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Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Research in Ethiopian Private Higher Education Institutions through International Cooperation

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to assess the contribution of international cooperation to the enhancement of the quality of teaching and research in private higher education in Ethiopia. To this end, a qualitative research design was employed. That is, primary data were gathered from 20 respondents: one higher education desk officer and one curriculum expert from the Ministry of Education (MoE), two experts from the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA), three higher education experts from Addis Ababa University (AAU), three instructors from Ethiopian private higher education institutions (PHEIs), and 10 Master's program students of the Department of Curriculum and Teachers Professional Development Studies at AAU who were undergraduate students in PHEIs. To supplement the data from primary sources, secondary data were also gathered from relevant policy documents. The respondents from the MoE and HERQA were selected by using purposive sampling technique, whereas those from AAU and PHEIs were selected by using availability sampling technique. Semi-structured interview guide was employed to elicit in-depth information from the experts and the instructors while focus group discussion was used with the students. Finally, the information obtained from the diverse sources were categorized into themes, analyzed, and interpreted. The findings indicated that privatization of higher education sector had become a global trend; international cooperation played a significant role in private higher education to elevate the quality of teaching and research; thematic research and interdisciplinary approaches were encouraged in private higher education; the growing need for access to higher education boosted the role of private higher education; and Ethiopian PHEIs had a comparative advantage for building international cooperation with a multitude of international organizations working in the education sector, the African Union and a growing number of Ethiopian PHEIs. However, it was found out that ICT support for teaching and learning as well as professional development training for the



academic staff were not given due attention in Ethiopian PHEIs. Hence, based on the major findings, it was recommended that Ethiopian PHEIs should strengthen and expand their international cooperation so as to further enhance the quality of teaching and research, and they should provide their academic staff members with institutionalized professional development training in order to update their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

Key Words: globalization, international cooperation, teaching and research

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Higher education institutions have been functioning in the global environment; therefore, they have been affected by circumstances beyond the campus and across national borders. According to Altbach (2007: 123), globalization is defined:

As a broad economic, technological and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable in the contemporary world. These phenomena include information technology in its various manifestations, the use of common language for scientific communication; the imperative of society's mass demand for higher education (massification) and for highly educated personnel, and the "private good trend" in thinking about the financing of higher education.

In addition to the concept of globalization, Altbach emphasizes the role of "internationalization" in determining the activities of higher education institutions in the 21st century. The author defines the concept of internationalization as:

Specific policies and programs undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments to support student or faculty exchanges, encourages collaborative research overseas, set up joint teaching programs in other countries or a myriad of other initiatives (Altbach, 2007: 123).



Growing internationalization is regarded as important phenomenon because it is believed to be a crucial strategy to develop quality of teaching and research in higher education institutions. Furthermore, it provides students with the opportunity for understanding other countries. Furthermore, it facilitates cultural literacy and promotes the development of intercultural competence among the staff and students.

What are the global trends that affect the higher education sector today? The competition among nations of the world has been intensified more than ever, and this expresses itself in the following global trends (Jacobs, 2010: 98-20

- (1) **Economic trends:** The global economy has increasingly forced countries to adapt their curricula market demands.
- (2) **Trends in science and technology:** The interdependence of countries of the world and the growing digitization of production since the 1990s necessitated that countries develop the ability to collaborate with people in different zones, across languages and cultures.
- (3) **Demographic trends:** The growing mix of people from all parts of the world with diverse cultural backgrounds brought a change in the composition of population almost in all countries. This situation necessitates that individuals should develop new skills and perspectives that would help them use the existing opportunities and cope up with emerging challenges of the global economy.
- (4) **Trends in security and citizenship:** All countries have been influenced, though the severity varies, effects of poverty, injustice, pandemic diseases, storage of energy and water, lack of education, environmental degradation, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons.
- (5) **Trends in education:** Nations of the world have become more and more aware of the crucial role of education in producing competent workforce that would put them in a position to be competitive in the global market. In other words, countries have entered more into the state of competition for excellence in education.



Not only the global trends, but the national context also plays a pivotal role in the quality of higher education. Ethiopia clearly recognized in its Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) the need to address the problem of limited access; the lack of educational equity; the lack of relevance; the problem of inefficiency; and the deterioration of quality of education and training.

