expressions they have used in labeling the dimensions are not the same. For instance, Noel (2000) used "process" and "outcome" aspect; Razvani and Kianinezhad (2002) used "process" and "resolution"; and Vallance (1980) has used "contextual factors" and "covert messages" to label the two dimensions of hidden curriculum. Although the expressions used by these scholars to label the major dimensions of hidden curriculum are ostensibly different, conceptually they appear to denote those factors in the learning environment that would serve as the sources of hidden curricular messages on the one hand, and the hidden curricular message itself as an outcome aspect on the other hand.

Unfortunately, there is no clear agreement in the literature as to what constitutes the sources of hidden curricular messages. However, Ebadi (2013), in his extensive review, considered three distinctive dimensions of the learning environment to determine the most important influences of hidden curricula. Those are: school structure, school's social atmosphere and teacher-student interaction.

Reviews made on the theoretical traditions of the concept of hidden curriculum also designate that, the manifestations of hidden curricular messages as an outcome aspect of hidden curriculum could be summarized in to four major themes (forms): covert tasks (Rennert-Ariev, 2008; Snyder, 1971; Yuksel, 2006), implicit messages (Illich, 1978; Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Gatto, 2005), unintended learning outcomes (Martin, 1976; Gordon, 1982) and unofficial expectations (Jackson, 1968).

Researchers defined "covert task" by contrasting the expectations of students with the expectations of teachers and the way in which students react to formal statements of tasks expected from them. In this regard, Snyder (1971) and Rennert-Ariev (2008), argued that students' views about what it is in fact necessary to do are usually different from the tasks as expressed by teachers, and students end up with covert tasks they infer as the basis for the rewards in the particular setting. According to them these covert tasks, the focus of investigation for the present study, form part of the hidden curriculum.

Review of related literature also portrays that there is no reason to suppose different settings will have identical hidden curricula. Regarding the relativity of hidden curriculum, Martin (1976) and Margolis and Romero (1998) argued that hidden curriculum is relative to a given context, time frame, and participants.

Although there are studies carrying the title of hidden curriculum, most of them were investigations designed at the level of primary and secondary education. Only few studies have investigated hidden curriculum in the context of higher education. (e.g., Ahola, 2000; Bergenhenegouwen, 1987; Margolis & Romero, 1998; Yuksel, 2006). Locally, Alemayehu (2008) analyzed the impact of hidden curriculum on multicultural education in Ethiopian universities. In his analysis both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used. The results indicated that, there exists strong negative correlation between students' self concept and their perception of multiculturalism. In his report it was also indicated that, there existed a significant correlation among the sociological variables with all components of hidden curriculum. Wudu (2016) has also investigated the hidden curriculum elements university students learn in Jimma University classroom and how these elements are used as a means of cultural reproduction. The study indicated that the main hidden curriculum elements students learn in the university classroom site include: self-control, male dominance, tactical study orientation, teacher power, social relations, indifference, cooperative work, punishment, reward and dependence on technology.

Rennert-Ariev (2008) analyzed the experiences of students on pre-service teacher education program in a university. The aim was to understand the hidden curricular messages within the program. The program's central hidden curricular message, as his investigation revealed, was that superficial demonstrations of compliance with external mandates.

Paradigms of Teacher Education: Brief Description

Several efforts have been made to reform teacher education worldwide on the basis of an explicit theoretical paradigm during the past half-century (Huizen; Oers, & Wubbels, 2005). The paradigms that achieved clear recognition and strong influence on teacher-education practice include: competency-based teacher education of the late-1960s and 1970s, personal orientation to teaching and teacher education, and the paradigm based on reflection and inquiry of the late-1980s and 1990s (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Zeichner, 1983). Competency-based teacher education is that which defines a public standard for teaching as a framework for teacher education, and hence it has been criticized for reducing the teacher's role to that of a 'technician' (Valli & Rennert-Ariev, 2002). The personal orientation to teaching, the reverse of the competency-based paradigm, emphasizes that one of the chief instruments a teacher uses is his or her own person (Combs, 1982). This model has been criticized in a point that a one-sided attention to the personal side of teaching tends to overlook the public, institutional, and corporate aspects of teaching (Valli & Rennert-Ariev, 2002). The paradigm advocating reflection and inquiry (Schon, 1983) is noteworthy in its emphasis that professional repertoires are not established once and for all and are not given from outside a practice, but have to be continually reappraised, reaffirmed, or modified by questioning experiences in the light of standards of evaluation.

The paradigm of reflective inquiry recommends social constructivist pre-service teacher education program and at the heart of it is building a program that is integrated, inquiry-oriented, and community-based (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). These values are used as the basic principles guiding the PGDT program (MoE, 2009) to alleviate the problems following the implementation of TESO which teachers' professional commitment and work ethics are not demonstrated as desired.

METHOD

Exploratory sequential mixed methods design was used in this study. Exploratory sequential mixed design is a popular design used when existing instruments, variables, and measures may not be known or available for the population under study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Creswell, 2012). In the exploratory sequential mixed design, qualitative data are collected first and findings are tested with subsequent quantitative data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In this type of mixed methods design, data analysis is separate, corresponding to the first qualitative phase of the study and the second quantitative phase of the study.

Studying the hidden curricular messages of educational settings is a complex process that involves researchers who must go to search for the lived experiences of students first. Regarding this idea Martin (1976) argued that a hidden curriculum is not something one just finds easily; rather one must go hunting for it. As she pointed out, hidden curriculum is experienced individually and particular students receive different messages from and respond differently. The study of hidden curriculum primarily requires gathering an experiential form of knowledge that student-teachers develop through their involvement in a certain setting. In other words, hidden curriculum is not just imprinted on student-teachers, but is formed over time through interaction with various factors in the learning environment. Thus, one of the beneficial ways to understanding its different aspects would be to examine it from the student teachers' perspectives. Moreover, there are no readymade instruments to collect data to study the hidden curriculum. Therefore, it requires the researcher to develop a tool first and then make use of it for the survey. Consequently, based on the knowledge claim assumptions, from different strategies of qualitative research approach, the researcher initially (in the first stage of this study) used the principles associated with strategies and assumptions corresponding to "phenomenology".

Since the ultimate goal of this investigation is to determine the hidden curricular messages of secondary school pre-service teacher education as a setting, attention is directed to exploring common themes running through the learning states in the setting (Martin, 1976). The learning states which do not fit readily into the general pattern are shunned, even though they are in fact produced by the setting. Regarding this idea, Martin (1976) suggested that idiosyncratic learning states are ignored when the determination of the hidden curriculum of a setting is the focus of attention. According to her, although the hidden curriculum of a setting is an abstraction from the standpoint of learners, a portrait of the hidden curriculum of a setting consists not in all the learning states therein attained, but rather in the dominant ones. In the second stage, the determination of the hidden curriculum of a setting (secondary school pre-service teacher education) is the focus of attention. This requires drawing data from a relatively

large sample size. To that end, the popular quantitative research method (i.e. survey) has been used.

The participants, instruments used for data collection, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques are described below.

Participants

In the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS), one of the nine regional states in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), there are seven universities all funded by FDRE. University of Gondar and Bahir Dar University are grouped first generation Universities, while Debre Markos University, Debre Birhan University and Wollo University are grouped in the second generation. Woldia University and Debre Tabor University are newly established universities grouped in the third generation. Five of these Universities (except University of Gondar & Debre Tabor University) were practicing secondary school pre-service teacher education in the year 2016/17 based on the framework of PGDT guidelines given from the Federal Ministry of Education.

From the five universities that were running secondary school pre-service teacher education, three universities were selected for the present study using multi-stage sampling techniques (stratified, purposive and convenience sampling). Debre Markos University was selected from second generation universities based on convenience. Bahir Dar University and Woldia University were selected purposively from first and third generation universities respectively.

The sample of the respondents was chosen randomly from a population representing 1023 (male=623 & female=400) students according to the universities statistics for the year 2016/2017. Respondents for the interview (male=15 & female=10) in the phenomenological study were selected purposively based on their will to involve in an in-depth interview that required an extended time of contact. Whereas, the respondents in the survey, 356 in number (male=216 & female=140), were selected based on systematic random sampling technique considering different strata.

Instruments

Given the research objective of this study, the goal of data collection was to explore the manifestations of hidden curricular messages, covert tasks in focus, by gaining insight into the student-teachers' lived experiences. Thus the investigative tool used should enable the researcher to go deep enough into the experiences of student-teachers through an in-depth interview in the first place and next to this gathering survey data to understand how covert tasks manifest in the program through the analysis of trainees' task compliance. Therefore, the main tools used for meeting this demand were an interview and questionnaire. The interview items were a type of questions that allowed the research participants freedom to tell their story without constraint. A questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the first stage qualitative study. A Likert type questionnaire that contains 18 items, of which 8 items reversely scored, was used to measure the lived experiences of student-teachers on their task

compliances. The rating scales in the questionnaire represented 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4=Mainly, and 5= Always.

Data collection procedure

Manifestations of hidden curricular messages were going to be explored through student-teachers' lived experiences. Therefore, the researcher decided to select the participants purposively from those that have been attending classes at least 95 per cent. To look for student teachers that would actually participate in the first stage of the study (qualitative study), the researcher provided a descriptive summary of the research plan and its major tasks to student-teachers who have been attending classes at most. The aim of doing this was to find the respondents on a voluntary base. Student-teachers indicating their decisions to participate were considered in the sample. The next step was to meet student-teachers in person in order to discuss the duration and conditions of the study, and the terms of their cooperation.

In the initial stage of the study, phenomenological strategy that requires an in-depth interview with the students has been used so as to hunt for a hidden curricular messages experienced individually. The content and questions of these interviews were prepared before the interviews began. The initial list of questions and the concepts in the semi-structured interview for collecting data were common for all participants. The data collected through these interviews were the initial source of knowledge production in this study. Subjects received a copy of their response to validate that it reflected their perspectives regarding the phenomenon that was studied. Fortunately, there was no discrepancy between their reports and textual data compiled.

Determination of the hidden curriculum of the PGDT program was the focus of attention in the second phase of the present study. Therefore, to shun hidden curricula which do not fit readily into the general pattern (Martin, 1976), questionnaire was developed and administered to large number of students in the quantitative phase of the study. Before administering the questionnaire to the respondents, it was presented to critical friends consisted of 5 instructors (assistant professors and above) who were chosen from the department of teacher education and curriculum studies in Bahir Dar University (BDU). Based on their comments, notes were taken into consideration in terms of adjustment, addition and deletion. The instrument was pilot tested to check its reliability on an initial sample consisting of 38 student-teachers. The pilot study was conducted in Wollo University, which is similar to the ones included in the main study. The researcher used Pearson Correlation to estimate the reliability of Task Compliance Rating Scale, and it was found to be 0.750. This correlation coefficient was generally considered appropriate for the purpose of the present study.

Data analysis techniques

Analysis of qualitative data was displayed first. For the ease of the laborious task of analyzing text-based data through rapid and sophisticated searches and line-by-line coding, the qualitative analyses was supported by an open software package called Weft-QDA (version 3.6.2.0, 2017) software. The data collected through questionnaires were coded, entered, cleaned and analyzed

using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20) computer software. The quantitative data was reduced into descriptive statistics such as t-tests, and one way ANOVA.

RESULTS

This research aimed at finding answers to the questions: (1)What do student-teachers lived experiences in the PGDT program tell us about their task acquaintance in their training, and (2) Do student-teachers' task acquaintance in the PGDT program vary significantly (statistically) with student-teachers' background characteristics?

Qualitative Findings

In the interviews, student-teachers were asked to describe what their task compliances are like as trainees in the PGDT program. Qualitative data indicated that, interviewed student teachers were likely to hold a range of task compliances that stretched from "superficial" to "genuine" demonstrations of task compliances (Table 1).

Superficial demonstrations of task compliance

Student-teachers were asked about their task acquaintances in the PGDT program and the experiences of most of the interviewees represent weak aspirations to take teaching as a career, displaying apathy in accomplishing tasks, and demonstrating tactical study orientations.

a) Indifference

Asked about their task acquaintances in the PGDT, participants of the interview expressed that they are apathetic in accomplishing tasks given to them from teacher educators. The following quoted responses from four participants echo this assertion.

Quoted Response6:

> *I get nobody cared about the PGDT program; I feel that course guide books, course works, and exams are given to us only for formality. I think, the Ministry of Education focuses on only to fill the severe shortage of teachers in secondary schools rather than the quality of graduates. Honestly speaking, I am not doing well as a trainee in this program…*(Respondent 8).

Quoted Response 7:

> *…my dream was to be a good business consultant. So, I am not trying to do anything fully in this program …*(Respondent 18)

Quoted Response 8:

> *.... Everything in the PGDT program is loosely executed. Because of this and other personal reasons, I do not believe that I am working as much as I can as a trainee* (Respondent 22).

Quoted Response 14:

> *I do not find courses in the PGDT program interesting…… so I keep my effort to the minimum…..I only read handouts given to us* (Respondent 5)

The above responses indicate that tasks planned by teacher educators are not given proper consideration by most of the student-teachers as the bases for their teaching competence development. These findings are consistent with that of Wudu (2016), who found that students in the university learn to be indifferent from their teachers because they usually observethat the latter do not properly use resources, do not get prepared to teach, use the same note yearafter year, do not correct the exam timely and sometimes fail to do correctly their activities.

b) Tactical study orientations

Probed to state their task compliances in the interviews, student- teachers have also reported that they go for tactical study orientations to complete the program. This assertion is evident in the following verbatim statements given by some of the participants:

Quoted Response 10:

> *I usually do tasks given from teacher educators bearing in mind that are not critically evaluated by instructors. Had there been critical evaluation of tasks, teacher-educators would have provided us critical comments on our performance. Therefore, working more on the decoration of written assignments than working on the quality of its content, to get better scores, is our usual practice in this program…. I mean this is not only the experience of me* (Respondent 25).

Quoted Response 11:

> *I, together with my friends, urge our instructors to give us more group assignments than individual assignments, if there are opportunities, I attempt to join competent peers for group work aiming to be free from burden. Because group assignments are usually completed by few knowledgeable peers. Moreover, scores given for group assignments are usually a 'pass mark' which is almost the same for each group* (Respondent 17).

Quoted Response 12:

> *I give little emphasis for the tasks in the content based courses compared with subject area method courses. Because I know it is mandatory to score at least 'C' in Subject Methodology and Practicum to qualify for graduation* (Respondent 24)

Quoted Response 13*:*

> *… why should I suffer!.... I mean I don't want to do a lot in this program, because teaching is not my destiny. To complete the program I simply figure*

> *out topics from handouts that are most likely to be asked in exams and I simply look for tips and exam pointers in classroom discussions. By doing this I can simply pass exams. Fortunately, most of the time questions for tests or exams are directly coming from handouts or Power Point notes* (Respondent 9)

The above responses indicate that student-teachers went for tactical study orientations in the PGDT program. This result is congruent with a research conducted by Wudu (2016). As noted by him, one of the hidden curriculum elements students learn in the university is tactical study orientations explained in terms of recognizing different easy ways to score grades and be successful in the university by using different strategies without exerting much effort.

c) Occupational preference

Student-teachers responses are extremely apprehensive regarding their occupational preference. It appears that student-teachers occupational preferences are the jobs in their applied degree areas rather than teaching. This has been reflected in their responses during interviews. The following word for word statements that were made by four of the participants confirm the above view:

Quoted Response 17:

> *I am looking for jobs in my applied degree area other than teaching…Hence, I am doing tasks in this program mostly not to be said incomplete, and my at most effort in this program is nothing more than collecting pass marks* (Respondent 10).

Quoted Response 18:

> *... I attend classes in this program for only 2 to 3 days in a week and search other jobs in the rest of my time. I don't like to be a teacher*…(Respondent 2)

Quoted Response 19:

> *... my primary reason for joining this program is unemployment, but not be affectionate of the teaching profession* (Respondent 23).

Quoted Response 20:

> *...had I had another job opportunity, I would have withdrawn from this training* (Respondent 14).

The participant's view expressed above represents that they were not motivated to be a teacher from the beginning and even now they are not aspiring to take teaching as their future career. These findings correspond with Villegas-Reimers's (1998) review that presents a list of problems in teacher education program. The problems include: the less-than-ideal characteristics of most candidates who enter the profession, and lack of attractive

characteristics of the teaching profession, which, in turn, affects who enters the profession, who stays and for how long.

Genuine demonstrations of task compliance

Student-teachers were not unanimous in their responses when they were probed to state their task compliances. It has also emerged from the interviews that some of the student-teachers participated in the interviews demonstrated task compliances that were genuine in orientation. The following quoted responses that were made by some of the participants attest this assertion:

Quoted Response 1:

> *I work hard at my studies… I spend a lot of my time working more on the topics which have been discussed in classrooms for different courses* (Respondent 3)

Quoted Response 2:

> *I accomplish the tasks given to me very carefully assuming that they are the bases for my professional development in teaching* (Respondent 19).

Quoted Response 3:

> *I read topics in advance…I come to most classes with questions in mind that I want more clarifications… besides, I make my own notes for most of the suggested readings to enrich my understanding….*(Respondent 11)

Table 1

Categories and Elements of Covert Tasks Established from Interviews

Categories	Elements of Covert Tasks
Superficial Demonstrations of Task Compliance	• Weak aspirations of student-teachers to take teaching as their future career, • Not to care about anything • low contribution in group works • Tactical study orientation • Preferentially valuing tasks • Temptation to keep their effort to the minimum • Temptation towards group assignments than tests and exams • Hunting and join competent peers for group work • Figuring out topics that are likely to be asked in exams • Dependence on handouts and power point notes • Looking for tips and exam pointers during discussion • Accomplishing tasks focusing more on decoration than the quality of its content • Fake communication with people in the program
Genuine Demonstrations of Task Compliance	• Courage to accomplish tasks through investigations • Submitting complete and defect-free assignments

Categories and elements of covert tasks established from interviews are summarized in Table 1 above. As Table 1 illustrates, the main categories extracted from the verbatim statements of student-teachers were "genuine demonstrations of task compliance" and "superficial demonstrations of task compliance" as to how the hidden curricular messages are manifested in a form of covert tasks. Besides, Table 1 represents that various elements of covert tasks were manifested in the PGDT program. The experiences of some of the interviewed student-teachers indicated that they were courageous to accomplish tasks through investigations, submitting complete and defect-free assignments, and proud in joining the teaching profession. Experiences like these suggest how genuine demonstration of task acquaintance is manifested in the learning environment and how student-teachers are striving to accomplish tasks to exhibit the minimum competency thresholds espoused by the secondary school pre-service teacher education program. On the other hand, there were experiences of most of the interviewed student-teachers in this program indicating the existence of tactical study orientation, preferentially valuing tasks, temptation towards minimal effort, temptation towards group assignments than tests and exams, hunting and join competent peers for group work, figuring out topics that are likely to be asked in exams, dependence on handouts, and looking for tips

and exam pointers. Reports like this suggest how superficial demonstration of task compliance is manifested in the PGDT program.

