



ST.MARY'S UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

PERCEPTION AND SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYERS TOWARDS PRIVATE
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA.

BY
FREHIWOT ALEMU

JUNE, 2017
ADDIS ABABA,
ETHIOPIA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Maru Shete (Assoc. Prof). All source material used for this thesis has duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning degree.

Name

Signature

St. Mary's University
Addis Ababa, June, 2017.

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Advisor

Signature

**St. Mary's University,
Addis Ababa, June, 2017.**

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LIST OF ABRIVATIONS

HERQA: Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency.

MoE: Ministry of Education.

PHEIs: Private higher education institutions.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

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ABSTRACT

The pursuit of education, particularly postsecondary education leads to individual growth. It is also a key for the development of any nation. Thus, without skilled human power it is impossible to think about nation development. The main purpose of this study is to examine employers' perception towards the service of private higher education institutions (PHEIs). In addition, it also aims at identifying the level of satisfaction of employers towards employees, who acquired their degree from PHEIs. In order to achieve these objectives a descriptive research design is chosen and a survey questions was prepared. For this purpose, purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select human resource experts and general managers, who are involved in the selection and recruitment processes. Snowball was used to identify companies, who hired graduates from PHEIs. After the data has been collected it was analyzed in both qualitatively and quantitatively. The result revealed that most employers had developed a negative perception towards the educational quality of PHEIs for different reasons. As a result, they have little preference to graduates of PHEIs. However, once they hired them, they are highly satisfied with the knowledge and skill of graduates, who came from PHEIs. As per the findings of the study, it is recommended that PHEIs should take the initiative to create awareness among employers about the quality of their education. Besides, decision makers particularly HR people should refer to their respective policies and standard to make sure their decision are not affected by their perception.

Keywords: Perception, PHEIs, Satisfaction, Employers and Ethiopia

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Education is a vital component for the development of any nations. As it was noted by Leisa (2009), sustained rapid economic development is highly depended up on the skilled labour force that a country has. Thus, higher education institutions are established with prime goal of disseminating knowledge and skill that would help for nation building (Omer, 2015).

Ethiopia possesses a 1,700 years tradition of elite education, which is linked to the Orthodox Church. Until mid-twenty century Ethiopian Orthodox church remained the only educational institution that produced teachers, leaders and scholars (Negash, 2006). Modern higher education, as contrasted to traditional, was heralded by the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950 (Teferra, 2005 and Yezengaw, 2003). From that time on other higher education institutions have been established in different parts of the country. Currently, Ethiopia engaged in a highly ambitious effort to re-align its higher education system in more direct support of its national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction (Yezengaw, 2003). Other than government owned institutions, private higher education institutions (PHEIs) have emerged as a new phenomenon rapidly in the Ethiopian education system. They are established to provide quality education with reasonable tuition fee for those, who pass the necessary requirement set by Federal Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (Saint, 2004).

PHEIs offer programs that are also available in the public institutions and provide opportunities for those students, who might otherwise not be admitted to higher education institution. Currently, there are more than 100 private higher education institutions, which operate in the country, enrolling 15 % of the student population of the country (MoE, 2009). Therefore, it is commendable that PHEIs are contributing their part to fill up demands for skilled human power in the country (Teferra, 2005).

In spite of their contribution, PHEIs face various problems. They are generally smaller in size, run few academic programs and tuition-dependent. Besides, they are often reliant on staff from major public institutions and are largely staffed by part-time instructors (Nega, 2012). On the top of these problems, they are facing persistent challenges from various stakeholders particularly from employers, that they are requested to assert themselves as providers of good quality education (Saint, 2004). This is due to negative public perception on the quality of their service.

According to Robins and Judge (2013), perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. It is also defined as a process of sensing and organizing something into meaningful views or understanding. However, perception can be substantially different from objective reality. This is because it can be affected by various factors. These factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object, or target being perceived. Perception is also heavily influenced by attitudes, personality, motives, interests, past experiences and expectations. Hence, a distorted perception towards something has potentially affects acceptance of organizations and their products.