To this end, it has introduced the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) in 1996/97, developed the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) and the Higher Education Sector Strategy (HESC) in 2003. Furthermore, the country developed a poverty reduction strategy and launched an overarching policy known as Growth and Transformation Plan which is now in its second phase. These and many other national and sector policies have their impact in shaping the quality of teaching and research in higher education of the country. With the growing liberalization of the economy, the Ethiopian Government has promoted the expansion of private higher education institutions as well. The following table summarizes the total number of students enrolled in Ethiopian higher education institutions in the year 2013/14.

Table 1: No. of students enrolled in Ethiopian HEIs in 2013/14

Total enrollment in Ethiopian HEIs (both government and non-government) in 2006 E.C. (2013/14 G.C)		
	Enrollment	%age of female
Undergraduate programs	593,571	30.3%
Post-graduate programs	33,882	15.0%

Source: ESAA, 2015

The table clearly indicates that more than half a million students were enrolled in the undergraduate programs of government and non-government higher education institutions in Ethiopia in the year 2013/14 and nearly one-third of these were female students.



Table 2: Number of students graduated from Ethiopian HEIs in the year 2013/14

Number students graduated from Ethiopian HEIs in 2006 E.C. (2013/14 G.C.)		
Program	Government	Non-government
Regular	65,264	4,485
Evening	8,314	2,685
Summer	7,999	58
Distance	1,206	6970

Table 2 above depicts that higher education is provided by both government and non-government institutions in Ethiopia today and the undergraduate programs are delivered through regular, evening, summer and distance modes of delivery. Furthermore, the table shows that a total of 96,980 students graduated from Ethiopian higher education institutions with the first degree in 2013/14.

It is on this background that the researcher was interested in investigating the role of international cooperation in enhancing the quality of teaching and research in Ethiopian private higher education institutions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Enhancing the quality of teaching and research in PHEIs through international cooperation has become imperative in light of growing internationalization of higher education. A number of researches have been conducted in areas of higher education in Ethiopia. For instance, Woesenu and Mulu (2012) conducted a study entitled “Current Issues in Ethiopian Private Higher Education Institutions: Opportunities and Challenges”. Their study focused mainly on how governmental regulatory framework affects the private higher education institutions, private-public partnership and employers’ satisfaction with graduates.

The Ethiopian Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA) which was established by Ethiopian Government through Higher Education



Proclamation 351 in 2003, conducts an Institutional Quality Audit - an in-depth analysis and assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning environment, the relevance of programs delivered by HEIs, the effectiveness of a HEI's approach to quality assurance, its systems of accountability and its internal review mechanisms. Among the many audited HEIs were also St. Mary's University and Unity University (HERQA, 2011: 6).

To the knowledge of the researcher, there wasn't any specific study directly conducted on enhancing the quality of teaching and research in PHEIs through international cooperation in the country. Hence, the researcher hopes this study would contribute to closing the existing research gap.

To this end, the following questions were set:

- (1) How do Ethiopian private higher education institutions employ international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research?
- (2) How do PHEIs enhance the quality of teaching and research?
- (3) What are the major challenges that EPHEIs have encountered in fostering international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research?

1.3. Objectives of the study

The overall objective of this study was to explore how Ethiopian private higher education institutions employ international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research. Its specific objectives were to:

- Analyze how EPHEIs use international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research.
- Identify the ways PHEIs enhance the quality of teaching and research?
- Explore the major challenges they faced in fostering international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research.



1.4. Delimitation of the study

This study aimed at exploring how Ethiopian private higher education institutions employ international cooperation for the purpose of enhancing the quality of teaching and research.

It would have been comprehensive if more PHEIs had been included in the study. However, only two private higher education institutions, namely St. Mary's University and Unity University were included due to time constraints. Furthermore, only the contribution of international cooperation to enhancing the quality of teaching and research, and challenges faced in fostering international cooperation were dealt with in this study.

1.5. Review of the Related Literature

In this section, relevant documents, books, journals, quality audit reports were reviewed to clarify the concept of quality enhancement in higher education institutions, identify factors affecting quality of education and training in higher education institutions, and depict the experience of selected countries in enhancing quality of teaching and research through international cooperation.