Quantitative Findings

Preliminary analyses included checking the data for the number of respondents in each group (N), missing data points for an item on a scale, and reliability statistics in the SPSS output. Missing data points for an item on a scale were found in 5 cases and this was handled by substituting mean scale scores for the missing value and the correlation coefficient found to be 0.788 was generally considered appropriate.

Manifestations of hidden curricular messages

One sample t-test was conducted to compare the observed mean scores of student-teachers enrolling in the secondary school pre-service teacher education program (N=356) with the expected mean scores as measured by the Task Compliance Rating Scale (TCRS) to determine the elements of covert tasks as the hidden curricular messages of the setting.

Table 2

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and One Sample t-test Results (N=356)

Items	Exp. Mean	Obs. Mean	SD	Std. Error	t	df	Sig.
TC 1: I complete the tasks given from teacher educators on time	3	2.266	.981	.0519	-14.14	355	.000
TC 2: I am careful as much as I can to submit complete and defect-free assignments	3	2.339	1.05	.0559	-11.82	355	.000
TC 3: I am courageous to accomplish tasks through investigations	3	2.331	.991	.0525	-12.74	355	.000
TC 4: I contribute a lot in group works	3	2.373	1.08	.0577	-10.87	355	.000
TC 5: I exert my at most effort to become professionally competent teacher	3	2.213	.943	.0499	-15.77	355	.000
TC 6: I accomplish tasks more focusing on the quality of its content than submitting many decorated pages	3	2.553	1.09	.0577	-7.75	355	.000
TC 7: I hate plagiarizing works deliberately from other sources.	3	2.303	.948	.0502	-13.88	355	.000
TC 8: I do not go for tactical study orientation	3	1.966	.575	.0305	-33.90	355	.000
TC 9: I do not value tasks preferentially	3	2.404	1.11	.0588	-10.14	355	.000
TC 10: I attempt to pass exams with minimal effort	3	2.331	.977	.0517	-12.94	355	.000
TC 11: I insist teacher educators to give us more group assignments than tests and exams	3	2.432	1.04	.0556	-10.22	355	.000
TC 12: I believe that grade is the only measure of professional competence	3	2.292	.975	.0516	-13.72	355	.000
TC 13: I hunt and join competent peers for group work aiming to be free from tasks	3	2.370	.980	.0519	-12.14	355	.000
TC 14: I figure out topics that are likely to be asked in exams	3	2.536	1.03	.0550	-8.44	355	.000
TC 15: Reading hand outs suffice to me to get pass mark	3	2.292	.924	.0490	-14.45	355	.000
TC 16: I look for tips and exam pointers	3	2.466	1.06	.0565	-9.45	355	.000
TC 17: Success in this program depends on my superficial task acquaintance	3	2.351	.985	.0522	-12.43	355	.000
TC 18: I feel proud in joining the teaching profession	3	2.303	.948	.0502	-13.88	355	.000
Task Compliance	54	43.52	8.32	.441	-23.76	355	.000

Table 2illustrated that the difference in mean scores for all the elements of covert tasks as measured by TCRS was found statistically significant (M = 1.966 to 2.553, SD = .575 to 1.11 andt (355) = -33.90to -7.75, p = 0.05, two-tailed). Furthermore, besides reaching statistical significance in mean scores differences, it also shows that the expected mean scores (3) exceeded the observed mean scores (1.966 to 2.553) for all the elements of covert tasks. Table 2 has also demonstrated the difference in mean scores for task compliance as a whole (M = 43.5225, SD = 8.32455 and t (355) = -23.76, p = 0.05, two-tailed) was found statistically significant. Furthermore, besides reaching statistical significance in mean scores differences, Table 2 also illustrated that the expected mean scores for task compliance as a whole (54) exceeded the observed mean scores (43.5225). This implies that various elements of covert tasks were manifested in the PGDT program (see Table 2) and all these elements of hidden curricular messages attested superficial task compliance of student-teachers in the training.

Differences in experiencing covert tasks

One-way between-groupsAnalysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate the differences among the mean scores on the experiences of student-teachers for groups of universities, as measured by the Task Compliance Rating Scale (TCRS). Participants were divided into three groups according to university's generations (Group 1: 1st generation; Group 2: 2nd generation; Group 3: 3rd generation).

Table 3

Summary Table for One-way between-groups analysis of variance (N=356)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.558	2	20.279	.291	.747
Within Groups	24560.262	353	69.576		
Total	24600.820	355			

Summary table for one-way between-groups analysis of variance for covert tasks presented in Table 3 illustrated that the difference in mean scores in the three universities for TCRS (*F* (2; 353) = .291, *p* = .747) was not found statistically significant at the *p* < .05 level. This implies that the perception of student-teachers on hidden curricular messages is not significantly different across university generations.

Similarly, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was also conducted to explore the differences among the mean scores on the lived experiences of student-teachers for groups of departments, as measured by the Task Compliance Rating Scale (TCRS). From all the 14 departments only 3 (same departments in the three universities) were considered for the analysis. Therefore, participants were divided into three groups according to their departments (Group 1: Biology, Group 2: Chemistry, and Group 3: Sport Science).

Table 4

Summary Table for One-way between-groups analysis of variance (N=94)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	36.023	2	18.012	.217	.805
Within Groups	7626.924	92	82.901		
Total	7662.947	94			

Summary table for one-way between-groups analysis of variance for covert tasks presented in Table 4 revealed that the difference in mean scores in the three departments for TCRS (F (2; 92) = .217, p = .805) was not found statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.This implies that the perception of student-teachers on hidden curricular messages is not significantly different across departments.

Besides, an independent sample t-test was conducted to explore the differences among the mean scores on the lived experiences of student-teachers between male and female student-teachers (N=356) as measured by the Task Compliance Rating Scale (TCRS).

Table 5

t-Test Results for Differences on Task Compliance Rating Scale between Males and Females

Gender group	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Male	216	43.83	.5724	.888	354	.375
Female	140	43.03	.6923			

The means, standard deviations, and independent sample t-test values for covert tasks presented in Table 5 illustrated that, the difference in mean scores for TCRS (for males M = 43.8380, SD = 8.41354and females M = 43.0357, SD = 8.19142; t (354) = .888, p = .375, two-tailed) was not found statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.This implies that the perception of student-teachers on hidden curricular messages is not significantly different across gender.

DISCUSSION

The qualitative phase of the study discovered important variables underlying hidden curricular messages and informed the quantitative phase of investigation. Besides, the qualitative and quantitative results are found to be convergent in provide numerous elements of hidden curricular messages.

The qualitative findings showed several elements of hidden curricular messages pointing to covert tasks,most of which indicating lack of authentic task engagement (Portalli, 1993; Rennert-Ariev, 2008; Yuksel, 2006).The quantitative finding also confirmed that all those elements of hidden curricular messages attested that superficial task compliance isas to how covert tasks manifest in the program.

The implication of these findings seems quite clear that the expectations stated by the curriculum framework for PGDT program and the way in which student-teachers react to are found contrasting. This result is congruent with a research conducted by Rennert-Ariev (2008). As noted by him in his study on pre-service teacher education program at Markham University to understand the "hidden" curricular messages within the program, the program's central hidden curricular message was that of superficial demonstrations of compliance with external mandates rather than authentic intellectual engagement. Locally, Wudu (2016) in his study on hidden curriculum in higher education classrooms, the case of Jimma University, has also reported that tactical study orientation, indifference, and dependence on technology are some of the elements students learn in the university classroom.

Dozens of explanations might be given as the possible factors that may resulted in the unintended task compliances of student-teachers. The researcher believes the salient factors would possibly be entrenched with the training modality employed in preparing teachers. The training requites B.Sc or BA in areas directly related to secondary school subjects plus an additional ten months professional teacher training to obtain a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching. The duration for PGDT training seems too short that give little room for discursive practices and consideration for the impacts of time and place factors. In this regard Buchberger and Byrne (1995) argue that, duration of training is one of the factors that affect the quality of teacher preparation. Another significant factor might be students' readiness, predisposition, and motivation to become secondary school teachers (MoE, 2009). Still another significant factor could be that teacher educators were sidestepped in the reform process when the PGDT was introduced as a new modality of teacher education in the country. As a result, teacher educators might have become gradually less interested in the program. Besides, in the practice component of the teacher education program, mentors in schools may not properly follow up student teachers.

The quantitative findings also revealed that, the differences in mean scores regarding the manifestations of covert tasksacross student teachers background characteristics were not found significant statistically. This implies that the various elements of covert tasks that were manifested in the PGDT program were experienced by student-teachers similarly regardless of their differences in gender, department, and university generation. These results are contrasted with the contentions of Martin (1976) that hidden curriculum is relative to a given context and participants. Besides, the results of the present study do not support Anyon's (1980) findings on hidden curriculum. Anyon documented evidence to support the relativity of hidden curriculum with class structure. Locally, Alemayehu (2008) has reported that the hidden curriculum in Ethiopian universities differentially treats students across gender, ethnicity, and religion and parental monthly income. The alternative explanation for the inconsistency of

results might be due to the fact that the previous studies were carried out with stratifying factors other than the present investigation (e.g., Anyon's investigation focused on the analysis of hidden curriculum across contrasting social class communities, and Alemayehu's analysis focused on the impact of hidden curriculum acrosssex, ethnicity, religion, and parental income).

CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian government envisions seeing secondary school teachers who are responsible, competent, and committed to their profession. This vision is reflected in national policies, educational proclamations and other subsequent documents. For instance, the development of responsible, competent, and professionally committed citizens is one of the pillars of the Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) which is currently under operation to guide the overall education system. More specifically, the policy states about the mission of that of higher education, as to enable students become problem-solving professional leaders in their fields of study and in overall societal needs. With a similar vein, the Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (FDRE, 650/2009), stated that "curricular design, delivery, and assessment of learning outcomes in any institution shall aim at enabling the learner to acquire pertinent scientific knowledge, independent thinking skills, communication skills and professional values that together prepare him [her] to become a competent professional." The curriculum framework for secondary school teacher education program in Ethiopia (MOE, 2009) has also clearly described the need for the preparation of secondary school teachers who are adaptive experts (reflective practitioners).

However the reform in this pre-service teacher education program seems, in Corrales (1999) words, an "access reform" that calls for only increasing the availability of educational programs and opportunities commonly understood as expanding the coverage of the education system. As a result, one of the consequences of such superficiality of student-teachers could be that they may not be equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to become effective secondary school teachers. More specifically, they may not develop professional knowledge and skills, the understanding of the nature of teacher professionalism, the responsibilities of teachers, and the professional values and ethical practice expected of them. Another noticeable consequence of the current situation could be student-teachers taking teaching primarily as an occupation only to stay with it until they get other jobs in their applied degree area.

In sum, it is conceivable to conclude that explored manifestations of hidden curricular messages in the PGDT program are against the standards set by the government for a qualified teacher (MoE, 2009, p.7) as well as the basic principles of contemporary paradigms for teacher education; and hence the hidden curricular messages may have an adverse effect on student-teachers forthcoming teaching role, ultimately it may result in a negative impact on students learning in secondary schools. Therefore, the researcher would recommend those teacher education institutions working with the framework of PGDT to ensure the vigor of the program.

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Assessing the Instructional Processes in Higher Education Institutions: Amhara Region's Universities and Colleges in Focus

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Abstract: This study assessed the instructional processes of Universities and Colleges of the Amhara Region, Ethiopia. The research design was descriptive survey and data were obtained from 204 participants (instructors, department heads and deans from Universities and Colleges) using questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. Both University and College instructors' practices of the instructional processes and their conceptions on effective teaching and the factors affecting effective teaching were examined. Results indicated that the three interactive instructional processes (instructional planning, methods of teaching and assessment) were not adequately implemented in an integrated manner. More specifically, significant differences were observed between Universities and Colleges in the application of instructional planning and continuous assessment (assessment for learning that served as a feedback for students' learning). In this regard, Colleges were in a good position than Universities. However, active learning strategies that could enhance higher order thinking and problem-solving skills of students were not applied passably in both the Universities and the Colleges. There was also no statistically significant difference among the three Universities and the three Colleges themselves in applying various active learning methods. Attitudinal problems to prepare instructional plans (mainly for Universities), lack of knowledge on various active learning strategies and work load were influencing factors for the effective implementation of the instructional processes in Universities and Colleges. As a result, re-conceptualizing the practices of instructional processes in Universities and Colleges to enhance effective teaching is a timely concern for all education actors at various levels.

Keywords: Instructional processes, instructional planning, active learning, continuous assessment, higher education institutions

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the context of Higher Education, effective teaching is about reaching achievement goals; it is about students' learning in a particular context, grade levels or subjects through quality instructions (Berliner, 2005). Research into effective teaching (Reece & Walker, 2003) illustrates that quality instruction involves instructional planning and managing learning

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effectively, using a variety of active learning strategies and promoting and actively engaging in professional and personal development continually and evaluating students' learning experiences. In other words, instructional process comprises three basic interactive components (planning, teaching and assessment) that are aligned one another (Brookhart, 2004; Clarke, 2005; Reeves, 2006).

According to Reeves (2006) alignment of the instruction is essential and a success of any learning environment is determined by the degree to which there is adequate alignment among eight critical factors: 1) goals, 2) content, 3) instructional design, 4) learner tasks, 5) instructor roles, 6) student roles, 7) technological affordances, and 8) assessment. Failure to align these dimensions will affect the successful instructional planning and implementation.

In the instructional process, the first task of a teacher or an instructor is planning learning (Reece & Walker, 2003). Planning involves the formulation of instructional objectives, processes and learning outcomes which lead to decisions about the types of learning activities that will enable students to successfully achieve the required outcomes (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gronlund, 2006). The second task is teaching. In a contemporary Higher Education context, effective teaching is enabling learners to become an independent learner, develop meta-cognitive skills, solve problems, act on feedbacks, assess one's strengths and weaknesses, acquire generic study skills, make effective use of technology , work effectively with others, and to show efficient time-management (Allan & Clarke,2007). Consequently, the student-centered approach, focusing on the process of learning rather than the product (Zhang, 2003), is a central idea for effective teaching. As a final task of teachers or instructors, assessment is an integral part of the concept of objective setting and methods of teaching (Clarke, 2005; Reeves, 2006; Sperber, 2005). Assessment (mainly continuous assessment) is a strategy used by teachers to support the attainment of goals and skills by learners over a period of time (Clarke, 2005; Reeves, 2006). It provides regular information about teaching-learning, the achievement of learning objectives and competencies (Reece & Walker, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Sperber, 2005; USAID, 2010). Continuous assessment, mainly formative assessment, is therefore seen as an integral aspect of the teaching and learning cycle (Bain, 2004; Wiliam & Thompson, 2008). As Bain (2004:151) stated, best teachers in higher education use assessment "to help students learn, not just rate and rank their efforts".

Currently, in Higher Education, there is a shift from teacher centered to learner centered approach, from teaching to learning and from summative assessment to formative assessment (Darling Hammond, 2012). Despite the shift in conceptions of teaching and learning, a parallel shift in relation to formative assessment and feedback has not been seen rapidly (Yorke, 2003). Dryden and Vos (2005) pointed out that many educators throughout the world are still teaching in ways similar to the blackboard-and-chalk, desk-in-rows classroom model and formative assessment and feedback have still been largely controlled by and seen as the responsibility of teachers.

Although, innovative approaches to teaching are not common, there are good examples in the higher education literature of undergraduate courses where an appropriate level of alignment among objectives, methods of teaching and assessment have been reached (Bain, 2004; Reeves, 2006). But the weakest component of most designs is assessment, perhaps because both instructors and students are so accustomed to thinking of assessments in traditional ways (Reeves, 2006). An effective instructor starts with what he/she wants his/her students to learn (the objectives), goes through 'entry behavior' (what the student already knows about the topic), assess teaching methods (this involves experiences and reflections), and evaluate how much has been learned and finally provides the feedback (Gronlund, 2006; Reece & Walker, 2003).

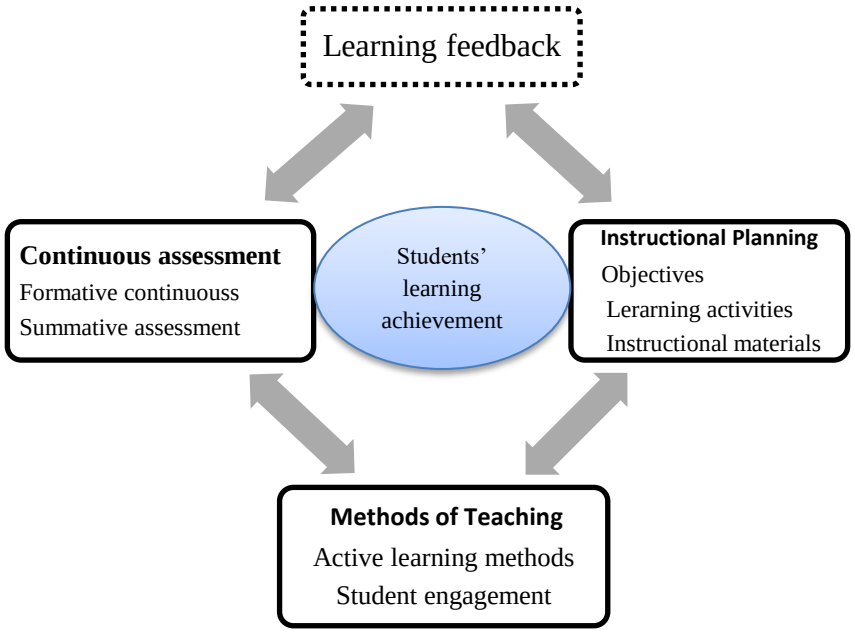

Fig.1. Instructional processes – a conceptual frame

Based on this conceptual frame work, an effective instructor should first plan the lesson, deliver it and assess whether students achieve the expected objective. Based on the assessment results feedback should be provided for further improvements. It is these alignments that help students achieve in a better condition. Based on view of constructivist teaching, instructional planning, teaching methods, and assessments have direct relationships (Reece & Walker, 2003). Nevertheless, in contexts where traditional methods of teaching are norms, assessments are often highly traditional. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, teachers are authoritarians "who expect students to listen and memorize correct answers or procedures rather than construct knowledge themselves" (Akyeampong et al., 2006, p. 34). Similarly, most Ethiopian classrooms still are teacher centered, where informative instruction is the norm (Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; Tesfaye, 2014). For this reason, the focus of this study was to conduct a comparative analysis of the instructional processes in Universities and Colleges found in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia.