Robins and Judge (2013) continued about satisfaction, and define as a collection of positive and/or negative feelings that an individual holds toward a certain output. On the other hand employers' satisfaction is described as positive or negative feelings about the performance of their employees', which results from evaluation. Despite PHEIs are providing crucial services to the nation, the existing negative perception can affect their performance. Hence, it is imperative to make a comprehensive study on the raised issue and detailed problems shall be elucidated here under.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to Mizanur (2013), there is a widely held negative perception of viewing PHEIs as little more than certificate shops or diploma mills by assuming their outputs (graduates) are not well trained. Particularly, the perception of employers that all PHEIs offer low quality of education compared to the public universities has influenced attitude towards accepting graduates from PHEIs, mostly in the working environment. Consequently, employers are not willing to hire applicants with degree acquired from PHEIs (Kettunen, 2015).

Without doubt, PHEIs provide crucial service to the nation as Ethiopia struggles to increase access yet, employment decisions are affected by the negative perception linked to the quality of education that PHEIs are offering. Such kind of negative perception affects both the student population as well as the performance of the PHEIs with far reaching implications to the development of the country (Bjorquist, 2009).

Although education in general and higher education in particular is considered one of the most effective pathways out of poverty, employers continue to have reservations about hiring graduates from PHEIs. Besides, it is not at all clear that privately provided higher education is recognized well. Furthermore, assessing the perception and extent of satisfaction of employers towards the educational service of PHEIs is currently not common practice despite the fact that PHEIs in the country are implementing quality improvement programs vigorously (Lemma, 2013).

It is also observed that a large amount of research has focused on students and family perceptions towards PHEIs (Omer, 2015, Adrijana, 2012, Diriba, 2013, Mizanur, 2013). Moreover, attempts to investigate employers perceptions, particularly around organizational policies and practices towards hiring graduates from PHEIs were not attempted. Therefore, this research looks in to employers' perception and measures their level of satisfaction towards the service of PHEIs with the intention of addressing the existing research gap.

1.3. Research Questions

This research has guided to address the following research questions.

1. How do employers perceive the educational quality of PHEIs?
2. What is the perception of employers with regard to hiring graduates, who earned their degrees from PHEIs?
3. What are the available policies and practices of employers towards hiring graduates from PHEIs?
4. What is the extent of employers' satisfaction on the knowledge, skill and job discipline of employees, who graduated from PHEIs? and
5. What is the level employers satisfaction towards the performances of employees, who graduated from PHEIs?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objectives

The aim of this study is to gain insights about opinion or perception of employers on the educational service of PHEIs. Besides, measuring the level of employers' satisfaction on the knowledge, skill and job discipline of employees, who earned their degree from PHEIs is additional objective of this study.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

In line with the general objectives, the research has the following specific objectives.

- To describe perception held by employers on the quality of PHEIs.
- To examine organizational policies and practices during hiring graduates from PHEIs.
- To identify the preferences of employers' for graduates coming from PHEIs and public universities.
- To measure employers satisfaction on the knowledge, skill and job discipline of employee after they hire graduate from PHEIs and
- To measure satisfaction of employers on job performances of graduates, who come from PHEIs.

1.5. Significance of the Study

As educational institutions grow and expand, so it is also important to undertake serious and rigorous research on them. There is a great need to study higher education institutions in Ethiopia, which should ultimately inform public policy (Teffera, 2005).