1.6. The concept of 'quality' in higher education

According to Harvey, Burrow and Green (1992) as cited by McKimm (2004: 183), the concept of quality can be sub-divided into several categories:

- ✓ **Quality as excellence:** the traditional (often implicit) academic view which aims to demonstrate high academic standards;
- ✓ **Quality as "zero errors":** most relevant in mass industry where detailed product specifications can be established and standardized measurements of uniform products can show conformity to them, but in higher education might be applied, e.g. to learning materials.
- ✓ **Quality as 'fitness for purposes':** focuses on 'customers' (or stakeholders) 'needs' (e.g. of students, employers, the academic community, government, or society), and /or as defined by the stated aims and learning outcomes of a program of study.
- ✓ **Quality as enhancement:** emphasizes continuous improvement.



- ✓ **Quality as transformation:** applies either to students' behavior and goals changing as a result of their studies or to socio-political transformation achieved through higher education.
- ✓ **Quality as threshold:** refers to meeting a minimum standard, as in subject benchmarking.

Generally, quality enhancement refers to the improvement of the quality. This can be through dissemination of good practice, or use of continuous improvement cycle.

1.7. International cooperation in higher education

Higher education has become more and more a competitive enterprise today. Countries aspire to promote their international cooperation in the higher education sector because internationalization gives students an understanding of other countries, and enhances their cultural literacy and research skills through experience sharing.

Ethiopia has embarked on the rapid expansion of its higher education over the last two decades, even though the beginning of modern higher education goes back to the year 1950/51 when Addis Ababa University College was established (Amare 2007). The expansion of higher education in Ethiopia today pertains to both public and private higher education institutions. This situation calls for fostering international cooperation among higher education institutions of different countries with the aim to improving the provision of quality teaching, research and community service.

1.8. Factors affecting the quality of teaching and research in higher education

A number of factors influence the higher education sector in the 21st century. These include (UNESCO, 2009):

(a) Globalization

Higher education is profoundly influenced by globalization today. One can define globalization as "the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the



English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions.”

(b) Internationalization

The policies and programs that universities and governments design and implement in order to address the challenges of globalization have strong influence on the higher education sector. These include student exchange, sending students to study abroad, establishing a branch campus overseas, or entering into some kind of inter-institutional partnership.

(c) The phenomenon of massification

Massification of higher education has become a growing international trend. This expansion has been mainly seen as a result of:

- the shift to post-industrial economies;
- the rise of service industries, and
- the knowledge economy (UNESCO, 2009).

(d) Information and communications technology

It is worth mentioning two issues when it comes to the influence of ICT on higher education. According to Altbach (2007a), one is the capacity to access and use ICT, and another is the dominance of English as a scientific communication.

The author underlines that both led to the fact that ownership of databases and other key resources have been concentrated in the hands of strongest universities and some multinational companies, located exclusively in the developed world.

2. Enhancing the quality of teaching and research in higher education

High quality, inspirational teaching starts out “by hiring people who have a vocation for teaching – who derive a positive pleasure from the process of conveying understanding and knowledge; who have the power to inspire learning; who can show sparkle and originality in their approach; who on the whole like their fellow human beings” (Ash, 1996:14).

The international dynamics and debate on quality education have led to the rise of two broad approaches, namely the economist approach and the



humanist/progressive approach. The former stresses the need to promote marketization of education and it is usually what the World Bank represents. The latter emphasizes that quality education is the one which promotes the development of the whole person and that enhances social change – this is usually represented by UNESCO (Beeby, 1966).

The notion of higher education as strictly a “public good” has been questioned in light of the financial pressures resulting from massification combined with neo-liberal orientation of international funding agencies. This led to the rise of private higher education institutions worldwide. Having a brief look into the experiences selected countries is useful because it helps us learn the best practices through comparison so as to improve one’s own education system. Hoerner (1993: 6-10) identifies four functions of comparison:

- **Idiographic function:** One has to consider the socio-economic, cultural, political and historical situations that have shaped the education systems of the nations;
- **Melioristic function:** comparison helps learn from the educational practices of other countries in order to improve one’s own education system;
- **Evolutionary function:** Comparison is useful to understand the international trends in education;
- **Experimental function:** Comparative education helps countries/institutions to experiment innovative educational ideas, theories and practices.

The experience of selected European countries

In their aspiration towards ensuring the quality of their higher education, the following European nations developed mechanisms of quality control, quality assurance and accreditation systems.

- ✓ the UK developed its ‘quality audit’ system;
- ✓ the Netherlands developed ‘external quality assessment’, and
- ✓ Germany emphasized the role of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Wissenschaftsrat and Kultus Ministerkonferenz (KMK).