Statement of the problem

In spite of the rapid expansion of education in general, and higher education in particular, the Ethiopian education system has been experiencing complex hurdles with long-term social, economic, and political implications (Tesfaye, 2014). Tesfaye added, the lack of genuine commitment to address the glaring problems of the quality of teacher education seems to manifest faster than many observers might have predicted. Specifically, the teacher education in Ethiopia has been noted a number of problems such as the professional competence of teachers is deficient; their content knowledge is unsatisfactory; the teaching skills and techniques are very low; the nature of courses and methods of teaching are theoretical and teacher centered, teacher professionalism is deteriorating, and teachers in general do not meet the standards and expectations of their professions (MoE, 2017),.

As a result, still the Ethiopian instructional classrooms remain teacher centered (Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; Tesfaye, 2014). Particularly instructional practices in the Universities and Colleges are largely teacher-dominated and content-oriented (Daniel, 2004; Joshi & Verspoor, 2013). Even, the current system of evaluating teaching effectiveness encourages such practices (Zenawi, 2009). Moreover, there is no coherence and collaboration in the teacher education reforms and practices, and this is the reason for the apparent mismatch between the rhetoric in the country's teacher education policy and the reality of teacher education in training Universities and Colleges (Hussien, 2007). Regarding the challenges of teacher education, Hussien (2007) stated that Ethiopian teacher education is characterized as a terrain of persistent contradictions, challenges, and chaos. Many teachers are favoring teacher centered approaches (Dawit, 2008; Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; MoE, 2016; Tesfaye; 2014). Most of the institutions still teach their classes in the traditional lecture mode. Seventy one percent of university students indicated their role during the instructional process as passive listeners to teachers' presentations (Zenawi et al., 2011). Accordingly, students in higher education institutions memorize specific facts and skills that help them promote from one level to another level of education (Reda, 2001).

High-quality teacher preparation requires skill of instructional planning, a complex body of knowledge, skills, dispositions, nurturing pedagogy, and multiple forms of assessment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Goe, 2007; Huisheng, 2007; Osguthorpe, 2008). Good teaching, according to Osguthorpe (2008), also necessitates a teacher to be knowledgeable in content, skilled in pedagogy, and have virtuous character. Generally, the teaching profession requires competent professionals with high concern and commitment for the social, psychological and intellectual prosperity of future citizens (Huisheng, 2007). However, investigating the viability of such instructors is the timely demand of teacher education institutions.

Due to this, the current reality of the education system, particularly the teacher education system, has become a source of considerable concern among educators, politicians, and the public at large (Tesfaye, 2014). In order to improve the teacher education program, several reforms were introduced and one of the reforms was Teacher Education System Overhaul

(henceforth TESO) (MoE, 2003). TESO was expected to give a great premium to the creation of quality teachers who would transform the social, economic and political lives of the society (MoE, 2003). The overhaul assumes that teacher educators, with the capacity and commitment, are required to train transformative intellectuals and devote their time and energy to create informed citizens and have the initiative as well as the institutional support to play the transformative roles (Hussien, 2007).

Later on, despite its contributions, TESO was seriously criticized for marginalizing 'content knowledge' in its secondary teacher education program component (Dawit, 2008). The weaknesses of TESO were also expressed in terms of teachers' 'poor' attributes-inadequate subject-matter knowledge, failure to apply student-centered or active learning methods, lack of interest to follow up and support students, low career commitment, and weak partnership of teachers with school leadership, parents, and the community at large (MoE, 2008; Tesfaye, 2014). Under such circumstances, graduates within the TESO program faced considerable difficulties in planning instruction, managing classrooms, and diagnosing students' learning needs (Tesfaye, 2014).

Recently, realizing the weaknesses of TESO and interest for bringing quality education, a new reform for the teacher education programs called the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) has been put in place (MoE, 2009). Priorities in this process include: improving the effectiveness of university programs for teachers and providing induction support to Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) (Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; MoE, 2009). The main aim of PGDT was to fill the content and pedagogical gaps that were present in earlier secondary education teaching programs as observed in teaching and classroom practices in secondary schools (MoE, 2009; Joshi & Verspoor, 2013). In order to implement the program properly, both the Ministry of Education and the Amhara Region Education Bureau (AREB) focused on Universities and Colleges to exercise instructional planning, active learning methods and continuous assessment techniques (MoE, 2009).

Thus, attempts have been made to improve teachers' or instructors' instructional processes through frequent in-service trainings, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Higher Diploma Program (HDP). Formative continuous assessment has also been given emphasis to improve the teaching-learning process and students' achievement (MoE, 2009). However, in practice, most instructors are not in a position to prepare instructional planning and implement different active learning strategies (Tadesse, 2012). Continuous assessment exercises in many programs are also poor at least in terms of giving feedback and motivating further learning (Getachew, 2013; Singh, 2006; Zenawi, 2009; Zenawi et al., 2011). Similarly, in few Universities and Colleges, the researcher, as HDP leader, and in-service training provider on pedagogy realized that there are gaps on instructors in delivering the instructional processes (preparing instructional planning, using a variety of active learning strategies and applying different continuous assessment strategies). This triggered the researcher to examine the instructional processes of university and college instructors. Therefore, the main purpose

of this study was to investigate instructors' practices of the instructional processes of Universities and Colleges in a comparative analysis.

Accordingly, the present study had the following research questions.
1. To what extent do teacher educators of the Universities and Colleges apply the instructional processes (instructional planning, active learning methods and continuous assessment techniques)?

2. Is there a significant difference between and among Universities and Colleges in the application of the instructional processes?
3. How do University and College instructors and principals conceptualize effective teaching?
4. what are the factors affecting the implementation of the instructional processes of Universities and Colleges?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For this study, descriptive survey research design was employed. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer the research questions. the data were obtained from three Universities (Wollo, Woldia and Debre Tabor) and three Colleges (Dessie, Woldia and Begimeder) of the Amhara Region. Within the three Universities, only Social Science and Humanities faculty, Natural and Computational Science faculty and Educational and Behavioural Science faculty were considered. Besides, two departments in each faculty of the Universities and five departments of each College were participated. Generally, using quantitative and qualitative collection instruments, this study involved instructors, deans, directors and department heads working in the stated colleges and faculties.

Participants

This study involved 231 participants (7 instructors from each departments of the Universities and 1 dean/directors of faculties or colleges). Participant instructors were selected randomly from the respective departments and the deans or directors of faculties or colleges were taken directly. However, the actual number of participants who filled out the survey and returned was 204 and the analysis conducted with that number.

Instruments

This study used data gathering instruments such as questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and document reviews.

The questionnaire had both close ended and open-ended questions. Pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient of Cronbach alpha as .82. The questionnaire items were also checked for validity by experts from measurement and evaluation. The semi-structured interview and the focus group questions were developed

based on the questionnaire items. Documents such as prepared course plans, daily lesson plans, course guide books, course outlines and different continuous assessment results were also analyzed.

Procedures

The data collection was first begun with administering the questionnaire on face to face basis and 204 participants filled it out correctly and returned. Then, three hours of interview was conducted with the Deans or Directors. Finally, the focus Group Discussion followed after collecting the required documents.

The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. For the quantitative data, percentage, mean, standard deviation, independent samples *t*-test, and One-way ANOVA were applied. The qualitative data, data from the interview, focus group discussion and document review, were analyzed qualitatively, using thematic and descriptive analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the results were thematically categorized in the form of instructional planning, active learning, continuous assessment and conceptions on effective teaching and factors affecting the effective teaching processes. Then, each category is stated here after.

Instructional Planning

Instructional planning is one of the prior tasks to be considered by higher education institutions. Thus, comparisons were made between Universities and Colleges regarding the use of instructional planning.

Table 1

t-test result for Differences in Instructional Planning Between College and University Instructors

Institution	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Colleges	103	42.8155	4.04811	8.709*	202	.000
Universities	101	37.3069	4.94923			

As the table above shows, there is a significant difference on the utilization of instructional planning between Universities and Colleges. ($t=8.709^*$, $p<0.05$ at $df = 202$). That is, the mean value of Colleges (42.82) is greater than that of Universities (37.31) showing that Colleges were found to be more effective in utilizing the instructional planning than the Universities.

Table 2

One Way-ANOVA for differences regarding application of instructional planning among the six institutions

Source	*Sum of Squares*	*Df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	1710.522	5	342.104	17.114*	.000
Within Groups	3957.890	198	19.989		
Total	5668.412	203			

As table 2, indicates**,** in order to see significance difference among the three Universities and three Colleges in the use of instructional planning, one-way ANOVA was employed and statistically significant difference was obtained ($F_{5,198}$) = 17.114, *p< 0.05). In order to see major differences in the use of instructional planning among the three Universities and three Colleges, Scheffe's multiple comparison test was utilized.

Table3

Scheffe's Multiple Mean Score Comparisons on The Utilization of Instructional Planning by Six Institutions

Workplace (I)	(J) workplace	Mean	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Dessie CTE (41.92)	Begimeder CTE	44.39	-2.47	.402
	Woldia CTE	42.37	-.45	.999
	Wollo University	36.75	5.17*	.000
	Woldia University	38.43	3.49	.089
	Debre Tabor University	37.00	4.92*	.001

For the mean comparisons, the Scheffe multiple comparison test showed that Begiemeder College used instructional planning better than others (44.39) followed by Woldia College (42.37) and Dessie College (41.92). Whereas, Wollo University with mean values (36.75), Debere Tabor University (37) and Woldia University (38.43) applied instructional planning less than the Colleges.

Such difference in instructional planning between the Universities and the Colleges may be because the majority of the instructors of Colleges were from the education field having better pedagogical concepts. Besides, Colleges were under the close inspection of the Regional Education Bureau. Whereas, most instructors of the Universities were from the applied Science field having little pedagogical background knowledge and skills. Moreover, instructors have relatively higher academic freedom than College which have a closer inspection has been made by higher officials.

Data from interviews of University instructors, even, supports the insignificance contribution of using the instructional plans to effective teaching. For instance, one of the interviewees from Woldia University strongly noted that they [instructors] have many years of teaching experience. They know what they will do in the class. So, putting what they already know in a piece of paper is just duplication and wastage of time, energy and resources. Besides, most instructors believed that planning on a regular basis is boring and time consuming. Most of them were not eager to devote much time in designing a variety of challenging activities for their students; instead they made students promote to the next grades which the students couldn't manage.

Conversely, research findings (e.g., Borich, 1988; Danielson, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Reece & Walker, 2003; Marton & Saljo, 1997) noted that preparing instructional plans could show the direction where the instructor is going, what he/she is doing and why he/she is doing.

Active Learning

In this section, comparisons between Universities and Colleges, as well as faculties and departments were made on the application of active learning methods.

Table 4

t-test result for Differences in Using Active Learning Methods Between College and University Instructors

Institute	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Colleges	103	45.3786	4.95295	-.037	202	.971
Universities	101	45.4059	5.57168			

Comparisons on the use of active learning methods were made between Universities and Colleges and there was no statistically significant difference ($t = -.037$, $p > 0.05$ at $df = 202$).

Table 5

One Way-ANOVA for Differences in Using Active Learning Methods among Faculties and Departments

Source	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	233.299	9	25.922	.936	.495
Within Groups	5373.328	194	27.698		
Total	5606.627	203			

Based on the above Table, the result of one way-ANOVA ($F_{9, 194}$) =. .936, P>.05) indicated no statistically significant difference among the three Universities and three Colleges on employing active learning.

Even though significant difference was not observed among Universities and Colleges in applying active learning strategies, differences were by instructors observed in exercising various active learning methods in their classroom practices.

Table 6

Percentage of Instructors Using the Different Active learning strategies (N=204)

Methods of teaching	%	Methods of teaching	%	Methods of teaching	%
Lecture method	86	Case study method	28	Diamond ranking method	19.2
Discussion method	83	Classification	26.5	Think -pair- share method	17
Question & answer	81	Pyramiding method	26	Spider diagram method	17
Gapped lecture	64	Ice breaking method	25.8	Future wheel method	13.5
Demonstration	55	Reciprocal questioning	25	Inquiry method	11
Brain storming	53	Experiment method	24.9	Problem solving method	8
Independent work	51	Picture analysis	24	Hot seating method	5
Matching exercise	48	Role playing method	24	Golden fish bowl method	3
Project method	41	Field visit method	22	Mastery learning method	2.8
Debate	38	Model construction	21	Discovery method	3.6
				Balloon Gaming method	2

As Table 5 indicated most instructors of Universities and Colleges are applying the traditional methods of teaching that includes lecturing, discussion, question and answer, demonstration (86 %; 83%; 81 %; and 55 % respectively). This implies that instructors were not in a position to convey active learning methods properly. Similarly, the research findings (e. g., Daniel, 2004; Dawit, 2008; Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; Reda, 2001) disclosed that although the constructivist approach has been well documented in the literature, its effective implementation in Ethiopian Higher Educations, became insignificant. Joshi and Verspoor (2013) further stated that still the Ethiopian classrooms remain primarily teacher-centered and the instructional practices in the Universities and colleges are widely teacher-dominated and content-oriented and this might be because the current system of evaluating teaching effectiveness encourages such practice (Zenawi, 2009).

Even though, the Education Policy of Ethiopia claimed that the pedagogical implications of constructivism- active learning methods or student-centered teaching governs instructional practices in institutions (TGE, 1994), those active learning methods (problem solving, 8 %,

inquiry method, 11 %, mastery learning 2.8 %, and discovery learning 3.6 %) were not applied by most instructors of the Universities and Colleges. Nevertheless, analysis of existing research literature (Glasersfeld, 1989, cited in Kim, 2005; Narli, 2011; Prince, 2004) suggest that knowledge is not attained but constructed so students must do more than just listen and engage in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Continuous Assessment

In this section, implementation of continuous assessment between the Universities and the Colleges was compared

Table 7

t-test result for Differences in Application of Continuous Assessment Between College and University Instructors

Institute	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Colleges	103	41.93	5.13	2.77*	202	.006
University	101	40.00	4.81			

As the table above indicates, the result of one-sample t-test shows a statistically significant difference between Colleges and Universities in the application of different continuous assessment techniques ($t=2.778^*$, $p<0.05$ at $df = 202$). That is, the mean score of Colleges (41.93) is greater than that of the Universities (40), revealing that Colleges were found to be better than the Universities in employing continuous assessment techniques.

Table 8

One Way-ANOVA for differences in Applying Continuous Assessment among the six institutions

Source	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	270.99	5	54.19	2.17	.058
Within Groups	4927.15	198	24.88		
Total	5198.15	203			

, The results of one-way ANOVA in Table8 shown that there was no significant difference among the three Colleges and the three Universities in the application of various continuous assessment techniques ($F_{5, 198}$) =2.178, P>.05). Even though the Colleges were found to be better than the Universities, as the interview and FGD data revealed, in the application of continuous assessment, the focus of both the Universities and Colleges on assessment for learning (formative assessment) was very low. They were highly concentrated on assessment of learning (summative assessment). A variety of continuous assessment strategies such as independent work, practical tasks, reflective activities, portfolios, demonstration performances, authentic assessment, peer and self-assessment were not applied significantly. The data obtained through interviews and focus group discussion also revealed the same results. The interview results of some instructors from Debre Tabor and Wollo Universities confirmed this. For example, one of the interviewees noted:

> Most of the time, they [the instructors] used few techniques of continuous assessment such as repeated paper and pencil tests, group assignments and final examinations. These assessment techniques were applied basically for grading purpose. Due to large class size, workload, shortage of time, and lack of commitment formative continuous assessment was not significantly applied.

Unlike the above findings, assessment is obtained as a crucial element of the instructional process. Assessment has many purposes in higher education ranging from narrow, formative ones to broad, summative ones (Reeves, 2006). Carefully designed assessment is a powerful tool for educators to improve the teaching-learning process (Bain, 2004; James et al., 2002; Reeves, 2006). More specifically, assessment for learning is seen as an integral aspect of the teaching and learning cycle that helps to improve students' achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Bain, 2004; Brookhart, 2004; Elwood & Klenowski, 2002; Gronlund, 2006; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) and the quality of teaching (Austin, 1993; Ramsdon, 1992). However, the research finding proved that different continuous assessment exercises in many programs were poor in terms of giving feedback and motivating further learning. Specifically, university instructors were not concerned with assessment for learning. Much focus was given for grading than feedback.

Similar findings revealed that even though portfolios, self and peer assessment, simulations and other innovative methods were introduced in higher education contexts (Struyven et al., 2005) both Universities and Colleges' use of different continuous assessment techniques were not satisfactory (Singh, 2006). This may be because continuous assessment needs much more effort and resources than most institutions are expending at this time (Reeves, 2006).

Ramsden (1992) indicated that inappropriate assessment procedures encourage surface approach to learning, yet varying the alternative assessments evoke deep approaches to learning. Assessment also drives learning (Napoli & Raymond, 2004). Most students come to recognize that they can get good grades by cramming for tests and then quickly forgetting what

they have memorized to allow themselves to focus on other pursuits (Reeves, 2006). Therefore, instead of focusing on final grading, assessment should be used for checking the learners' readiness, their achievement about the expected goals and the effectiveness of the teaching approaches that should be in place (Brookhart, 2004; USAID, 2010).

On the other hand, the focus group discussants from Dessie and Begiemeder CTE, regarding the application of continuous assessment, noted:

> Even though we used different continuous assessment techniques, it was not dictated by their instructional plans (daily lesson plan and course plan). We lacked remembering and joining what is planned and what is expected to measure and achieve.