It is important to examine the workforce sentiments about receiving a degree completed from PHEIs. It is quite important for prospective students to be aware of the perception toward degrees from PHEIs before they complete the program. This research can add to the limited body of literature on employability for graduates, who receive a degree from PHEIs particularly, employers' policies and practices for the recruitment and selection of job applicants. Additionally, this research may assist personnel in higher education institutions in planning programs that give students reassurance of successful job placement upon by addressing employers' expectations in the workforce. Moreover, the opinions and viewpoints on the perception of PHEIs current situation from key stakeholders will assist in understanding the limited success of existing efforts and possibilities for more effective future development.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Perception and satisfaction are very broad concepts, yet for this study purpose these two concepts are studied from employers' point of view on the service and quality of PHEIs. In addition, the scope of this study is geographically restricted to Addis Ababa. In addition, employer companies are chosen after the researcher assures the presence of graduates from PHEIs and they are represented by human resource (HR) professionals, who are responsible for employment, recruitment, placement of job applicants. These professionals were instructed to only consider prospective employees, who had obtained a degree from PHEIs when answering the survey questions. The HR professionals were also asked to respond according to their organizational culture, not their personal feelings. The researcher also limited with financial and time limitation so as to involve large sample size.

1.7. Organization of the Study

The paper comprise of five chapters. The first chapter deal with introduction section while the second chapter focuses on the theoretical literatures related with the subject matter under study. The methodology for this study presented in third chapter, which includes the selection of the population and sample, research instrument, data collection tasks and data analysis procedures. Chapter four analyzes and discusses findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter provide summary of the results, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review will introduce the theoretical framework adopted for this study, which includes the concept of perception and satisfaction. Additionally, the literature covers practices towards recruitment and selection of prospective employers. Finally, review will examine the demand for higher education with its evolution and growth in the Ethiopia context.

2.1. Employers Perception towards Private Higher Education Institutions

Although there is paucity of research on perception of employers towards PHEIs, the existing few written materials provide useful accounts in relation to stakeholders in PHEIs, their perception and satisfaction.

As Kettunen (2015) mentioned, some decades ago, stakeholders in business administration were understood as those funding bodies that invested in the company and held their stakes to collect dividends. However, stakeholders are now considered as those organizations, networks and private people, who are able to influence the objectives and activities of the organization. This is because many internal and external stakeholders can influence the strategic and other objectives, the quality of teaching and other activities. Freeman (2000) also added that a stakeholder is any group or individual, who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's performance.

Hence, the success of higher education institution depends on its ability in the respective management approaches. Besides, the role of stakeholders should be prominent in strategic plans, quality assurance systems and process descriptions. Neglecting stakeholder relationships may lead to limited success and insufficient quality assurance in a higher education institution (ibid).

Various types of stakeholders are involving within the system of higher education and employers are the one among many (Nwuke, 2008). Employers' can be both public and private entities that will be retaining graduating students. They need highly performing individuals in order to meet their goals, to deliver products and services they specialized in and to achieve competitive advantage. Consequently, during employment decision they prefer to hire graduates, who possess good knowledge, skill and job discipline (Catharina, 2009).

As Douglass and Blaung (2012) agreed, due to the existing negative perception employers are more forced to rely on graduates from public higher education institutions than the private ones. As the authors continued this is reasonably because employers want trainable people, who will learn quickly, grow in their jobs, and have a willingness to comply with organizational rules. Supporting the above authors idea Bishaw (2012) in his research indicated about quality of education had gradually deteriorated due to a number of factors. This affect level of satisfaction of employers and particularly, as it was mentioned by Negash (2006), in spite of their effort to enhance their service, on the eyes of employers PHEIs are perceived as offering low quality of education compared to public universities and colleges. The presence of such perception therefore significantly affects employers' during decision making process.

2.1.1. Employers Perception during Decision Making Process

According to Robins and Dudge (2013) perception is a psychological term related with opinion about something viewed and assessed. It is also a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. However, it varies from person to person as every individual has different beliefs towards certain products and services.

2.1.1.1. Factors Influencing Perception

As Robins and Dudge (2013) argued, what is perceived can be substantially different from objective reality. In addition to this, individuals may look at the same thing yet perceive it differently. This is because a number of factors operate to shape and distort individuals perception. These factors can reside in the perceiver; in the object, or target, being perceived; or in the context of the situation in which the perception is made. Their argument is depicted on the following model.