The Experience of Uganda

Uganda is situated in the eastern part of Africa. The country is divided into 4 regions; Northern, Eastern, Central and Western. The Uganda Constitution identifies 56 ethnic groups falling within four main linguistic groups. Over 30 languages are spoken. The country's population is estimated at 31 million with a growth rate of 3.4, the third highest in the world (PEAP 2004). 51% are females and 49% males.

Since independence the number of higher education institutions both in public and private sector increased enormously and as of 2009 there are more than 250 public and 420 private higher education institutions in Africa (World Bank. 2009).

Uganda's oldest university is Makerere University, which was established in 1922 as a Technical School. Later, it became a University College linked to University of London in 1949, and in 1963 became a constituent college of the University of East Africa. It gained full university status in 1970 and was until recently, the only university in the country (Aguti, 1999). Bacwayo (2010: 103) states that the role of private higher education institution in the provision of educational services has increased over the last two decades in Uganda. Some of the factors that led to growing number of private higher education institutions were:

- Increased number of students who demand access to higher education;
- The failure of public universities to meet the growing demand;

The author pointed out that the Ugandan government started reducing the higher education budget and embarked on its gradual liberalization since 2005 which led to increment of the number of privately enrolled students public and private higher education institution.

4. Methodology

4.1. Method

In this study, qualitative approach was used, for it is appropriate to undertake in-depth analysis of the problem. As Patton (1990) cited in Best and Kahn (2004: 184) states:



Qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended answers; (2) direct observations; and (3) written documents. The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, actions and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis in qualitative inquiry yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational clinical or program record; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys.

The researcher used in-depth interview and document analysis to generate the required information in this study.

4.2. Sources of data

The primary sources of data one Higher Education Desk Officer and a higher education expert, HERQA officers, AAU instructors and former students of PHEIs.

In addition, relevant policy documents, journals and institutional quality audit reports were used as secondary sources of data.

4.3. Sample size and sampling techniques

A total of 20 respondents were employed in this study. Three respondent academic officers from St. Mary's University, three academic officers from Unity University, two higher education experts from the MOE, two HERQA officers, two higher education experts from Addis Ababa University and eight masters students from the College of Education and Behavioral Studies who were undergraduate students in private higher education institutions.



No.	Respondent category	Number	Sampling technique used
1.	Academic officers from St. Mary University	3	Purposive sampling
2.	Academic officers from Unity University	3	Purposive sampling
3.	Higher education experts from MOE	2	Purposive sampling
4.	HERQA officers	2	Purposive sampling
5.	Higher education experts from AAU	2	Purposive sampling
6.	Students	8	Availability sampling

4.4. Instruments of data collection

The data collection tools employed by the researcher were in-depth interview, focus group discussion and document analysis.

- The in-depth interview was used to generate in-depth information from the officers from MOE and HERQA officers, academic officers from St. Mary's University and Unity University, and the instructors from AAU.
- Focus group discussion was used to obtain the required information from former undergraduate students from Ethiopian PHEIs.

5. Results and Discussions

Hereunder, the results obtained by using diverse data gathering tools were briefly discussed.

International cooperation

It is generally recognized that international cooperation promotes the quality of teaching and research. Concerning this issue, an academic officer from St. Mary's University stated:

SMU is an outgrowth of St. Mary's Language School which was established in 1991 in Addis Ababa. In 1998, it became a University College and started



the provision of degree programs. Currently, our University offers, among others, five fields of study as regular degree programs: Accounting, Computer Science, Law, Management and Marketing Management. SMU has a well organized distance education programs as well. Moreover, St. Mary's is a founding member of the Ethiopian Private Higher Education Institutions Association and is a member of the African Association of Universities. Furthermore, it has become a member of the International Council for Distance Education. These diversified academic programs and modes of educational delivery led to appreciation and utilization of international cooperation for enhancing the quality of teaching and research. Hence, SMU has cooperation with Marshall University, Indira Gandhi National Open University and Amsterdam Business School (AOSMU-1).

The Institutional Quality Audit Report by HERQA (2009:9) also confirmed that:

- Communication is aided by the open door policy adopted by the University College.
- The University College has developed good staff and student relationships and an environment conducive to academic endeavor.
- There is a strong commitment to quality that is shared by staff and students of the Institution;
- The institution is strongly committed to quality and quality enhancement, among other things, by establishing the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA).