In other words, even though instructors were using different continuous assessment techniques, they were not guided by their lesson objectives. Most of the objectives they stated in their plans were not congruent with the assessment techniques they applied. This entails that most instructors conducted assessment haphazardly. Similarly, according to Reeves (2006), evaluations of traditional and blended approaches to post-secondary teaching indicate that the most commonly misaligned factor among objectives, contents and instructional design is assessment. That is, instructors may have supercilious goals, share high-quality content, and even utilize advanced instructional designs, but most of their assessment strategies tend to focus on what is easy to measure rather than what is important (Reeves, 2006).

Generally, an effective instructor always strives for his/ her students achieve the stated objectives using a variety of active learning methods, and assessments should check whether the designed objectives were achieved (Brookhart, 1999; Reeves, 2006). If scholars want their university and college graduates to possess the 21st century skills, assessment must focus on those higher order types of outcomes such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, concern for ethical issues as well as breadth and depth of specific knowledge and the methodologies and standards of evidence used to create that knowledge (Bain, 2004). Accordingly, university and college teachers must devote much more effort to the task of assessment because it is the lifeblood of good teaching (Blumenstyk, 2006). Rather than using just one method, robust assessment requires the critical analysis of multiple forms of evidence that learning outcomes have been attained (Reeves, 2006).

Conceptions of Effective Teaching

In section, the Universities and the Colleges' instructors' conceptions on the nature of effective teaching were analyzed and interpreted.

Table 9

t-test result for Differences in Conceptions of Effective Teaching Between College and University Instructors

Institute	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Colleges	103	32.64	5.00	-.18	202	.85
Universities	101	32.76	4.60			

The *t*-test result of Table 9 indicated that there was no significant difference on the conceptions instructors on effective teaching between the Colleges and Universities (t = -.180, p>0.05; df=202). That is, the mean scores of the Colleges (32.64) and the Universities (32.76) on the conceptions of effective teaching were nearly the same.

Table 10

One Way-ANOVA for differences in Conception of Effective Teaching among the six institutions

Source	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	4.769	5	.954	.040	.999
Within Groups	4671.991	198	23.596		
Total	4676.760	203			

As the above table shows, the results of one way-ANOVA implied that there was no statistically significant difference among the three Colleges and three Universities ($F_{5,198}$) =.040, P>0.05. However, as the Figure below indicates, individual instructor's conceptions and understandings concerning effective teaching tended to be varied.

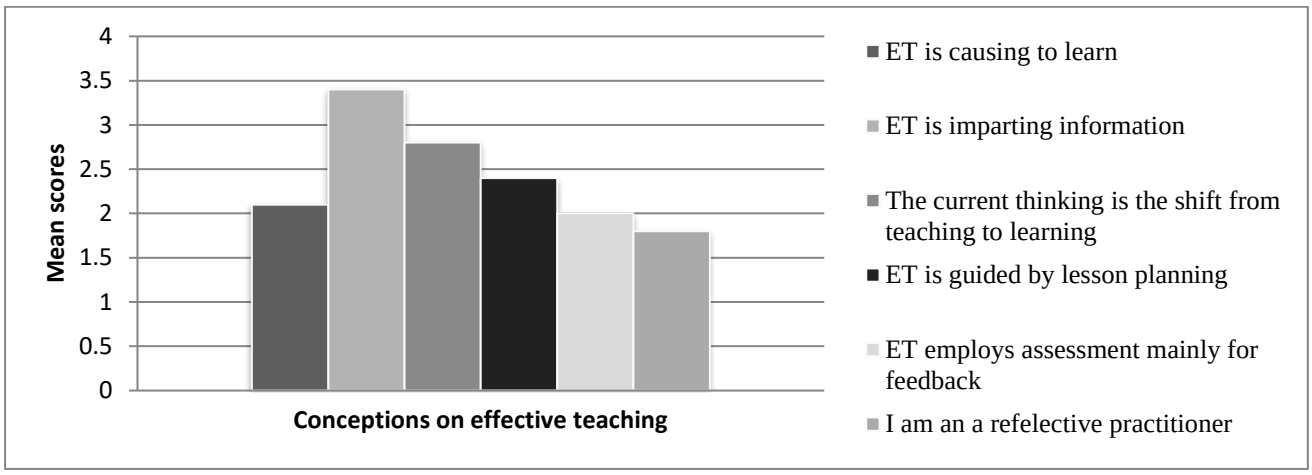

Figure- 1: A graph representing conceptions on effective teaching

As shown from Figure1 above, most of the instructors failed to conceptualize effective teaching well. Most of them considered effective teaching as imparting information. Such little conception may be one reason for exercising dominantly teacher-centered instructions.

Similarly, findings of Zenawi et al. (2011) revealed that teacher-centered conception was the predominant orientation, and the teaching and learning practices have been described to be reflections of this orientation. Even, the measure of teaching effectiveness currently in use reflects the teacher-centered paradigm (Joshi & Vespoor, 2013).

Nevertheless, the teacher-centered orientation and instruction is less likely to produce high-quality learning outcomes among students (Akerlind, 2004). Educators, researchers, and policymakers feel that the traditional view of learning, focused on knowledge and procedures of low cognitive challenge and the regurgitation of superficial understanding, does not meet the demands of the present and future (Danielson, 1996).

Our society today needs young people who are flexible, creative and proactive, who can solve problems, make decisions, think critically, communicate ideas effectively and work efficiently within teams and groups. In order to optimize life-long learning and potential success, it is now widely accepted that young people need to have opportunities to develop personal capabilities and effective thinking skills as part of their well-rounded education. By using active learning methodologies, it is hoped that pupils will not only come to a deeper understanding of the issues involved, but also meet their motivation and enthusiasm (Danielson, 1996; Silberman, 1996).

Nevertheless, many instructors tended to understand that the current thinking is the shift from teaching to learning but practice doesn't manifest this. In order to sustain lifelong learning, it is learners who should actively participate in the learning process and the role of the instructors is facilitating, guiding and creating conducive environment for learners. This shift encourages teachers to reflect not only on the key principles of learning and teaching but also on their roles in the process.

Factors Affecting the Instruction Process

Based on data obtained from open ended questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions, there are some factors affecting the overall implementation of the instructional process. These are lack of interest and commitment to conduct instructional plans or attitudinal problems (i.e., most instructors believe that preparing a lesson plan is wastage of time); lack of knowledge in implementing different active learning strategies (mostly for those from the applied field of the Universities); work over loads of instructors (both horizontally and vertically); large class size and shortage of time; and instructors' focus on assessment of learning than on assessment for learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The success of any learning environment is determined by the degree to which there is adequate integration among the critical components (instructional planning, methods of teaching and assessment) (Reeves, 2006). Effective teaching in Higher Education is about achieving the planned programs, i.e., bringing learning into effect. Thus, quality instruction involves first, preparing instructional planning and managing learning effectively; second, using a variety of active learning strategies; finally assessing students' learning experiences properly.

In the instructional process, the first task of the instructor is planning learning. Planning involves the establishment of instructional objectives, processes and learning outcomes which lead to decisions about the types of learning activities that will enable students to successfully achieve the required outcomes. In this regard, Universities have lower or almost minimal practices than teacher education colleges. Therefore, as Higher Education Institutions (Universities and Colleges) are the producers of the learned society, the teaching-learning processes should be guided by the instructional plans and the continuous assessment practices should be in line with the stated objectives of students set in the instructional plans.

Currently, in Higher Education, there is a shift from teacher centered to learner centered approach and from teaching to learning. Thus, in a contemporary Higher Education context, effective teaching is enabling learners to become an independent learner, develop meta-cognitive skills and deep learning, solve problems, acquire generic study skills, make effective use of technology and to promote one's own learning, and work effectively with others. To this end, the Universities and the Colleges were not largely applying various active learning methods that promote higher order thinking and problem-solving abilities of students. Therefore, in both Universities and Colleges those active learning strategies that reinforce higher order thinking and enable learners to learn by themselves should be employed adequately.

Besides, integral to the concept of instructional planning and methods of teaching is continuous assessment. Best instructors in Higher Education usually use formative continuous assessment to help students learn, not just rate and rank their efforts. However, the Universities and the Colleges were not properly using formative assessment (assessment *for* learning) as a

feedback for students' learning. Instead, their focus was on summative assessment (assessment *of* learning) that mainly meant for grading. Therefore, in order to make students grow and develop their potential in academics, both University and College instructors should primarily implement formative continuous assessment more than summative assessment.

Moreover, now days, the paradigm shift in teaching is from teaching to learning, from assessment of learning to assessment for learning and from knowledge reproduction to knowledge production or knowledge creation. In this aspect, there is a wider gap among instructors in perceiving what effective teaching is and to which direction the paradigm shift must show. Though conceptions on effective teaching vary among instructors of the Universities and the Colleges, they have to focus on teaching learning process or learning how to learn rather than imparting knowledge. They should also emphasize on enabling learners produce their own knowledge and creativity than pushing them to reproduce the same knowledge since the target of effective teaching is how to make students learn.

Finally, instructors' attitudinal problems to develop instructional plans (mainly for Universities), lack of knowledge to implement different active learning strategies (mainly for those from the applied field of the Universities), and work load and large class size (referring one instructor entering to many classes with different courses) were taken as major factors affecting the implementation of active learning methods.. Therefore, training on these challenges should be provided in a more sensible and continuous manner.

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The Mediating Role of Parental Attachment in the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Identity Achievement among Secondary and Preparatory School Students

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to examine the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' identity achievement. To this purpose, 375 adolescent students were drawn from four secondary and preparatory schools in Debre Markos town using proportional stratified sampling technique. Correlational design was employed to conduct the study. Adapted self-report questionnaires for parenting styles, parental attachment and identity achievement of adolescents were used to collect the data from the respondents. Hence, quantitative data were collected and path analysis via linear regression was employed to determine the path coefficients of the variables under consideration. Based on Baron and Kenney's requirements of single mediation, simple and multiple linear regressions were made to determine the beta value of the four paths. Furthermore, the existence of significant mediation via parental attachment was tested using Sobel's z-test for each path diagrams. Hence, the findings indicated that parental attachment positively and partially mediated in the relationship between identity achievement and authoritative parenting style. Authoritarian parenting style had positive and significant direct effect on identity achievement, but the indirect effect via parental attachment was not significant. Parental attachment positively and fully mediated the relationship between permissive parenting style and identity achievement. Future research is recommended to extend the work of this study by further examining the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent identity achievement.

Key words: Parenting Styles, Parental Attachment, Identity Achievement

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are very busy in searching who they are, where they are going, and where they fit into society in relationships, ideology, career choice and other life issues. In this process of searching oneself, adolescents experience the psychosocial conflict of identity synthesis versus role confusion (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Those adolescents who are in role confusion do not know what to do, when to do and how to do their activities in their daily life (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). According to Marcia (1980), the major challenge for adolescents is forming a matured identity, identity achievement. Adolescents who do not explore their environment

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are characterized by lack of awareness and knowledge about different alternatives and opportunities of interpersonal relationships, ideologies, political beliefs and occupational roles. Without exploring different domains, adolescent do not make any firm decision or commitment (Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles, 2011).

As a result, adolescents face problems such as anxiety, low self-esteem, low body image and self-confidence, a feeling of inferiority, suicidal attempt, exposure to risky behaviors, substance abuse and low academic achievement (Laghi, Baiocco, Lonigro, & Baumgartner, 2013). In contrast, studies revealed that achievers perceive more meaning in life and are more eudemonic than other types of identity status (Schwartz, et al., 2011). Besides, Kroger (1993) also confirmed that identity achieved individuals show the highest levels of ego development, moral reasoning, self-certainty, self-esteem, and internal locus of control.

Studies also suggest that family environments constitute the basic ecology where children's behavior is manifested, learned, encouraged, and suppressed (Dishion & Pattersob, 2006). Parents' roles in the family environment have primarily been to prepare children for adulthood through rules and disciplines. Research has demonstrated that parenting accounts for more variance in externalizing behaviors in adolescence than any other one factor (Crosswhite & Kerpelman, 2009).

In relation to the above ideas, parents who are encouraging and supportive create safe and secured environment to explore various opportunities and alternatives for adolescents to become independent and autonomous individuals. For instance, Newman and Newman (2012) state that a secured parental attachment fosters identity formation in different ways such as fostering confidence in the exploration of social relationships, ideologies, and establishing positive expectations. They further suggest that secured attachment enhances adolescents' interpersonal experiences outside the family, encouraging the formation of group identities apart from the family and providing a transitional context for work on individual identity. Hence, adolescents who enjoy secured attachment relationships with their parents generally have a stronger sense of exploration and commitment, higher self-esteem, greater social competence, better emotional adjustment, and fewer behavioral problems (Sigelman & Rider, 2009).Yet research has demonstrated that the quality of family relationships contributes significantly to a young person's ability to achieve a personal identity achievement (Allen & Land, 1999).

Parenting styles and parental attachment are important factors that facilitate, encourage and support the synthesis and reorganization of childhood identifications and experiences to make active exploration and appropriate decision to the journey of independence and autonomy (Newman & Newman, 2012). More specifically, Arnett (2012) states that in a collectivistic culture like Africa and especially Ethiopia, parenting styles and parental attachments are more important than individualistic culture of western society. This is because in collectivist culture, the goal of parenting styles is to guarantee conformity, interdependence, cohesive emotional ties and support one another. In contrast to this, in individualist culture, the goal of parenting styles is developing a sense of independence, self-reliant, self-realization (Friedlmeier, Chakkarath & Schwarz, 2005).

In relation to this, empirical studies were conducted by several researchers on the relationship between parenting styles and parental attachment. For instance, Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz (2003) conducted a study on the relationship between parenting styles and parental attachment with a sample of 212 adolescents. The findings indicated that authoritative parenting style positively and significantly predicted parental attachment. Moreover, the investigators confirmed that warm parental involvement plays a unique role in adolescents' views of attachment figure. Far & Fattahi (2015**)** conducted a study on the relationship between parenting styles and identity development using 360 randomly selected adolescents in India and found a significant relationship between parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissive) and information identity style (identity achievement) of students. Besides, Damon & Lerner (2006) found that authoritative parenting significantly predicted adolescents' identity achievement and role-taking skills. In other words, sensitive support, monitoring and guidance from parents for adolescents significantly contributed for making crisis (exploring alternatives) and commitment (conducting firm decisions after considering the alternatives). Furthermore, Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles (2011) stated that identity of adolescents emerges from family social context. Thus, family is a unique relationship context that influences both the contents and processes of identity formation. Studies also confirmed that strong parental attachment was found among those in the identity-achieved status (Quintana & Lapsley, 1987; Kroger & Haslet, 1988)

Previous studies confirmed relations between attachment and identity status. When individuals have a secured attachment with parents, they are independent from external validation (Park, Crocker, & Mickelson, 2004), have an internal locus of control (Kroger,1993), are able to explore their environment (Green & Campbell, 2000), have higher level of confidence and assertiveness in social situation (Collins & Read, 1990), are more educated (Sroufe, 2005), and have higher level of self-actualization (Otway & Carnell, 2013). Other studies reported relationships between parenting styles and identity achievement (Damon &Lerner, 2006; Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles, 2011). As mentioned earlier, studies also confirmed that parental styles and parental attachment are correlated (Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz, 2003; Newman & Newman, 2012). However, these and other studies did not consider the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and identity achievement.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, few studies have been conducted that showed parental attachment as a mediator variable in the relationships between parenting styles and identity achievement globally (Benson, Harris, & Rogers, 1992) and in particular no studies in Ethiopia were conducted in relation to the issue under consideration. Because of this, literature is scant in the area. Thus, through examining the relationship of parental influences on attachment and attachment on identity achievement, this study contributed indicating insights in which parents can support their adolescents' transition to positive development, ultimately helping their child achieve positive social and academic outcomes. Thus, conducting research in the issue under consideration is found to be worthwhile in order to pave the way for future research and suggest appropriate intervention strategies.

Thus, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the mediating roles of parental attachment in the relationships between parenting styles and identity achievement of adolescents. Based on this purpose, the following research questions were formulated.

1. To what extent does parental attachment mediate the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and identity achievement among adolescent students?
2. To what extent does parental attachment mediate the relationship between authoritative parenting style and identity achievement among adolescent students?
3. To what extent does parental attachment mediate the relationship between permissive parenting style and identity achievement among adolescent students?

METHODS

Participants

The participants of this study were ninth up to twelfth grade secondary and preparatory school students in Debre Markos town. There were four secondary and preparatory schools with a total number of 6080 students, 2045 students in grade 9, 1947 students in grade 10, 1023 students in grade 11 and 1065 students in grade 12. Regarding grade level, in order to obtain a representative sample size, the number of students in each school, grade level and gender categories were taken into consideration.

Procedures

In order to determine the sample, size some researchers support using rule of thumb considering the total population and directly calculate the sample size using the percentage given in the rule of the thumb (Yount, 2006). Nevertheless, other researchers are sensitive to use formula to determine the sample size based on the nature of the population. In this study, the sample size was determined through a formula developed by Yamane (1967). After determining the sample size, to make the sample more representative, respondents were selected considering school, grade level and gender categories proportionally through stratified sampling technique. Finally, simple random sampling technique was used to select 373 respondents from each stratum. Of this population, 196 students were females while the rest 177 were male students.

In the process of collecting the data, approval was obtained from Zonal Education Department and school officials. Following this, informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants before administration of the questionnaire. The participants were also informed to decline from filling out the questionnaire when they felt uncomfortable. Assistant data collectors together with the investigators briefed the participants on the nature and purpose of the study and attempted to make participants to feel at ease. They were also told how to fill out the questionnaire.

Measures

Parenting style Questionnaire: Regarding parenting styles, the data were collected using parenting authority questionnaire developed by Buri (1991). This scaled questionnaire consisted of 30 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Of these 30 items, ten items measured authoritative parenting style, ten items measured permissive parenting style, and ten items measured authoritarian parenting style. The internal consistency or reliability was determined through a pilot study and the result revealed.712 for permissive parenting style, .831 for authoritative parenting style and .808 for authoritarian parenting style. The alpha levels for each parenting style in this study were almost closer to a study conducted in the U.S.A. which indicated authoritarian parenting style alpha level of .88, authoritative alpha level of .85 and permissive style at alpha level of .73. All these alpha level results were within in the acceptable range of alpha coefficient as a measure of internal consistency because each exceeded .67 (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008).