Factors That Influence Perception

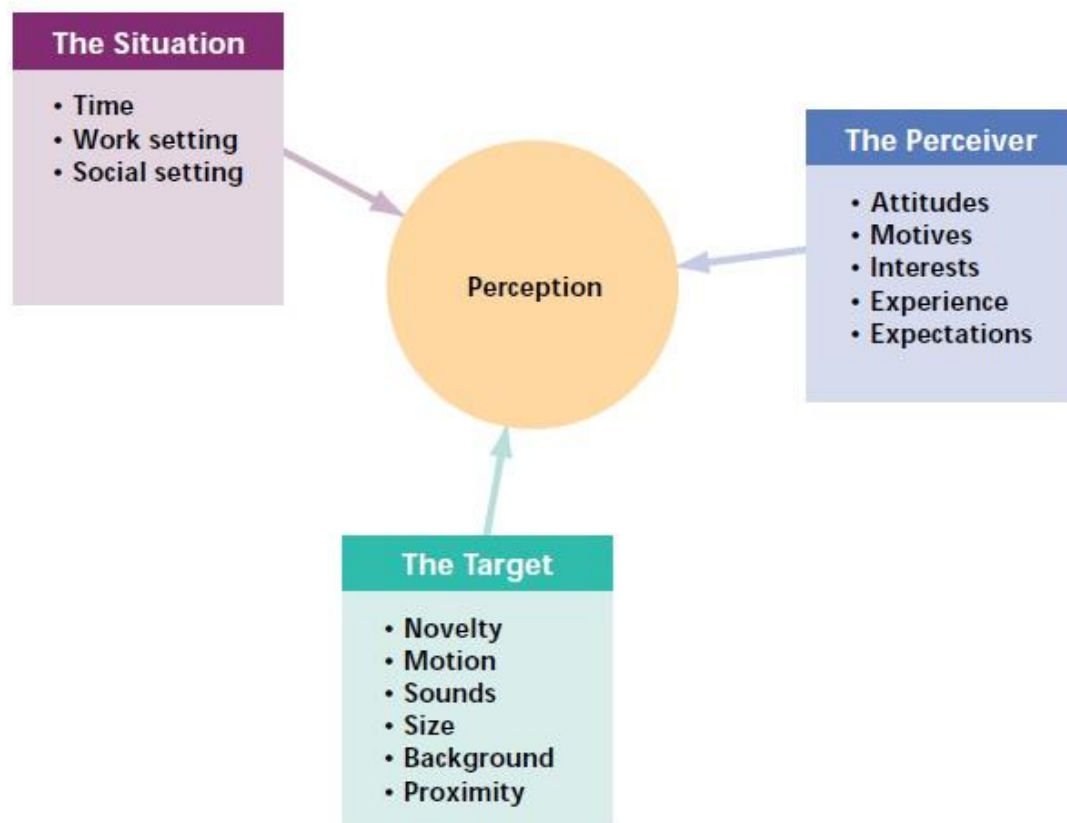


Fig. 2. 1: Factors Influencing Perception

Source: Robins and Dudge , Organizational Behavior (2013, pp.167).

Therefore, what and how we perceive things has a direct impact up on our decisions in different critical issues. Every decision requires us to interpret and evaluate information. We typically receive data from multiple sources and need to screen, process, and interpret them. Which data are relevant to the decision, and which are not? Thus, our perceptions will answer that question. We also need to develop alternatives and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Again, our perceptual process will affect the final outcome. Finally, throughout the entire decision making process, perceptual distortions often surface that can bias analysis and conclusions (Robins and Dudge, 2013).

According to Greer (2011), managers usually forced to pick up individuals out of the pool of job applicants with requisite qualifications and competence to fill jobs in the organization during the process of selection. Robins and Dudge (2013) also indicated, factors that can affect decisions, which have no close relationship with the applicant and this are known as fundamental attribution error discussed as follow.