Likewise, an academic officer from the Office of the AVP of Unity University (AOUU-1) reported:

Our University has a strong belief that international cooperation in the higher education sector contributes a lot to the improvement of the quality of teaching and research. Cognizant of this fact, we have now international cooperation with the Fielding University and University of Los Angeles in the USA. Of course, we have the intention to expand our international cooperation because it helps us improve our services through academic staff exchange, sharing of experiences and the provision of guest lecture.



One can deduce that both St. Mary's University and Alpha University have developed international cooperation with higher education institutions from abroad and benefited from it in the form of enhanced teaching and research activities.

5.1. Mechanisms for enhancing the quality of teaching and research

Today, quality enhancement in higher education is highly emphasized by the Ministry of Education in general and by HERQA in particular.

With regard to this issue, a senior expert of HERQA said:

Currently, Ethiopia has 34 public universities and more than 90 private higher education institutions. The expansion of higher education is encouraging as the country has been showing economic progress over the last two decades. Hence, the issue of quality is imperative for HEIs. Today, higher education institutions have established quality assurance offices and HERQA encourages them to enhance the quality of their diverse services. To this end, ten areas of institutional quality audit were communicated to HEIs. Based on the guideline, HEIs are expected to undertake self-evaluation. The self-evaluation document (SED) is then sent to HERQA. Finally, HERQA facilitates the process of institutional quality audit (IQA) and produces an institutional quality audit report. The overall purpose of the quality audit is to help degree offering HEIs provide quality teaching, research and community service.

Concerning this issue, an instructor from the College of Education and Behavioral Studies of Addis Ababa University (AAU- Instructor-1) said:

International cooperation is important for enhancing quality in higher education whether it is public or private in two areas; namely in the area of teaching (professional development training,, delivery of post-graduate courses; growing understanding of the modular and other innovative approaches) and in the area of research (advisement and co-advisement of PhD students, staff and student exchange).

Likewise, a higher education expert from the MOE pointed out:

Higher education is believed to be a key for economic development and socio-cultural transformation. Both public and private higher education institutions play a significant role in Ethiopia's move towards overcoming poverty. This, of



course, necessitates that quality of higher education is maintained. The MOE has now given due emphasis to strengthening the linkage and cooperation between public and private higher education institutions.

The responses given by officers from both the MOE and HERQA clearly indicate that the Ethiopian Government is committed not only to ensuring access, equity, and relevance but also to the provision of quality teaching, research and community service in higher education institutions.

Moreover, the researcher was informed about ways of quality enhancement employed by the PHEIs during the interview sessions. For instance, an academic officer from the Office of the AVP of St. Mary's University responded to the question "How does your PHEI enhance the quality of teaching?" as follows (AOSMU-2):

We strive for providing quality teaching and research because we know that we are in a competitive world. Moreover, as citizens we believe that our University should contribute to the production of well-trained quality workforce who can make a difference in their workplaces. Hence, concerning teaching, we have institutional cooperation with Business School in Amsterdam, the Netherlands for the last six years. It is a project-based cooperation and it gives our students practical exercise in designing project plan with eventual funding of winning project proposals. In addition, short-term pedagogical training is regularly provided for the academic staff. Our Testing Center conducts needs assessment and provides a short-term training on assessment. This includes designing tests, item analysis; provision of feedback the results of item analysis. Finally, the teaching staff discusses on ways of improving assessment as a whole.

To the question "How does your University enhance the quality of research?", the same respondent from the Office of the AVP of St. Mary's University reported:

The quality of our service determines our very existence as a private higher education institution. SMU has already established a quality assurance office and it was also audited by HERQA. It is with this strong belief that our University conducts annual multidisciplinary research conferences, academic workshops; organized lectures provided by renowned professionals as well various academic forums. For instance, SMU organized one-day training for the academic staff on



how to make our students critical thinkers. The training was provided by three American professionals.

This clearly indicates that SMU is striving to ensure the quality of teaching and research thereby contributing to the economic growth and socio-cultural transformation of the country.

The researcher raised the same questions to interviewees from Unity University. Hence, an academic officer from the Office of Quality Assurance of Unity University (AOUU-2) responded to the question "How does your University enhance the quality of teaching?" as follows:

Our University has already established a Quality Assurance Unit. It is committed to ensuring the provision of quality teaching, research and community service. This begins in our real commitment to ensuring appropriate admission from the outset by using admission checklist. Only students who fulfill the standard set by the Ministry of Education are allowed to join any academic program in our University.