Parental Attachment Questionnaire: Researchers used different data collection instruments to measure parental attachment developed and revised at different times by different scholars. However, the most commonly used data-gathering instrument is inventory of peer and parental attachment (IPPA) that was originally developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) in two versions, one for peer attachment and the other for parental attachment. Each version consists of 25 items to measure peer attachment and parental attachment separately. Then, this study adapted the parental attachment version which contains 25 items with five-point Likert-scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Pilot test was made on 50 adolescent students to check the internal consistency of this general parental attachment questionnaire. Based on the pilot study result, the internal consistency was found to be .829, indicating more reliable and in the accepted range of alpha coefficient (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008).

Identity Status Questionnaire: Identity achievement of adolescents was measured using scaled questionnaire taken from Objective Measure of Ego Identity Statuses (OMEIS) adapted from Bennion and Adams (1986) prepared based on the extent of making commitment and in-depth exploration. The instrument consisted of six-point Likert-scale with 16 items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). A pilot study was conducted on 50 secondary and preparatory school students selected randomly to assess the internal consistency of items for identity achievement taken from Objective Measure of Ego Identity Statuses (OMEIS). Then, the pilot study result indicated that the internal consistency of the scale was .90 for identity achievement that shows in the acceptable range of alpha level.

Methods of data analyses

The methods of data analyses for this study began from Pearson product moment correlation to examine the extent of relationships among the predictor, mediating and criterion variables (Hewitt & Cramer, 2011). In addition, the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and identity achievement was analyzed using path

analysis. In determining the four paths, Baron and Kenny's (1986) single mediator model was used in the conceptual framework (path c, path *a*, path b and path c'). A series of linear regressions were run for each parenting style, parental attachment and identity achievement in path diagram (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). The significance of the indirect effects of parenting styles on identity achievement via parental attachment were tested by Sobel's z-test.

RESULTS

The following section shows results of path analysis via simple linear and multiple regressions with a discussion of major findings in line with the research questions. Significant relationships among study variables were the basic requirement for meditational analysis. Hence, before the meditational analysis, the mean, standard deviation and intercorrelation results of parenting styles, parental attachment and identity achievement were computed and presented as shown below.

Table1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations among the Variables

Variables		*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1	*PPS*	3.04	.598	1.00	.068	.355**	.175**	.387**
2	*APS*	3.42	.623		1.00	.105*	.194**	.221**
3	*PA*	3.64	.720			1.00	.332**	.525**
4	*IDA*	3.92	.989				1.00	.282**
5	*AVPS*	3.51	.729				.	1.00

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Note - *PPS = Permissive Parenting Style, APS = Authoritarian Parenting Style, AVPS = Authoritative Parenting Style, PA = Parental Attachment, IDA = Identity Achievement*

As shown in Table 1, permissive parenting style was significantly and positively associated with identity achievement ($r = .175$, $p < .01$) and parental attachment ($r = .355$, $p < .01$). On the other hand, permissive parenting style was significantly and positively correlated with authoritative parenting style ($r = .387$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, authoritative parenting style was significantly and positively correlated with parental attachment ($r = .525$, $p < .01$), identity achievement ($r = .282$, $p < .01$) and authoritarian parenting style ($r = .221$, $p < .01$). The result indicated a significant and positive relationship between authoritarian parenting style and parental attachment ($r = .105$, $p < .05$), identity achievement ($r = .194$, $p < .01$). Finally, parental attachment was significantly and positively correlated with identity achievement ($r = .332$, $p < .01$).

In order to examine the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and identity achievement, first, the path coefficients were determined using simple and multiple linear regressions. According to Mackinnon (2008), the following three requirements are required to establish a mediational relationship.

First, conduct a simple regression analysis with parenting styles predicting identity achievement. Second, conduct a simple regression analysis with parenting styles predicting the mediating variable (parental attachment). Third, conduct a regression analysis with parental attachment controlling parenting styles predicting identity achievement. Finally, conduct a regression analysis with parenting styles controlling parental attachment predicting identity achievement. Accordingly, the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationships of parenting styles and identity achievement were investigated by running two simple and one multiple regression analyses.

Table 2

Regression Analysis on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment in the relationship between Identity Achievement and Authoritarian Parenting Style

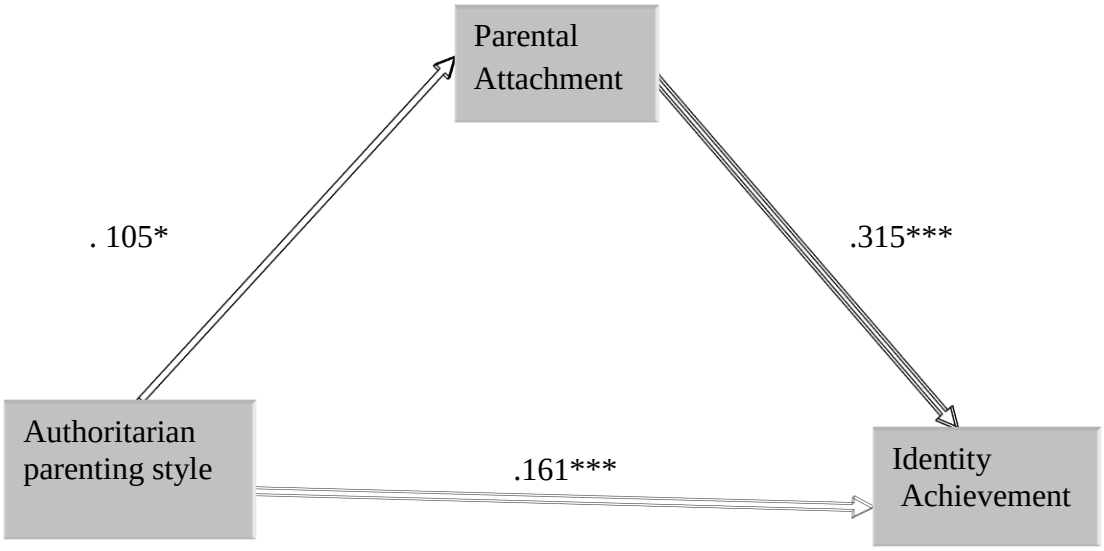
Regression	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*Sig.*
		B	*SE*	Beta		
1	APS	.308	.081	.194	3.80***	.000
2	APS	.121	.060	.105	2.03*	.043
3	PA	.433	.067	.315	6.48***	.000
	APS	.255	.077	.161	3.30***	.000

*$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$

Note *- APS = Authoritarian Parenting Style, PA = Parental Attachment*

As shown in Table 2, for the first requirement, the first regression result indicated that authoritarian parenting style (β = .194, t = 3.80, p< .001) significantly and positively predicted identity achievement. Furthermore, for the second requirement, authoritarian parenting style *(β* = .105, t = 3.03, p< .05*)* positively and significantly predicted parental attachment. For the final requirement, the effect of parental attachment on identity achievement controlling for authoritarian parenting style was found to be positive and significant with a path coefficient of (β = .315, t = 6.48, p< .001). Moreover, identity achievement was predicted positively and significantly by authoritarian parenting style (β = .161, t = 3.30, p = .001*)* controlling for parental attachment.

The indirect effect of authoritarian parenting style on identity achievement (.105 X .315) was .033. Then, Sobel's z-test result demonstrated that the indirect effect of authoritarian parenting style on identity achievement was not significant with z = 1.9251, p = 0.0542> .05, indicating that parental attachment did not mediate in the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and identity achievement. Thus, the direct path is more influential than the indirect path (see Figure 2 below).



*p < .05, ***p <.001

Fig. 2. Path Diagram on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment between Identity Achievement and Authoritarian Parenting Style

Table 3

Regression Results on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment between Identity Achievement and Authoritative Parenting Styles

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Regression	Variables	*B*	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*Sig.*
1	AVPS	.382	.068	.282	5.65***	.000
2	AVPS	.519	.044	.525	11.9***	.000
3	PA	.349	.078	.254	4.45***	.000
	AVPS	.201	.077	.148	2.59*	.011

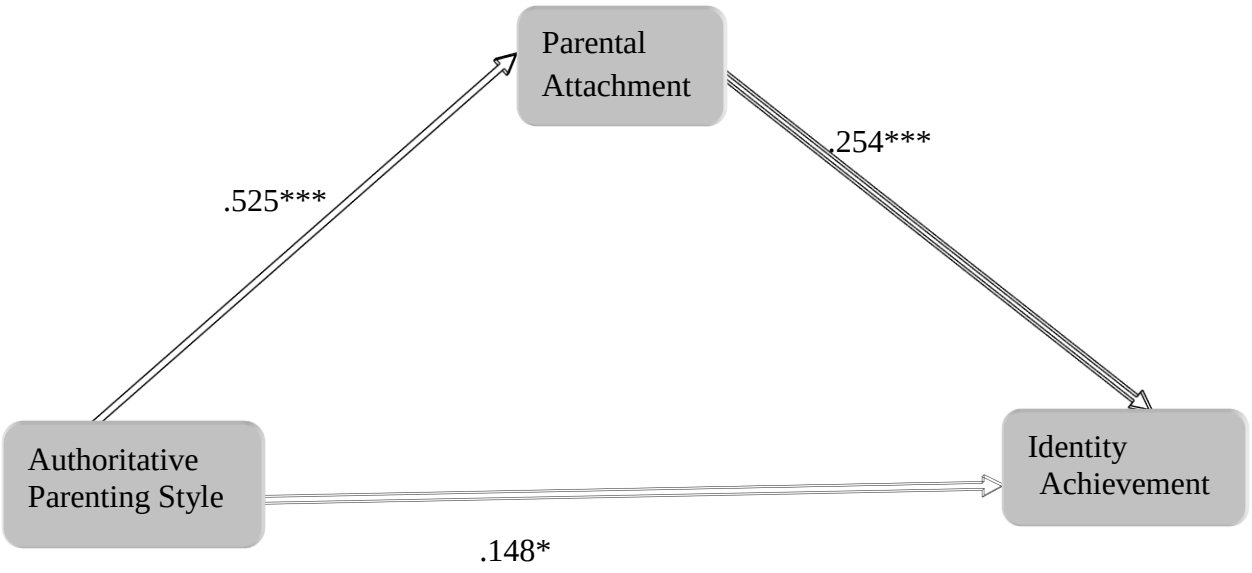
*p < .05, ***p <.001

Note - *AVPS = Authoritative Parenting Style, PA = Parental Attachment*

The regression analysis for the first requirement in Table 2 demonstrated that authoritative parenting style significantly predicted identity achievement (β =.282, t = 5.65, p< .001). In addition, for the second requirement, parental attachment was regressed on authoritative parenting style and, significant relationship was exhibited (β =.525, t = 11.9, p< .001*)*. Hence, for the last requirement, the effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement, controlling parental attachment, was found to be significant (β =.148, t = 2.59, p< .05). At the same time, the effect of parental attachment on identity achievement

controlling for authoritative parenting style was found to be significant (β=.254, t = 4.45, p< .001).

The indirect effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement through parental attachment (.525 X .254) was .133. With this extent of indirect effect, Sobel's z-test result depicted that the indirect effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement was found to be significant with z = 4.1834, p < .001, indicating that parental attachment partially and significantly mediated the relationship of authoritative parenting style and identity achievement. With regard to effect proportion, 47.2% of the effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement was mediated through parental attachment, while the rest 52.8% through identity achievement directly. This shows that both the direct and indirect effects are important for the development of adolescents' identity achievement.



**p < .05, ***p < .001*

Figure 3: Path Diagram on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment between Identity Achievement and Permissive Parenting Style.

Table 4

Regression Results on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment between Identity Achievement and Permissive Parenting Style

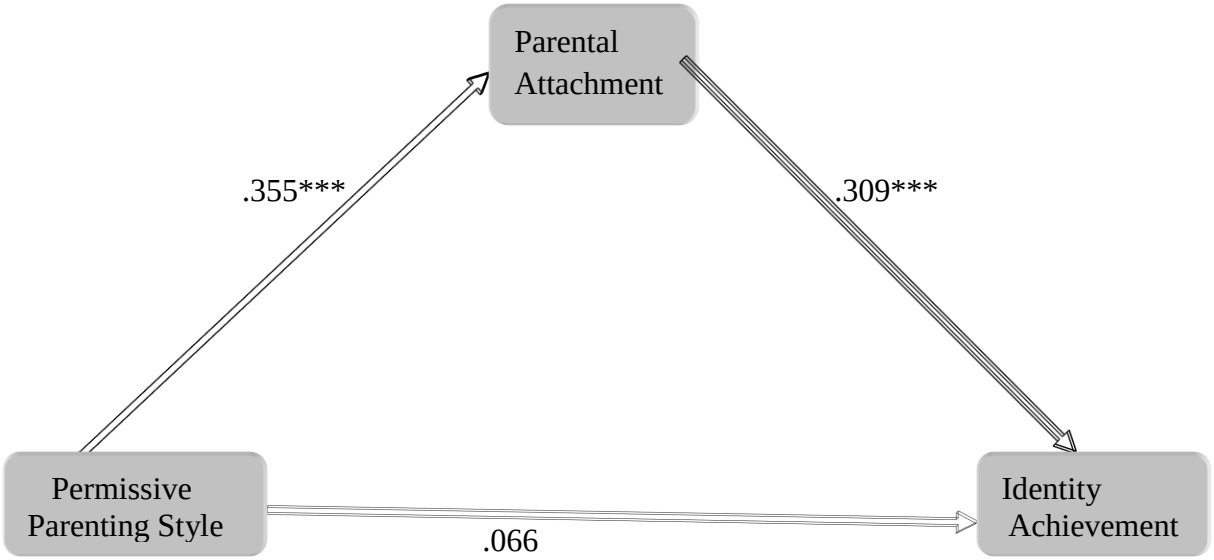
Regression	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*Sig.*
1	PPS	.290	.085	.175	3.43***	.000
2	PPS	.427	.058	.355	7.31***	.000
3	PA	.424	.072	.309	5.89***	.000
	PPS	.109	.087	.066	1.260	.208

***p* < .001

Note - *PPS = Permissive Parenting Style, PA = Parental Attachment*

As shown in Table 4, the first regression analysis indicated that identity achievement was positively and significantly associated with permissive parenting style (β=.175, *t* = 3.433, *p*= .001). Besides, for the second requirement, the second regression analysis indicated that permissive parenting style (β =.355, *t* = 7.309, *p*<.001) was positively and significantly correlated with parental attachment. As a last Baron and Kenny's requirement, parental attachment (β =.309, *t* = 5.898, *P*<.001*)* significantly and positively predicted identity achievement when the effect of permissive parenting style was controlled. The direct effect of permissive parenting style on identity achievement was not found to be significant, controlling for the effect of parental attachment with a path coefficient of (β =.066, *t* = 1.260, *p*>.001). This shows that the direct path is not influential for the development of identity achievement.

The indirect effect of permissive parenting style on identity achievement (.355 x .309) was .1096. The Sobel's *z*-test result revealed that the indirect path had a significant effect on identity achievement (*z* = 3.821, *p* < .001), indicating that the relationship between permissive parenting style and identity achievement was significantly and fully mediated through parental attachment because the effect of the direct path was found to very small and insignificant to adolescents' identity achievement. Thus, the path coefficients were displayed in Figure 4 below.



****p < .001*

Figure 4: Path on the Mediating Role of Parental Attachment between Identity Achievement and Permissive Parenting Style

DISCUSSION

Parenting styles predict Identity achievement

Parenting styles are powerful beliefs, values, efforts and endeavors in shaping, guiding, directing and controlling the identity formation of adolescents (Borkowski, Ramey &Marie Bristol-Power, 2002). Research findings revealed that parental beliefs about childrearing and parenting including appropriate practices, aspirations and expectations are important factors to determine adolescents' identity development. This study revealed that authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting style significantly and positively predicted identity achievement. This means adolescents from controlling and restrictive parenting style develop sense of exploration and commitment to their future personal goals. In the same vein, parents who are warm, supportive and believe in discussion foster their children to have positive developmental outcomes. In relation to the findings of this study, it was suspected that parents who provide the most supportive and loving relationship would produce the most securely attached adolescent. These secured adolescents would yield better achievements (Kerns, Tomich, Aspelmeier, & Contreras, 2000). Similarly, Far & Fattahi (2015) found that parenting styles are the main factors that affect establishment of successful identity through encouraging, facilitating and motivating adolescents in searching for their own individuality and independence.

Parenting Styles Predict Parental Attachment

The findings of this study revealed that the predictor variable was significantly correlated with the mediator variable. That is, authoritative parenting style significantly and positively predicted parental attachment. Consistent to the findings of this study, Karavasilis, Doyle &

Markiewicz (2003) in their study reported that authoritative parenting style significantly and positively correlated with parental attachment. Moreover, inconsistent with this research finding, Sigelman & Rider, 2009) stated that authoritative parents are responsive, setting clear and consistent limits, relatively strict but love and emotionally supportive, use reasons and discussion on basic issues with better communication that increase an emotional attachment with their adolescent children. Still, Berger's (2009) research findings indicated that parents with authoritative parenting exert maximum efforts for better future of their children and provide every opportunity to improve their status and provide them comfort.

Yet again, this research found that authoritarian parenting style was a very weak predictor of parental attachment compared with other parenting styles, but it remained positive and significant. This weak and poor relationship is the result of high demanded and low responsive behavior of parents such as strictness, firmness, rigidity, setting rules and standards, respecting values and being obedience (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010). This home environment is most common in collectivistic society like Ethiopia compared with the individualistic society in western countries.

Furthermore, the results of this study revealed that permissive parenting style significantly and positively predicted parental attachment. Supporting this finding, Santrock (2011) stated that parents with permissive parenting style deliberately rear their children in this way because they believe the combination of warm involvement, high love and affectionate, and few restraints can produce creative, confident adolescents. Yet, Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz (2003) also found that warm parental involvement plays a unique role in attachment. Other research results showed that permissive parenting style is very weak in supporting, guiding, setting the demanded standards and monitoring their daily behaviors (Sigelman & Rider, 2009).