- A. Selective Perception:** People selectively interpret what one see on the basis of ones interests, background, experience, and attitudes. Any characteristic that makes a person, an object, or an event stand out will increase the probability we will perceive it. This is because it is impossible for us to assimilate everything we see; we can take in only certain stimuli. Because we cannot assimilate all that we observe, we take in bits and pieces. But we don't choose randomly; rather, we select according to our interests, background, experience, and attitudes. Selective perception allows us to speed-read others, but not without the risk of drawing an inaccurate picture. It is in general seeing what we want to see, thus we can draw unwarranted conclusions from an ambiguous situation.

- B. Halo Effect:** this attribution error happen when we draw a general impression about an individual on the basis of a single characteristic, such as intelligence, sociability, or appearance, a halo effect is operating.

C. Contrast Effects: this is evaluation of a person's characteristics that is affected by comparisons with other people recently encountered, who rank higher or lower on the same characteristics. For example in a series of job interviews, for instance, interviewers can make distortions in any given candidate's evaluation as a result of his or her place in the interview schedule. A candidate is likely to receive a more favorable evaluation if preceded by mediocre applicants and a less favorable evaluation if preceded by strong applicants.

D. Stereotyping: this perception is occurring when we judge someone on the basis of our perception of the group to which he or she belongs.

Therefore, managers' decisions can be affected by the above mentioned factors thus, they are expected to think and rationalize before they act. In some decision situations, people follow the rational decision-making model. But other decisions are simple or unambiguous enough because the decision is affected by the above mention attribution errors.

2.2. Employers Satisfaction towards their Employees

According to Zafiroopoulos and Vrana (2008), higher education institutions must understand what service quality stakeholders need and what quality attributes are demanded by stakeholders in order to improve service quality and to satisfy stakeholders. For, Shah (2009), institutions can improve the quality of their service if they listen to and take cognizance of the experience of stakeholders. This was done by improving service quality, increasing competitiveness and dealing with the rapidly changing environment (Vakola and Rezgui, 2000).

With increased national and international competition and greater stakeholder expectations for quality service/products, organizations are engaged in the improvement of both quality and stakeholders' satisfaction (Shah, 2009). According to Mehralizadeh and Massoud (2010), organizations are now shifting their focus to comprehensive quality improvement to cope with the demand of markets.

In support of this idea, Smith et al. (2007) proclaim that, higher education institutions are facing similar challenges due to rapidly changing technology, growing international and national competition for students, staff, research output, accountability by accrediting agencies and the public. Even though reasons for quality improvement vary from organization to organization, Johnston and Kong (2011) contended that, the major reasons for improving service quality in PHEIs“ are concerned with improvement of stakeholder satisfaction and winning their loyalty, increasing confidence of stakeholders in the institutions and developing a strong attachment with customers.

Bryslan and Curry (2001) also noted that, knowledge of what satisfies stakeholders and a consideration of their role in society are important steps in quality improvement initiatives for PHEIs“ in the delivery of service quality and the assessment of their relationships with different stakeholders. Hence, greater stakeholder satisfaction leads to an improvement in loyalty, the further consumption of the service and invitations from other stakeholders. Identifying stakeholders perceptions of service quality is an important matter for PHEIs (Gallifa & Batalle, 2010).

According to Shah (2009), stakeholders’ perception of quality is one of the determinants of their attitude towards quality work and based on their perception of quality, they will be attracted to some products or services. In support of this view, Faganel (2010) observed that, PHEIs“ service quality must be improve by ensuring that the service is accurate, reliable and clear. In return, this improvement leads to higher satisfaction of various stakeholders. He furthermore remarked that, a negative response from stakeholders is the result of a failure to meet their expectations. In general, quality improvement by PHEIs would create good perceptions of the service they delivered and enable them to be competitive both nationally and internationally.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988) quality of a service is measures by the following dimensions.