Another academic officer from the Office of the Quality Assurance Unit added (AOUU-3):

We have a strong commitment to staff development. Our Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) provides pedagogical support to the teaching staff to improve their teaching skills. This includes short-term pedagogical trainings for instructors in the areas of active learning, classroom management, continuous assessment, lesson plan, and life skills.

Concerning ways of enhancing the quality of research at Unity University, an academic officer from the Office of Quality Assurance (AOUU-2) stated:

Our University is also committed to the delivery of quality research and publications. In the last 14 years, annual multidisciplinary research conferences have been conducted. For instance, this year alone out of the total of 25 papers selected from eighty and presented in our annual multidisciplinary research conference, 24% of them were by our academic staff and graduate students. Unity University has also "Research Guidelines" produced by our Research and Publication Office in 2013."

From the responses mentioned above, it is clear that Unity University utilized various strategies to improve the quality of teaching and research.



5.2. Challenges faced by the PHEIs

Despite the achievements attained so far, higher education institutions have also encountered many challenges. An interviewee from Unity University (AOUU-3) reported:

It is very difficult to find the required trained manpower from the labor market in selected fields; specifically, in the areas of Civil Engineering, Mining Engineering and Accounting.

Likewise, an academic officer from SMU reported:

The most serious challenge that our University has faced is the fact that it is hardly possible to find highly qualified person for teaching and research in certain academic disciplines.

6. Major Findings

- a) The study disclosed that the MOE and HERQA encourage the Ethiopian private higher education institutions to enhance international cooperation in the areas of teaching and research.
- b) It was found out that the private higher education institutions developed international cooperation for enhancing teaching and research.
- c) It was revealed that PHEIs played a significant role in creating access to higher education for thousands of young and adult citizens.
- d) It was disclosed that St. Mary's University had accomplished the following among other things,

(a) to enhance quality of teaching:

- It encourages diverse approaches to teaching and learning and
- Provided a Guidance and Counseling Service to students;
- Developed strong and shared commitment to quality among staff and students;
- Had an Academic Development and Resource Centre (ADRC) that made a worthwhile efforts to promote staff development in terms of pedagogical training;



(b) to enhance the quality of research

- Established the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA);
- Conducted annual multidisciplinary conferences and launched “The Ethiopian Journal of Business and Development”.

c) The study disclosed that Unity University had accomplished the following, among other things,

(i) to enhance quality of teaching:

- ✓ Created a relatively conducive classroom environment that helped teachers and students use audiovisual equipment;
- ✓ Provided short-term training for the academic staff on active learning, classroom management, continuous assessment, and life skills.

(ii) to enhance the quality of research:

- ✓ Conducted annual research conferences on multidisciplinary issues; and
- ✓ Established a number of successful national and international academic linkages.
- ✓ Produced ‘Research Guidelines’
- ✓ Established a Curriculum Standards and Quality Assurance Office.

d) The study indicated that the major challenge both private higher education institutions faced was lack of adequate academic staff for fields like Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering (at Unity University) and Computer Science and Marketing as well as lack plot of land for constructing campus building (at St. Mary’s University).

7. Conclusion

Ethiopian private higher education institutions made a significant contribution to increment of (a) access to higher education; (b) qualified workforce in different sub-sectors of the society; and made continuous efforts to enhance their international cooperation to enhance the quality teaching and research. Hence, it could be safely concluded that they would



remain competitive alternatives for the provision of quality education and training in the country.

8. Implications

- (a) St. Mary's University and Unity University are advised to strengthen and expand their international cooperation in order to enhance the quality of teaching.
- (b) It was found out that both private HEIs were organizing research multidisciplinary conferences. It is necessary to develop a culture of joint research activities with public higher education institutions as well.
- (c) Both PHEIs are advised to strengthen the provision of institutionalized professional development training for their academic staff members to help them update their knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes.
- (d) Both private higher education institutions are advised to improve their staff profile by recruiting well-trained manpower from abroad and/or find qualified part-time staff from public universities, regional (e.g. African Union) and international (UN specialized agencies) organizations.
- (e) Both private higher education institutions are advised to regularly monitor the quality of their services by exercising self-evaluations.

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