Parental Attachment Predicts Identity Achievement

This research result indicated that parental attachment positively and significantly predicted identity achievement. This shows that as the parent-adolescent emotional bond becomes strong, identity achievement becomes encouraged and strengthened. In relation to the current study, Zimmermann & Becker-Stoll (2002) conducted a Meta-analysis and found that Marcia's identity achievement and parental attachment had weak to moderate correlations. Campbell, Adams, and Dobson (1984) conducted another study on the parent adolescent relationship in terms of emotional attachment and the results suggest that those with the highest degree of attachment to their parental figures fall into the identity achieved status which confirms adolescents who were in identity achievement had higher and strong parental attachment. Similarly, Kroger and Haslet (1988) found that strong parental attachment was found among those in the identity-achieved status. Quintana and Lapsley (1987) demonstrated a significant finding relating ego identity to parental attachment, indicating low level of attachment led to low level of identity achievement and vice versa. Concisely, parents who raised their children with strong emotional ties and attachment, their adolescent

children explore several alternatives and reach better commitments that characterize identity achievement.

The Mediating Role of Parental Attachment in the relationship between Parenting Styles and Identity Statuses

This research result depicted that the inclusion of parental attachment (the mediator variable) into the regression equation controlling for authoritarian parenting style did not significantly reduce the relationship of authoritarian parenting style and identity achievement. At the same time, the Sobel's z-test result demonstrated that the indirect effect of authoritarian parenting style on identity achievement was positive but insignificant, implying that parental attachment did not mediate in the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and identity achievement. This shows that authoritarian parenting style has positive and significant direct effect on identity achievement. In consistent with the above result, Quintana & Lapsley (1987) indicated that authoritarian parenting style had significant direct effect on identity achievement but not mediated by parental attachment. The present research result implies that parents had higher demand in obedience and conformity, respecting rules, standards, values and other measures of disciplines, which in turn positively contributed for identity achievement.

The study also showed the effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement controlling for parental attachment positively and significantly predicted identity achievement. Moreover, the Sobel's z-test revealed that the indirect effect of authoritative parenting style on identity achievement was found to be significant, indicating that parental attachment significantly and partially mediated the relationship between authoritative parenting style and identity achievement. Regarding the effect proportion, 52.8% of effect of authoritative parenting style directly influenced identity achievement, whereas the rest 47.2% of the effect influenced identity achievement indirectly via parental attachment. In order to relate the findings of this study to the previous studies, literature was almost none. Thus, we suggest future research will be conducted on the area by considering the variables of this study.

Similarly, this study indicated that permissive parenting style was positive but did not significantly predict identity achievement. This finding indicates that the indirect effect, as indicated in the Sobel's z-test result, permissive parenting style via parental attachment was positive and significant. This shows that permissive parenting style significantly and fully mediated the relationship between permissive parenting style and identity achievement through parental attachment. This means that high degree of warm parental involvement, emotional bond, love and affection but low fostering of psychological and behavioral control contributed for adolescents to explore alternatives and make committed decision. In fact, literature was scant in this area; we tried to indicate that the results of this study will have a great contribution for future research.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting styles and identity achievement of adolescents. Then, authoritative-parenting style

was most commonly practiced with higher mean score compared with other parenting styles followed by authoritarian parenting style. This shows that parents of adolescents monitor, guide, set rules and standards, respond, discuss basic issues, and have high expectation from their adolescent children outshine the other parenting styles.

Furthermore, authoritative parenting style facilitates and encourages adolescents' exploration and commitment and significantly contributes for the development of identity achievement. Moreover, authoritative parenting style uses parental attachment as tool to shape children's behavior with the necessary guidance and monitoring while allowing the children explore alternatives and make commitments. However, authoritarian parents directly enforce their adolescent children to follow their rules, standards, values, and expectations without discussion and mutual understanding, but it remained significant and positive predictor of identity achievement in the context of this study. The relationship between permissive parenting style and identity achievement significantly and fully mediated through parental attachment. This implies that permissive parenting style contribute to identity achievement through warm parental involvement, emotional bond, love and affection.

Recommendation

- Developmental psychologists ought to pay much attention to the importance of parental attachment that plays role in creating the link between parenting styles and identity achievement. This may inform on how to devise appropriate intervention strategies to foster the relationship of the two parties.
- Future research is recommended to extend this study by further examining the mediating role of parental attachment in the relationship between parenting style and identity achievement of adolescents

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The Practice of Quality Assurance in the TVET System of the State of Amhara as Perceived by Major Stakeholders

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of quality assurance in the TVET system of the State of Amhara. In this respect, leading questions focusing on the supply of resources, the quality of the training delivery process and the efforts exerted towards quality assurance were taken care of based on the input-process-output framework of quality assurance. The study employed the embedded design. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from students and teachers (809 in sum) who were drawn through stratified and simple random sampling techniques from six TVET colleges. Eleven teachers and twelve students selected through purposive sampling method were also involved in an independently conducted FGD to garner qualitative data. Besides, four deans, two OCACA participants and two industry managers were involved in a one-to-one interview drawn through the same sampling method. Documentary examination has also been conducted. Both descriptive (mean) and inferential (t-test) statistics were implemented to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the TVET quality in the study area has been persistently stricken with meager supply of necessary resources. Consequently, the quality of the training process has been so weak to equip students with the required competences. That means the efforts of quality assurance were not fruitful enough to meet the needs of both the trainees and the labor market. To rescue the quality assurance efforts, it requires taking an immediate action by the government that enables to effectively finance TVET institutions in any way possible, including the realization of the intentions of cooperative training.

Key words: competence, cooperative training, quality, quality assurance, TVET.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, it seems that the focus of emphasis in the provision of education and training is shifting more towards quality. Tikly (2013) and the World Bank (2011), for instance, claim that access for the opportunity of education and training alone could not reduce the problems of unemployment, income inequalities and poverty effectively. Vegas and Petrow (2008) complement that poor quality in education and training is the possible attribute for relevance and utility problems. Hanushek and Wößmann (2007) and the World Bank (2011), more acutely, assert that quality of education and training contributes much more significantly to development than its quantity (expanding access) does. The latter two sources have reported that the correlation of quality of education and training with economic growth is stronger than that of the correlation between the years spent in schooling and economic growth. Joshi and Verspoor (2013, p. 51) in the same vein emphasize that "at higher levels of the education system …

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ensuring the quality of education and training and the mastery of advanced knowledge and skills, may be more important than rapidly increasing the number of graduates." Joshi and Verspoor as well as d King and Palmer (2010) in general inform that contemporary economists and educators widely advocate that it is the real competence that people acquire than the number of years of their schooling that is playing pivotal roles in the alleviation of poverty and achievement of sustainable development in our contemporary competitive socio-economic context. Consequently, quality and quality assurance in education and training have won more emphasis than ever before across the world today.

Quality is characterized by multifaceted dimensions that make it difficult to define precisely. According to Blom and Meyers (2003) and Van den Berghe (1996; 1998) its definition often depends on the perception of people defining it. For African Union (AU) (2007) and Visser (as cited in Blom & Meyers, 2003), for instance, quality refers to the different aspects of a product or a service: the input, the process, the output, or to the three dimensions at the same time. AU considers these are also the major yardsticks for TVET quality

Just as it is in all aspects of production and service delivery, there is no standard definition for quality in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Although the characteristics of quality in the service sector such as TVET are difficult to define, many scholars of the field (e. g., Bulmahn, 2004; Seyfried, Kohlmeyer & Futh-Riedesser as cited in Blom & Meyers, 2003; Sallis, 2002; Wolf, 2011) explain that it is possible to detect and characterize quality indicators in the service sector. Competence and morale value of teachers, adequate supply and application of material resources and required technology, strong partnership among stakeholders, strong concern and aspiration among students, standardized and relevant occupational standards (OSs) and curriculum, appropriate monitoring and evaluation scheme, and strong and purposeful leadership are the major ones among others. Van den Berghe (1996) relates TVET quality with two essential concepts: first, quality of design, organizational competence to draw up plans, and determine services that can be recognized for its quality by the end-users; and second, quality of conformance, organizational capability to address the required design, plan and specification in line with the agreements made earlier. AU (2007, p. 23) in this respect declares that "inadequate instructor training, obsolete training equipment, and lack of instructional materials" are some of the factors among many that debilitated the quality and effectiveness of TVET in Africa. AU also suggests that if competence is sought in TVET, appropriate workshop, adequate equipment and training materials as well as the time for practical exercise for trainees need meet the standards besides the competence of teachers.

Nowadays, various scholars (e.g., Blom & Meyers, 2003; Van den Berghe, 1998; Van der Berg, 2011) assert that quality improvement is one of the major focus areas of TVET employability because low quality TVET is one of the key poverty traps in many countries, particularly the developing ones. King and Palmer (2010) also supplement that quality assurance in TVET is an essential step towards maintaining TVET quality. Blom and Meyers (2003), Van den Berghe (1996; 1998) and Zuniga (2004) insist that TVET quality usually implies a comparison with the standards already set to assess the quality of the service delivered by a TVET institution. They argue that TVET quality requires the development of systematic and consistent definition,

continuous improvement, documentation and verification of the market needs of parents, learners, employers and government agencies and honoring working methods to meet these needs.

Scholars such as Blom and Meyers (2003) and Zuniga (2004) state that clients of TVET institutions want the training they take to match with the competencies demanded in a work place. To meet such requirements, according to them, TVET institutions should cope with the ever-increasing demands of clients as well as the rapidly changing technological and work environment situations. They infer that the concept of quality applied in TVET comes down to the success that graduates achieve in the labor market. For them, TVET quality is often analyzed from the institution's management point of view because whether a TVET institution complies with the principles implicit in the norm determines the quality of its service. Nonetheless, according to Zuniga, TVET quality encompasses four interacting subsystems: quality of policies and strategies; quality of institutional administration; quality of the programs at an institution level; and quality learning experiences at individual level. The first two can be characterized as systemic qualities (system level quality) while the remaining three as operational quality – quality at proper training delivery level.

Delivering quality TVET is strongly linked with the establishment of a strong quality management and leadership system. These included management commitment, teamwork, good understanding of principles and procedures by all, maintaining quality at any step by everybody, dependence on facts and objective data, and systematic problem-solving competence (Masson, Baati & Seyfried, 2010; Van den Berghe, 1996; Wolf, 2011). According to Allen (2006), that is because service quality is increasingly requiring "responsiveness, reliability, accuracy, knowledge, courtesy, consistency and urgency" (p. 1) particularly from the TVET institutions. That might be why AU (2007), Billett (2013), and Van den Berghe (1996; 1998) emphasize quality management as one of the main concerns in contemporary TVET exercise, which is characterized by highly competitive environment that forces customers to expect the training they gained need correspond to the abilities and competences required in the market.

Van den Berghe (1996) also contends that Total Quality Management (TQM) is the most widely used quality improvement approach in modern TVET quality assurance movement. Unlike quality control that is based on the detection and elimination of final products or their components that lack to meet the required standards and most probably followed by wastage, according to Van den Berghe (1996; 1998), TQM better addresses the quest of quality assurance because it gives emphasis to five major concepts: a clear customer focus, continuous improvement, quality assurance of internal processes, emphasis on process, and prevention instead of inspection. Blom and Meyers (2003), Bulmahn (2004), Sadgrove (1997) as well as Sallis (2002) conceptualize TQM as a way of understanding, planning, organizing and leading each activity to eliminate unnecessary wastage of effort and energy on routine activities. Not only Van den Berghe (1996) but Pekar (1995) too argue that since there is no one best way for effectiveness in TQM due to the peculiarities of organizations leadership commitment, attention to customers, knowledge and skill, shared vision and ownership, team-work, and

competent monitoring and evaluation mechanism are often considered as the building blocks of a good TQM. In general TQM is an agenda not only done by senior managers and passed down the line but also equally cared by the subordinates. That is because the word total in TQM implies that everything and everybody in the organization is involved to maintain continuous quality improvement. It is, therefore, an important instrument for a successful management of TVET institutions (Atakilt & Van Kemenade, 2013; Pekar, 1995; Sadgrove, 1997).

Besides input supply, the incorporation of competency-based education and training (CBET) into the system is taken as a function of quality improvement in TVET (Billett, 2013; King & Palmer, 2010). According to Brockman, Clarke, Mehaut, and Winch (2008) CBET is also taken as a variety of TQM in TVET quality assurance. According to these authorities, TQM is a mechanism whereupon the quality of the training provided is measured by the competence achieved than by the quantity and quality of inputs supplied and the type and magnitude of courses taken, and the theoretical knowledge acquired in a given period by the trainee. The methodology focuses on the performance of trainees (the outcome) in accordance with qualification standards set by the work place. They add, CBET is highly essential because besides stimulating the development and integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, it bridges the economic demands with individual learning needs of students. Other notable sources of literature (e.g., Billett, 2013; King & Palmer, 2010), on top of that, point out that CBET does not neglect the input and the process aspects of training delivery because the TVET system puts the principles of TQM – attention for input, process, and output – in place.

Unlike the traditional (supply driven) approach, Brockman, Clarke, Mehaut, and Winch (2008) as well as Mounier (as cited in Wheelahan and Moodie, 2011) advocate that CBET enables every student to understand what is expected of him/her and what the ranges of competences are. According to these authors, for one to implement CBET successfully, s/he should clearly define the standards that are used to deliver training and measure the performance of the students vis-a-vis workplace requirements. In addition, they substantiate that CBET takes individual issues into consideration in which a student is given the chance to master a skill at his/her own pace within a reasonable time. In the context of Ethiopia CBET is a component of outcome-based TVET delivery approach, key paradigm change brought about by the new TVET strategy to respond to the questions of quality and relevance (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2008). The approach has replaced the obsolete curriculum based scheme to address the problems of both quality and employability in the TVET system of the country more easily.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Both the education and training policy (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994) and the TVET strategy (MoE, 2008) of Ethiopia attempt to deliver good quality TVET across the country. Yet, MoE (2008; 2010) discloses that the TVET system of the country has long been prone to low quality and the consequent unemployment. Similarly, Atakilt and Van Kemenade (2013), MoE (2010a) and the Technical, Vocational and Enterprises Development Bureau (TVEDB) (2007a, 2007b E. C.; 2008 E. C.; 2009 E. C.; 2010 E. C.) of the State of Amhara unveil that the quality of TVET is very low in the country in general and in the study area in particular. Above all, not only the beneficiaries of the system but all the stakeholders often

involved in TVET delivery too highly complain about the widespread quality problem in the TVET system in the current study area.

The roots of the problem may be diverse. This study has made its focus on the input, process, and output components to examine the quality assurance practices in study area because literature reviewed above inform that these three interrelated factors are the major factors of quality that need be examined thoroughly to understand the quality assurance practices in the system. These included the delivery of material inputs, the supply of competent teachers, and the quality of the training delivery process. That is because understanding the status of these factors significantly helps to understand the quality of TVET delivered and deduce about the practices of quality assurance made. The purpose of the study is, therefore, to investigate the practices of quality assurance in the TVET system of the State of Amhara by examining those factors thoroughly. To that end, the following three basic questions guided the study:

1. What do students and teachers feel about the supply of material inputs and teachers?
2. What does the perception of study participants inform about the quality of the TVET delivery process?
3. To what extent do TVET institutions endeavor to foster the quality of the training?

METHODOLOGY

Design

The intention of this study was to examine the practices of quality assurance in the TVET system of Amhara State. It employed the cross-sectional descriptive survey design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data and methods. The mixed method was applied both to collect and analyze data because it creates better understanding over the problem under investigation than either the quantitative or the qualitative approach alone (Creswell, 2014). In this respect, the embedded design was preferred, according to Creswell, because this method is mentioned by many scholars as the most cost effective and efficient model in educational research and in addressing mutuality or filling of data gaps to each other. The supportive data in the study was the qualitative data because it is the most widely preferred approach than otherwise. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously from each study site. Then quantitative and qualitative data were integrated (triangulated) through data consolidation (interpretation) method (Blaikie, 2003; Cozby, 2001; Kothari, 2004). This is because it easily helps to perceive the influence of the independent variable in a more authentic picture. In line with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), for sure, the quantitative data of the survey approach assisted in elucidating an overall picture of the study whereas the more fine-grained information achieved through interviews and documentary examination helped to augment the quantitative data.

Population and Sampling

This survey study employed the mixed methods approach and triangulated data both in terms of data source and typology of instruments. That is because different scholars, such as

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) and Patton (2002) recommend that the mixed design is essential for studies that seek to triangulate data. They further suggest that such methods inform much more than otherwise due to their mix of information-rich and representative samples. Accordingly, among about 91 public TVET colleges organized into ten clusters, six colleges were involved in the study through a two-stage sampling procedure. According to Creswell (2014), Dattalo (2008), and Schofield (2006), this was because extracting participants through a mere probability sampling technique from a hierarchically structured population environment may nest some segments of the population unnecessarily and affect the relevance of the conclusion thereafter. To this effect, primarily, Bahir Dar, Debre-Markos and Woldia polytechnic colleges were drawn through a simple random sampling technique. Then three satellite colleges (Finote-Damot, Amanuel and Kobo TVET colleges from each cluster center consecutively) were selected from each cluster center through the same sampling method.

The drawing of participants has implemented the simple random sampling technique. For an exhaustive understanding of the phenomenon across occupations an attempt was made to address as different occupations as possible. Therefore, the cluster and stratified sampling techniques were implemented for securing occupational diversity. In addition, the selection of students was limited to the senior year batches from levels V, IV, and III sequentially basically to secure better information due to their long stay and experience in the colleges. To minimize the sampling error that may stem from the disproportionality of population size (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012), 70 teachers and 70 students from each college were drawn to fill out the questionnaires among a total of 4,163 teachers and 96,095 students (TVEDB, 2010 E. C.). The method of sample size determination suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 103) that states "a conventional sampling strategy will be to use a 95 per cent confidence level and a 3 percent confidence interval" was employed to select these participants. The sample size, which in sum involved a total of 420 teachers and 420 students, is intentionally maximized to avoid the risks of losing questionnaires due to problems springing from different sources (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

In sum, 412 and 397 participants filled out and returned the questionnaires. Besides, eleven teachers and twelve more assertive and conversant students were selected purposively with the assistance of deans and the teachers and interviewed independently. The collection of qualitative data was limited to Bahir Dar Polytechnic College and two companies in its catchment area. That was because conducting an in-depth interview with people in micro and small enterprises in all the six study colleges was not found worthy enough, apparently, because there is absence of such companies in the rest study areas focused. Two private companies that provided employment opportunities to graduates and at times involve in providing cooperative training were drawn through purposive sampling method. Then, the managers of the two companies were interviewed thoroughly about the competence of graduates to get information about the quality of the training provided by TVET institutions from which the quality assurance practices in the study area are possibly deduced.