1. **Tangibles:** the physical facilities and surroundings, the equipment used in the delivery of the service and appearance of the personnel.

2. **Reliability:** the ability of the service provider to deliver dependable and accurate service as promised.
3. **Responsiveness:** the institution's willingness to assist its stakeholders by providing prompt service.
4. **Assurance:** the service providers' knowledge and ability to provide confidence to stakeholders.
5. **Empathy:** readiness for provision of individualized care and attention to stakeholders.

These dimensions are represented in the model below.

Fig. 2.2: Determinants of Perceived Service Quality.

Source: Parasuraman et al. (1988, pp, 186).

Therefore, various literatures tell that PHEIs' should work in a way that can satisfy the need of stakeholders and it was mentioned that employers are one of the major stakeholders'. Thus, employers' satisfactions towards their employees are very important for both personal and organizational success and achievements (Adrijana, 2012).

In relation to satisfaction of stakeholders, Diriba (2015) did a research where he states in today's world of intense competition, the key to sustainable competitive advantage lies in delivering high quality services that will in turn result in satisfied stakeholders. As the author mentioned, when competition increases and environmental issue becomes dynamic, the importance of service quality is increased. Even though the ultimate goal of every service giving industry is satisfying stakeholders more often, many of the service delivering organizations are failed to achieve this objective. However, in his research he did not consider employers' as stakeholders' hence their level of satisfaction was not measured.

Added to the above, Ashenafi (2010), made a research where he investigated the performance of private higher education institutes in relation to educational output to satisfy employers' need. The researcher also did his best to ascertain PHEIs are working to satisfy the expectation of employers. Yet, since employers' satisfaction is determined by their perception and expectation, he didn't indicate the relationship existed between perception and satisfaction.

2.3. Performance Appraisal as a way to Measure Employers Satisfaction

To measure the level of satisfaction, employers' begun to explore new ways and performance appraisal is the most common one. It is defined as a systematic evaluation of individuals with respect to his or her performance on the job and his or her potential for organizational development. It is a formal, structured system of measuring and evaluating an employee's job related behaviors and outcomes to discover how and why the employee can perform more effectively in the future so that the employee, organization and society all benefit (Greer, 2001).

The performance of a worker can be evaluated using different criteria (Parasuraman et al. (1988). It might be determined according to objective measures such as the number of pieces produced, the value of sales or the quality of output. These measures are directly observed both by the person, who performs the evaluation and the person being evaluated. As a consequence, the use of objective measures might simplify appraisal through a standardization of processes. Moreover, it could generate perceptions of equity since the parameters that are evaluated are fixed and well-known to employees (ibid).

On the other hand, evaluation may be determined according to subjective performance measures, based on the evaluator's judgments (Baker, 1994). The use of subjective measures provides flexibility in the appraisal system, since it is possible to adapt the evaluation process to the particular circumstances of a job. In addition, it makes possible to account for the different dimensions of a worker's job, avoiding the potential problem of "misalignment of incentives" (ibid). However, it may enhance perceptions of inequity among workers since ratings are not based on observable and clearly-defined criteria, and it could also give rise to distortions and inefficient behavior. As Greer (2001) described, in the past most organizations assessed only how well employees performed the tasks listed on a job description, but today's less hierarchical and more service oriented organizations require more. As he noted, three major types of behavior that constitute performance at work needs to measure during performance appraisal.

- A. **Task Performance:** Performing the duties and responsibilities that contribute to the production of a good or service or to administrative tasks. This includes most of the tasks in a conventional job description.
- B. **Citizenship:** Actions that contribute to the psychological environment of the organization, such as helping others when not required, supporting organizational objectives, treating co-workers with respect, making constructive suggestions, and saying positive things about the workplace.