Instruments

To collect primary data self-prepared instruments (questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, and focus group interviews [FGD]) were administered. This sort of multiple data collection method was applied because pertinent sources of literature (e.g., Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012) inform that it helps to refine personal perceptions further and tap the advantages of data triangulation. Both the questionnaires and interview guides were employed after translation into Amharic for the sake of enhancing communication and validity. Five level attitude scales (extending from very low to very high) were designed for all the sub-scales. Three packages of items incorporating 11 items on the supply of training material, 14 items on the supply and competence of teacher, and 12 items on quality assurance practices were administered. Teachers were involved in all the three packages whereas students filled out only the first two packages on which they are expected to have adequate information.

To ascertain reliability and validity factors the questionnaires were piloted at Injibara Polytechnic College, which has a similar setting with those included in the study. Although the questionnaires demonstrated good internal consistency and homogeneity among the sub-scales in each package, some items were excluded based on the feedback from the participants and on the inter-item correlations indicated by the pilot data analysis. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) of the sub-scales in each package after improvement were 0.855, 0.911, and 0.897 respectively. Similarly, alpha values were 0.813, 0.938, and 0.897 consecutively after the questionnaires were fully implemented. All these values were considered suitable for the purpose of the current study, according to Creswell (2014) and Larson-Hall (2010), because $\alpha = 0.70$ is often taken as the lowest acceptable value for a questionnaire with less than 20 items.

Data Analysis

In this study, the input-process-output framework was employed to schematize the analysis and interpretation of data. In this respect, the descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (between group and within group *t*-test) statistics were manipulated by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-23) computer software. Five percent ($\alpha = 0.05$) level of significance was applied to determine whether groups of scores are significantly different because it is often a conventional standard degree of significance for educational and behavioral studies (Creswell, 2014; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). *Cohn's d* was also operationalized to measure effect size index (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To help refine (triangulate or complement) the quantitative data results qualitative data gathered through interview guides and documentary examination were analyzed thematically by embedding them in the quantitative data. In this respect, as can be seen in the data analysis section, the qualitative data were found so helpful to substantiate and tie up the loose ends of the quantitative data.

RESULTS

Input Supply

Supply of training materials

Material supply in this study encompassed facilities, machinery, equipment, hand tools, and consumables. Both teachers and students have replied an inadequate supply of these resources. As can be seen from Table 1, however, the *t*-test for independent samples reveals a very small mean scores difference between the two groups ($t = 2.350$, $df = 723$, $p = .017$, $d = 0.18$). That is, teachers and students sense that there is very poor material supply in the colleges.

Table 1

t-test result for Differences in Perception of Supply of Training Materials Between Teachers and Students

	n	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Teachers	412	20.14	5.44	2.35	723	.017	0.18
Students	397	19.22	5.05				

The entire annual reports of the bureau (2007 through 2010 E. C) in general and the respective colleges studied in particular verified the critical challenges the colleges faced with were scarcity of training materials. Even the two cluster centers, which are considered as better furnished and senior ones in the regional state, seriously complain in their annual reports that shortage of workshops, obsolescence of machinery, shortage of consumable materials and the like are the key problems that they are often challenged by. In view of all the deans interviewed, the satellite colleges totally do not possess machineries required by the OSs for training delivery. Neither are there adequate supports for satellite colleges from their cluster centers because the latter colleges themselves are not self-reliant let alone to support others. To make things worse, satellite colleges are located in rural areas where there is no access for companies or enterprises to benefit from cooperative training (CT). According to one of the deans among the satellite colleges ($Dean_4$), the CT exercised in a limited extent by itself is not effective because of the reluctance of companies to allow practical training for various reasons. The real intention of sending trainees for CT, according to this interviewee, is not for practical exercise but to show trainees the machines they theoretically learnt physically.

Student interviewees also resentfully complained that the training delivery is highly affected by the shortage of resource supply. A student from information technology occupation ($Student_6$), for instance, criticized his college because it has admitted about 150 students while the workshop is equipped only with not more than five functional computers. In connection to this, another student from automotive technology ($Student_1$) described that it is unthinkable to get adequately facilitated workshops in most occupations of her college. She believed that workshops are available physically but not practically. She also argued that in most cases practical training is hardly possible because workshops are not equipped with necessary machinery and consumable material supplies. Another student involved in the FGD from the

same occupation ($Student_2$) condemned the scarcity of material supply and its implications more gravely:

> …Imagine a TVET college enrolling students … without preparing adequate material supply. Which comes first, student enrolment or delivery of material inputs? I am a graduating class trainee in auto engine servicing …I have never seen what an engine looks like so far… we all [his classmates] have never exercised how to drive a car at all.

Teacher supply

With respect to the supply of teachers required, the analysis of data as can be seen in Table 2 revealed that neither teachers nor students are satisfied with the supply and competence teachers. The t-test result shows a substantial difference between the two groups (t = 13.132, df = 720, p < .001, d = 1.12). The mean score of teachers was found higher than that of the mean score of the students' implying that teachers' dissatisfaction about the supply of competent teachers is much less than that of the students. To measure the competence of teachers, similarly, the current study has examined the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers. Data analysis results regarding teacher competence showed that the composite mean score of teachers is high whereas that of the students is low. As can be understood from the table the mean score difference between the two groups is strong (t = 25. 815, df = 720, p < .001, d = 2.16). This informs that while most teachers perceive that they are competent enough, most students refute the competences of their teachers.

Table 2 *t-test result for Differences in Perception of Supply of Teachers and Teachers' Competence Between Teachers and Students*

Variable	*Groups*	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Supply of teachers	Teachers	412	3.02	1.01	13.132	718	.000	1.14
	Students	397	1.98	0.82				
Competence of teachers	Teachers	412	34.12	9.80	25.815	704	.000	2.17
	Students	397	18.18	4.90				

For capturing better clarity on teacher competence both teachers and students were involved in FGD. During the interview session, students were so open and confident enough to disclose the prevalence of teachers with very weak competences. $Student_{7,}$ for instance, noted that despite his regular class attendance, he does not feel that he can succeed in the occupational competence assessment due to lack of proper training that emanated from lack of material resources as well as poor teacher competence. $Student_{3,}$ from surveying occupation, also senses that most of the teachers in his college lack necessary qualification, inexperience, and language skills to transfer what they know to their students. The following excerpt from the words of the same student may describe the situation of teacher competence more acutely:

> Fortunately, I am from a surveying occupation where necessary machines and devices are available. …. [At the same time] I am unfortunate because our teacher cannot

> operate the available machines such as stereoscope, GPS, and total station. ……. except our teacher takes us to the workshop and introduces us their names …and functions we …never utilized those machines in the training process. Those machines and devices are utilized only during competence assessment.

Just like their students, teachers were also interesting for their honesty. Most of them not confessed their own weaknesses besides openly disclosing the deficiencies of their colleagues. In contrast to the responses given to the questionnaire items, teacher interviewees have contested the results of quantitative data presented by Table 2. They reflected similar views with the students regarding the prevailing problems of teachers' competences. One teacher ($Teacher_4$) emphasizing on the knowledge of teachers, for instance, mentioned that almost 90% of the teachers lack to understand English texts properly. Another one ($Teacher_2$) added that most teachers instruct not what they are expected to do but only few units of competences which they can understand. Another teacher ($Teacher_6$) who focused on the practical competence of teachers sorrowfully explained that the availability of practically competent teachers is deteriorating from time to time and their college is starting to yearn for TVET in the past. $Teacher_5$ also confessed that since most of them prefer office works to physical works, most TVET teachers are usually seen in workshops with white-collar dresses instead of overalls. He also condemned teachers, including himself, as follows: "for fear of being ridiculed …most of us do not exert efforts to improve our skills by involving in …actual work places such as production units." Moreover, $Teacher_4$ confessed on the existing challenge that teachers are faced from skill gaps and defects in their subject matter knowledge as a result of which most of them often deliver training focusing only on specific units of competences that are easier to them for demonstration. According to this participant most teachers jump units or topics that are difficult for practical demonstration. $Teacher_3$ expounds the problems of teacher competence as follows:

> Regarding practical [skills] we do not deserve to the level we are assigned to train. … Each of us often look for assessment tools and their projects …for training delivery ... because we cannot escape the pressure from the students on the one hand… and enable as many students as possible to pass the assessment. That is because the pass rate of students is one of the key criteria for our career promotion. … As to me these are characteristics that most of us…including myself share. Had that not been the case … our weaknesses could have been exposed and our job security endangered.

Teacher interviewed also revealed the persistence of negative attitudes among teachers for their profession. $Teacher_5$, for instance, mentioned that these days being a TVET teacher is something highly tiresome and boring, coupled with dissatisfactions on remunerations. According to this teacher, nowadays, the majority of the teachers in the TVET system are either less competitive, less experienced, or burnouts who want to leave TVET if opportunities are opened. $Teacher_7$ added also that being a TVET teacher is so tedious today that demands the delivery of training including on profession on which they are not specialized. English language, mathematics and entrepreneurship are examples he mentioned in this respect. According to him, these in aggregate demanded intensive preparation and worthless fatigues

with a resultant effect of irresponsibility among teachers. Still more, according to $Teacher_3$ and $Teacher_5$, TVET teachers are also responsible to looking for and negotiating CT, providing support for local enterprises and graduates, carrying out labor market demand and tracer studies, etc. It is teachers who are inextricably tied up with all these responsibilities and problems that we are expecting effectiveness from, which is absurd and precarious. According to these participants, such challenges have resulted in continuous turnover of teachers that exposed the sector to lose the most experienced and competent trainers. This in turn implies how the quality of TVET delivered is deteriorating.

Moreover, teachers interviewed unanimously felt that no one would stay a TVET teacher nowadays had a teaching experience been directly valid to transfer to other jobs. For them, those teachers who currently live in the colleges are mostly novice teachers and less competitive ones who by themselves are lurking to leave and join better-paid and more convenient work environments. Teachers involved in the interview session, in general, contend that currently the quality of TVET delivered is so poor because most teachers are highly affected not only by problems of ineptitude but also by lack of motivation and determination for their tasks.

All the deans interviewed shared the arguments of teachers strongly, if not more gravely. $Dean_1$, for instance, stated that from the outset most of the teachers available possess C level qualification (the lowest qualification level in the system). This dean also feels that most of these teachers have poor subject matter knowledge and skill. Due to shortages of teachers, according to this interviewee, many of them offer training in levels III and IV that should have been delivered by B or A level teachers. $Dean_4$, from a different college, complemented with regret that most of the teachers available in his college also have only C level qualifications. These teachers, according to him, complete a module that requires 260 hours within few weeks. For him, this is due of lack of competence (i.e., lack of subject matter knowledge, skills, and methodology) among teachers.

According to the perception of the deans, in general, the key problem in the TVET system today is poor competence of teachers. $Dean_2$ exhaustively describes different factors that have been major hindrances for the effectiveness of most teachers:

> The supply of teachers is … [one of] the formidable challenges in TVET colleges.… Besides, there is a high turnover among …better-experienced teachers. Most of the available teachers do not fulfill requirements … [and] those who fulfill [qualification levels] lack necessary competences …. Although they are expected to teach English, mathematics, and entrepreneurship as a rule of thumb … most of them lack competences not only on those professions but in training methodology as well. … Their defect of English proficiency in particularly is an arduous imperil for the system….

Even though there has been an employment of many new teachers, they do not have the acquaintance of teaching methodology. The TVEDB report examined informs only little measures taken to equip teachers with necessary methodological competences. The 2007b E.

C. annual report, for instance, points out that 144 teachers have left and 536 new ones hired within six months none of whom were equipped with necessary methodological competences. From then on, no report mentions about filling the methodological skill gaps of teachers. In this respect, $Dean_3$ comments that most TVET teachers did not take courses focusing on training methodology because most of them are trained for production activities in an industry but not for providing training. According to this participant the only measure taken when hiring such graduates as college teachers was providing them a sort of orientation on training methodology for an hour or two after employment.

Consistently, all the annual plans and performance reports of TVEDB throughout the last five years condemn teachers for different methodological defects. These included lack of preparing session plans, trainee progress follow up charts, and training modules or materials as well as maintaining the training delivery with 80% practical and 20% theoretical proportion by involving trainees in CT. These reports align with the FGD teachers confessed all these defects outright. $Teacher_8$, for instance, disclosed that in their context the practical-theoretical proportion of training delivery is reversed (i.e., 80% theory and 20% practice). Yet, surprisingly and paradoxically, the two TVEDB authorities interviewed ($TVEDB_1$ and $TVEDB_2$) claimed that the quality of the training delivered in the entire regional state is still good.

Process of Training Delivery

As regards training delivery process teacher focused variables were paid due attention. Factors such as regular preparation, motivation, practice of trainee record-book, focus for practical exercise, attention for theoretical concepts, competence-based training delivery, feedback delivery, communication skills, and work ethics of teachers were considered based on the standards described in one of the manuals set to realize the goals of the TVET strategy. Except for trainee record-book utilization and communication skills, the mean scores of students for the rest of those factors were low. These two factors are also the only items on which teachers and the students have no strong mean score differences ($t = 4.013$, $df = 720$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.31$ and $t = 4.989$, $df = 698$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.41$ consecutively). It implies that both groups have optimistic perceptions regarding teachers' effectiveness in practicing trainee record-book utilization and demonstrating favorable communication skills. As regards the remaining items, the mean scores of teachers and students were completely divergent. That is, the mean score of teachers for all the items were high whereas those of the students were low. This implicitly informs that for the students the quality of the training delivery process was poor while it was good in the eyes of teachers.

Besides examining the process of training delivery, the efforts made toward quality assurance were emphasized by this study. Results of quantitative data analysis in this respect inform that teachers involved in the study are not satisfied with the quality assurance measures taken by their respective colleges because the mean scores obtained are low. Within group *t*-test result comparing teachers of cluster centers (colleges more likely with senior and better experienced teachers) with teachers of their satellites (colleges more likely with junior and less experienced teachers) demonstrated by Table 3 portrays a modest difference between the two ($t = -3.901$,

df = 352, *p* = .003, *d* = -0.34). It implies that teachers perceive quality assurance practices in both college types are not adequate to equip students with the required competences.

Table 3

t-test result for Differences in Perception of TVET quality assurance practice Between Teachers of Cluster Centers and Teachers of Satellite Colleges

Groups	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Teachers of cluster centres	412	23.2	7.95				
Teachers of satellite colleges	397	25.9	7.77	3.90	352	.003	-0.34

In Table 2 it is seen that the mean score difference between teachers and students was strong (*d* = 2.18). This was because the mean scores of teachers for all the items, except for two factors, were high whereas those of the students were low. This implies the existence of contradictory perceptions between teachers and students regarding the competence and effectiveness of teachers or the process of training delivery. Since teacher competence, which is likely ascertained by student satisfaction, is one aspect of quality assurance, it in turn informs that the practice of quality assurance in the TVET system of the study area did not meet the needs of customers. It all implicitly tells us that students perceive the quality of the training delivery process is poor.

Output

The output in this study refers to student competence. Although it might be possible to measure and judge quality output directly, most commonly through the assessment of student competence, it is also possible to deduce output quality based on the perception of necessary stakeholders. The latter approach is useful in contexts where available data regarding output have lack of reliability. In the context of this study, for instance, the occupational competence assessment results are not reliable data sources. That is because according to data sources presented earlier students are assessed after they are trained to the test based only on assessment tools and projects instead of being equipped with the necessary competence in the occupation they are enrolled to. With respect to the judgment of student competence, accordingly, the perceptions of teachers and the students were examined. Data analysis in this respect informed that the mean score of teachers was found slightly lower than that of the students. That is, while most students felt that they have adequate occupational competence, teachers reported quite the reverse. Table 4, however, indicated that there is a moderate mean score difference (*t* = -8.908, *df* = 691, *p* < .001, *d* = -0.71) between the two groups.

Table 4

t-test result for Differences in Perception of student Competence Between Teachers of Cluster Centers and Teachers of Satellite Colleges

Groups	*n*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*	*Cohen's d*
Teachers	412	2.47	0.96	8.908	691	.000	-0.71
Students	397	3.50	0.97				

Interview data gathered from teachers, deans, Occupational Competence and Certification Agency (OCACA) participants, similarly, confirmed that the real competence of most candidates assessed is much below the assessment results they score. According to these sources, the defects of the assessment procedure have resulted in an assessment score that does not explain the competence of most candidates. Among other things, that is because the assessment system lets an instrument prepared for assessment in a specific time to be utilized repeatedly throughout a year in a situation where occupational assessment is carried out every month. This possibly exposes a situation whereby assessment tools get into the hands of candidates. It in turn helps candidates to exercise on the tools ahead of sitting for an assessment. Consequently, according to the interviews conducted particularly with OCACA participants, the competence assessment results of graduates do not demonstrate their real competence on the ground in most cases.

Participants from the industry favored the above argument. Both the industry managers ($Manager_1$ and $Manager_2$) involved in the study affirmed that often the graduates lack to fulfill the minimum requirements of their respective companies. $Manager_1$, for example, states that his company does not place newly employed TVET graduates without retraining them. He adds that his company has never assigned a TVET graduate on a specific job permanently without ascertaining their competence through retraining. A quotation from $Manager_2$ shares the same experience:

> Newly recruited TVET graduates always …fail to fulfill the competence requirements of our company. …most of them have serious problems [skill gaps]. Therefore …we do not deploy new employees of TVET graduates without additional training. Often, we deliver them up to 90 days training together with others who are recruited among those who do not have TVET background. …otherwise they will damage machines and …expose the company for unnecessary costs and wastage.

DISCUSSION

One of the issues the study has addressed is pertaining to the inputs (material supply and teacher supply) in the TVET system. Material supply is one of the key requirements in bringing quality in TVET. All the college deans, teachers, and the students interviewed, resentfully and with one voice complained that the training delivery is highly challenged by shortage of resource supply no matter the college is a cluster center or a satellite. Students, particularly, have

furiously complained TVET colleges for wasting their time by enrolling students without necessary preparation and ill-equipped workshops. To make it worse, most satellite colleges are located in rural areas and hence not only lack accesses for companies or enterprises to compensate the gaps through CT but also are the available enterprises unwilling for CT. The situation just confirms the persistence of Foster's half-century old observation (as cited in King & Martin, 2002) that strongly condemned policy makers and elites of developing countries, typically of Africa, for hypocrisy. That is, he used to criticize leaders of those countries had been erecting TVET institutions that cannot even afford hand tools for the poor but send their sons and daughters to luxurious academic schools.

Although the strategy (MoE, 2008) repeatedly stipulates that the problem of material supply in TVET colleges will be addressed by using diversified funding sources, data sources in the current study reveal that TVET colleges are still entangled with serious challenges of financial and material resources to meet quality requirements. Despite the fact that TVET colleges are officially (Council of the State of Amhara, 2012a, 2012b) authorized to generate and utilize their own incomes, moreover, both deans and the teachers commented that it is very difficult for all satellite colleges and many cluster centers to generate income and compensate their budgetary deficits. Above all, the findings of the current study disclose a big mismatch between the principles set in the strategy and the practices on the ground because in contrast to strategy directions (Melaku, 2015; MoE, 2010c), the supply of training materials with the required quantity and quality is not paid with adequate attention. Accordingly, the finding of the current study with respect to material supply is a typical reflection of the concerns of Johanson and Adams (2004), who argued that public TVET systems in SSA often have financial constraints that highly hampered the possibility of equipping students with necessary competences and pave the way for employability.

In general, TVEDB and the colleges under its auspices, both bestowed with shared goals of enhancing the quality of TVET, disputed on the need for material supplies in TVET colleges. TVEDB participants were not that much concerned for material supply in TVET colleges because they argue that CT compensates it whereas deans and the teachers who understood the formidability of CT, in contrast, insisted the need for fulfilling necessary material supplies for colleges. Besides supplying adequate material resources, this big rift need be synchronized if the quality and employability of TVET is sought to be ascertained.

The supply of teachers with the required levels of qualification and competences is indisputably essential to maintain the quality of TVET. The analysis of data regarding the supply of competent teachers revealed contradictory perceptions and quite mixed results among participants. Despite manipulation of mean score differences revealed that there is a big disagreement between teachers and students regarding teacher competence, the perception of students is likely a binding information. That is not only because one of the definitions of quality is customer satisfaction (Blom & Meyers, 2003; Zuniga, 2004) but also because deans and the teachers involved in the FGD have strongly backed the perceptions of students on the point. The perception of students is binding because from the perspectives of quality, too, service quality is either conformity to established organizational requirements and

specifications or at least meeting customer expectations (Blom & Meyers, 2003; Van den Berghe, 1996; 1998). Data from documentary review consistently corroborate that all TVET colleges in the region are delivering training mostly by using teachers that fail to fulfill the requirements of the standards set.

During the FGD students also amazingly disclosed that there are teachers who cannot operate the existing machines besides their deficiencies to deliver the theoretical concepts of the courses effectively. This is a fundamental problem not only in equipping students with the required skills but also in maintaining internal efficiency because the available resources that could have optimized the output of the training were not utilized effectively. The underutilization of the available facilities and machinery due to lack of teacher competence and budgetary shortages for the supply of adequate consumable materials made TVET more expensive in the context of the study area. In general, it is plausible to assume that TVET teachers have neither fulfilled the required qualification levels nor satisfied their customers. In the study area, accordingly, TVET is neither efficient nor effective because according to the criteria set by MoE (2010c) TVET is considered as effective when the teachers available in a specific occupation fulfill the required levels of qualification and competence as well as material supplies are relevant and adequate for delivering training.

Although the manual focusing on trainers' qualification framework (MoE, 2010a) specifies that a trainer should have a qualification at least one level higher than the one s/he offers, moreover, deans and the teachers know that this was impossible to practice in the colleges due to lack of teachers who meet the qualification levels specified. According to them, mostly C level teachers deliver training in levels III and IV, which according to the standards of MoE (2010a) shall have been delivered by B level teachers. Both participant groups know that most C level teachers are not able to understand English texts to provide training properly and hence training is limited to few units of competences in most cases. To make things worse, entrepreneurship, English and mathematics have been de-professionalized in the TVET system of the study area. Consequently, technical teachers who by themselves are condemned for their weakness in mathematics and English proficiency provide communication and mathematics courses. This, in turn, implies the problem in equipping students with necessary generic skills (business management, communication, measurement, etc.) in aggregate generates far-reaching deficiencies on the entrepreneurial competence and business life of graduates.

In general, although problems related to teacher supply and competence were emphasized as the key bottlenecks of the system by the TVET strategy (MoE, 2008), the findings of the current study revealed the persistence of those problem to these days. The findings, moreover, disclose the problems related to the supply and competence of teachers is not resolved so far, if not worsened at all. That is because the problem related to teachers today is not only lack of practical competence like old times but also deficiency in theoretical knowledge unlike old times. Despite the fact that the GTPII (of TVEDB) has targeted to equip all its teachers with the required competences as of 2012 E. C., the practice on the ground reveals that teacher competence is still not only poor but deteriorating instead. To complicate the problem further most TVET teachers today lack the competence in training methodology. Although the

qualification framework for teachers (MoE, 2010a) emphasizes any TVET teacher to possess a certificate of methodological competence before employment, besides occupational competence, so far, many teachers in the TVET system are not certified for their methodological competence.

To qualify as a TVET teacher, according to MoE (2010a; 2010b), one has to be certified at least with a C-Level trainer qualification that requires two different certificates. The first one is Level-III certificate or National Certificate III (NCIII) that is acquired through the occupational competence assessment. The other one is C-Level certification in training methodology that is known as Trainers' Methodology C (TMC) and is achieved through competence assessment in methodology. Accordingly, legibility for recruitment as a potential C-Level teacher requires possession of NCIII as well as TMC, competence in subject matter knowledge (or what to teach) and on how to teach consecutively. The same procedure holds for both A-Level and B-Level teachers (i.e., a minimum of NCV + TMA for the former and NCIV + TMB for the latter). Besides, MoE (2010b) underpins that "a teacher is at least one level higher than the level that s/he is actually teaching" (p. 7). Despite the official formulation of all these criteria, deans and the teachers involved in the FGD have disclosed that most teachers in their colleges provide training on levels that are equivalent to their qualification levels and none of the teachers in the study area has practically been certified accordingly. C-Level teachers, particularly, are short of TMC as well as exposure for methodological courses except a sort of orientation or induction exercises they participated for an hour or two after employment. Given that there may be many teachers gifted with natural talents of methodology, therefore, it is easy to imagine the problems that the TVET system is challenged due to lack of teacher competence and its implications on the quality of the training to ultimately ascertain quality and effective employability.

Moreover, although MoE (2010a, c) has set out a strategy of industry immersion programs for teachers to continuously enhance and thereby update their competence and the quality of the training they deliver, both deans and the teachers have confirmed that it has never been practiced. According to them, the major excuses behind included scarcity of enterprises, reluctance of the available enterprises to provide the opportunity, and absence of interest and courage from the teachers themselves. That is, on the one hand, enterprises do not want to waste their time and resources by hosting teachers to exercise in their workshops without any return to gain. On the other hand, most teachers often shy away actual work place exercises due to lack of adequate practical competence and the consequent frustration of being a laughing stock by the exposure of their inabilities. Data gathered from both deans and teachers, therefore, reveal that industry immersion is an unutilized opportunity that may have contributed much in improving the competence of teachers and the quality of training.

The findings of the current study reflected the statements of Cavanagh, Shaw, and Wang (2013) as well as Ferej (2000) who demonstrated that detachment from real work places for a long time is one of the critical problems often observed among TVET teachers. TVET under such a context becomes less relevant and less employable because school-based training often implements basic curriculum that is so general in scope and function, besides being removed

from the day-to-day workplace practices and activities. Consequently, TVET delivered under such conditions has become incompatible with the requirements of the work place and graduates find it difficult to fulfill the required work place competencies at the end of the day. Otherwise, teachers with qualification levels below the requirements in association with the scarcity of machinery and training materials can in no way deliver training according to the requirements.

In its TVET strategy, MoE (2008) has announced that to ascertain quality in the system it has introduced a new paradigm of training delivery process known as the outcome-based approach. It has also stated that the goal of introducing this approach is to equip students with the necessary competences easily. This is an approach that different notable sources (e. g., Billett, 2013; Brockman, Clarke, Mehaut & Winch, 2008; King & Palmer, 2010) called CBET and is a process whereby training delivery focuses on improving the competence of a student through learning by doing and continuous assessment and feedback delivery. Even though TVEDB (2002 E.C.) proclaims that it has been effectively implementing the outcome-based approach, students disprove the claims. Students felt that teachers by themselves lack the competences to teach and hence is the training process hardly outcome-based. Besides, students have replied that most teachers lack motivation, preparation, and rigor to provide feedbacks on their performances. That means, just like the statements by different scholars (for instance, Bulmahn, 2004; Blom & Meyers, 2003; Sallis, 2002; Wolf, 2011) CBET is not tapped effectively to make TVET outcome-based because the competence and morale values of teachers are ignored. Deans and the teachers, moreover, confirmed that most teachers lack all the necessary competences to implement the outcome-based training methodology, given that the scarcity of material supply is another obstacle that exacerbates the problem. Consequently, the reliability of the reports by TVEDB regarding the quality of the training process is subject to question.

Although the TVET strategy and the teachers' qualification framework (MoE, 2010a) outline that maintaining necessary qualification and motivation, in conjunction with keeping enthusiastic to their profession, among teachers is the key to keep the quality of TVET, the findings of the current study reveal that the practices contradict the principles and requirements. Similarly, even though old practices are condemned by the strategy for their exclusive emphasis on theoretical knowledge and denial of adequate attention for the importance of practical skills and the world of work, the current finding has revealed that nowadays it is not only the practical exercise but the theoretical aspect too that has been denied attention. Therefore, even if criticizing outdated and poor practices and setting inspiring strategies and plans is a step towards improvement and development, it does not suffice by itself. The indispensable measure to justify the utility of the inspiring strategy directions is rather realizing the objectives formulated and demonstrating their viability.

In general, besides low competence participants have disclosed that most teachers are discouraged and uncommitted for their tasks because they shoulder different duties that are beyond their capacity to accomplish. Most of them are complaining of burn out and seen usually blaming that they are TVET teachers. The problem faced to TVET these days is,

therefore, not only lack of competence among teachers but also deterioration of the existing competence among the available teachers through time.

Another issue addressed in the present study is the process of training delivery. The Ethiopian education and training system cohort analysis demonstrates that at least 80% of secondary school graduates, excluding those who drop out education at both primary and secondary levels are expected to join TVET every year. That is because the maximum accommodation capacity of the higher education system does not exceed 80% of the graduates every year. Concern for quality and quality assurance of TVET means concern for more than 80% of the young work force who leaves and drops out school every year. TVET quality is, therefore, the cornerstone of the whole socio-economic development of the country because Joshi and Verspoor (2013) and Melaku (2015), for example, explain that as far as TVET quality is not paid with adequate attention its goals of cultivating competent middle-level skilled workforce that meets policy and strategy goals might end fruitless. Worldwide advocacies (e. g., King & Palmer, 2010; Kingombe, 2012), too, convey that cautiousness and paying adequate attention to quality assurance in TVET ascertains the quest for employability and its contribution for developing middle-income economy. Those sources complement that the above analogy has importance in a modern market environment because the situation is highly exposed for globalization and the consequent inescapable competition.

The findings of the current study, nonetheless, reveal that the training process in the area under study is in line with neither the abovementioned worldwide practices nor the intentions of the strategy in general and the operational and strategic plan (GTP) of TVEDB in particular. Although MoE (2008) criticizes low TVET quality in previous times has been highly debilitating the competitiveness of graduates and the image of TVET in Ethiopia, the findings of the current study reveal the continuity of quality problems as well as the poor public image. One of the major reasons behind, according to data sources, is that TVEDB denied adequate attention for quality and quality assurance in the system. Teachers who filled out questionnaires regarding the practices of quality management in the TVET system have revealed that they are hardly satisfied with the practices of quality assurance in their respective colleges.

In contrast to different research results (e. g., Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007; Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; World Bank, 2011), which unveil that the role of education and training quality on effectiveness and development is much stronger than that of quantity, the commitment of TVEDB for maintaining the quality of TVET is subjected to question. For example, the GTP, the different operational plans and the performance reports lack to give necessary attention for quality as much as they do for quantity. Moreover, the confusing targets of TVEDB (2002 E. C.) on the number of TVET colleges to be established during the GTP years reveal the possibility of establishing substandard colleges. On the one hand, it states that the number of TVET colleges that fulfill the required standards will be 107 by the end of 2007 E. C. On the other hand, the same document attempts that the number of TVET colleges will be 130 by the same time. In the latter category, quality is not mentioned at all. Arguably, this implies that the 23 additional colleges incorporated in the latter category of colleges are not necessarily to fulfill the required standard. Otherwise, there is no reason of mentioning different figures in such an

official document unless the GTP of TVET is set only for the sake of planning or it is introduced spontaneously. Even though any sort of training is better than no training at all, it is possible to enhance the expansion of access along with quality through proper planning and efficient resource allocation. Neither in the TVET strategy nor in the different manuals and directives introduced to change the strategy into practice is there a single option given for erecting colleges that compromise quality, however.

Be that all as it may, despite the claim by TVEDB participants that the quality of TVET in the state is encouraging, documentary review results unveil that TVEDB has been recklessly disregarding the quality of TVET. Hanushek and Wößmann (2007) as well as the World Bank (2011), on the other hand, advocate that quality of education and training has a stronger impact on economic growth than do the years spent in schooling. The practice of TVEDB, however, diverges not only from such study findings but from the strategy goals of creating competent, motivated and innovative workforce through delivering quality and relevant training as stated by the strategy, the GTP, and the operational plans formulated every year as well. It is a pity to see a government organization vested with the responsibility of maintaining defined quality standards but is ignorant for the quality of TVET that it stands for. The finding of this study, accordingly, shares the concerns of many scholars (e. g., Maclean & Wilson, 2009; Munbodh, 1999; Winch, 2013; Wolf, 2011) because just like the findings there it has clearly pointed out that TVET colleges in the study area are disguised with low quality and quantity of human and material resource supply. That is, TVET colleges of the study area are hardly utilized for playing instrumental roles for enhancing the capability of the enrollees and their socio-economic development. Accordingly, just in agreement with Vegas and Petrow (2008) who warn that poor TVET quality is the possible attribute for relevance and employability problems, the credibility and utility of TVET towards alleviating the challenges of employability and poverty in the study area is so dubious.

The study has also examined the issue of graduates' competence. According to the TVET strategy (MoE, 2008), the competence achieved by the student is the sole indicator of output quality in the TVET system of Ethiopia. The strategy in this regard justifies that the outcome-based approach whereby occupational competence assessment results rather than training completion certificates verify the competence of graduates is introduced into the system. The principle sounds legitimate because nowadays the outcome-based approach or simply CBET is echoed across the world (Billett, 2013; Brockman, Clarke, Mehaut & Winch, 2008; Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). As regards the competence of students, nevertheless, findings revealed quite mixed result among teachers and the students. Teachers, most of who claimed for possessing the required competences for themselves, responded that student competence is low whereas students who are dissatisfied on the overall competence of their teachers, in contrast, claimed that they possess the necessary occupational competence. This is one of the contradictions among the two participant groups in general, which demonstrates a serious blame game in the TVET system.

Since it is very difficult to produce competent graduates under a situation where TVET colleges are highly challenged by resource scarcities and reluctance of the industry to involve in CT

(AU, 2007; Bulmahn, 2004; Sallis, 2002; Wolf, 2011), the claims of students for possessing necessary competences more likely lacks reliability. It seems that students are contradicting themselves (attitude-reality paradox) because they claim for possessing adequate occupational competence on the one hand and decry about the problems of material resources and competent and determined teacher supply, on the other, which they confirmed for highly affecting the quality of the training they have been delivered. Consequently, it is possible to argue that if the TVET system in the study area has widespread deficiencies to equip trainees with the required competencies and quality, students, inevitably lack to fulfill the required competence.

Incidentally, even if the overall objective of the TVET strategy was producing competent and motivated workforce that can serve as the backbone for the endeavors of poverty alleviation in the country (MoE, 2008), it at all remained a futile exercise. While formulating such an inspiring objective, the strategy has belittled previous TVET systems for overlooking access, relevance and quality. The finding of the current study, in contrast, disclosed a strong mismatch between the rhetoric and the practice of TVEDB. Both competence and employability situations observed on the ground are evidences to claim so. In contrast to the ideas of Allen (2006), Pekar (1995), Van den Berghe (1996; 1998) and Zuniga (2004) who advised the indispensable role of leadership on TVET quality assurance, it is arguable that the TVET system in the study area is not in a position to realize the goals of quality and competence stipulated in the strategy as a consequence of which the employability of graduates is suffering a lot.

CONCLUSION

Given that TVET is an expensive investment as it relies on costly infrastructure and low student-teacher ratio, it is not that easy to assure its quality. In connection to this a closer examination of data by this study revealed that access for TVET has been characterized by a haphazard erection of ill-facilitated institutions. That is because attempts made to optimize the utility of TVET have been mere expansion of institutions without adequate supply of resources. Overlooking the matter of resource supply is meant neglecting attention for CBET, a quality assurance practice that could have equipped trainees with the required competences. Despite the due emphasis by the TVET strategy for TQM, besides, the practice of quality assurance has fundamentally focused on inspection (assessment and certification) and not on TQM or prevention (monitoring the quality of training delivery process). Above all, the practice of quality assurance has been overshadowed by the aborted and obstructive CT in most cases, if not at all. The fatigue and burnout among teachers that hampered their commitment and fruitfulness as well as the deficiencies in their occupational competence and generic skills have also been neglected. The efforts made by the government to ascertain TVET quality in the study area rather explain a contradiction between its rhetoric and the practice on the ground. Quality assurance efforts, specifically with respect to measures taken to improve the quality of training delivery through improving the competence of teachers as a whole is overwhelmed by a wide spread blame games among the major TVET stakeholders that in turn informs that all efforts of quality assurance have proved futile.

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