C. Counter productivity: Actions that actively damage the organization. These behaviors include stealing, damaging company property, behaving aggressively toward co-workers, and taking avoidable absences.

Most managers believe good performance means doing well on the first two dimensions and avoiding the third. A person who does core job tasks very well but is rude and aggressive toward co-workers is not going to be considered a good employee in most organizations, and even the most pleasant and upbeat worker, who can't do the main job tasks well is not going to be a good employee. Therefore, employers are looking for knowledge, skill and discipline so as to operate their operation (Greer, 2001).

2.4. History of Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

Development of higher education is very significant for the economic, social and cultural development of any country. Strengthening such sector and implementing developed skills and knowledge is preconditions for permanent and sustainable economic growth (Adrijana, 2012).

According to Saint (2004), despite Ethiopia possesses a 1,700 years tradition of education, the development of modern higher education was dated back only to 1950s. Attempting to bring change from traditional models of education to the modern and secular forms was not a simple task for previous secular rulers, as there were significant obstacles. This was due in part to the conservative attitude of church leaders (Popes from the Egyptian Coptic Church) and noblemen.

Since the 1940s, Ethiopia has experienced three systems of political governance, each distinguished by its education policy. The first system of governance was the Imperial system that started soon after WWII and lasted until 1974. Some argued that this period was the golden age of modern education while others claim that the number beneficiaries of modern education were very much minimal (Nega, 2012).

Similarly, Negash (2006) also pointed out that, the golden age of modern education in Ethiopia is dated to the years between 1941 and 1970. This is because education sector with his late majesty the Emperor as frontline minister was by far the best staffed and financed. Thus, throughout the 1940s and 1950s there were too many schools for students and incentives as well. Besides, brilliant students were enticed to join vocational such as agriculture, laboratory science and teacher training through free food and lodging.

However, as Nega (2012) argued, between these years the education sector of Ethiopia was undoubtedly influenced by two major ideas about what education is good for. The first one was the Emperor's conviction that modern education, preferably carried out by Lutheran missionaries, was an excellent strategy to educate and train citizens, who respect their king, country and religion. Secondly, Ethiopia's growing integration with the Western world in general and the African continent in particular was an additional idea that encouraged the growth of the modern school in the urban and semi-urban areas of the country.

Despite, the Imperial regime's contributions for the expansion of education and modernization of the country, as Negash (2006) concluded, the system was criticized for not paying enough attention to the communication gaps between generations that modern schools were creating. Besides, the education system was geared to the production of academic, who could best be entrusted with only clerical tasks. The other critic was that the curriculum of Ethiopian education was highly irrelevant to the historical experience and current socio-economic situation of the country. On the above of these problems University College of Addis Ababa was the only institution that provides tertiary education for limited number of students.

Bishaw (2012) also mentioned on his article entitled Education in Ethiopia ; past, present and future prospects that, after the down fall of the imperial system the socialist regime had no difficulties in criticizing the poor performance of the Imperial system in the field of education. Ethiopia was depicted as the poorest country in the world and this poverty was allegedly brought by the Imperial (feudal) system of rule.

Thus, the educational policy of the Imperial system was simply dismissed by the new leader, who promised that they would transform the economy and hence pull the country out of its poverty trough education. Supporting Bishaw, Ayalew (2012), synthesized that after the Derge came in to power it started launching of vigorous national campaign against illiteracy, which can be considered as one of the significant contributions of the system. By July 1990, which marked the Eleventh Anniversary of the Literacy Campaign, a 75.3 percent national literacy rate was reported. Besides, in terms of expansion, the number of primary schools increased at a high rate in all parts of the country. Moreover, the slogan of the Ethiopian government was to spread education as much as possible and the nation's economic and social development problems would take care of themselves.

Nevertheless, Nega (2012) challenged that, the fundamental aim of education at that time was to cultivate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the young generation. For this reason, by the mid-1980s, the socialist government could no longer ignore the widespread public dissatisfaction with the quality of education. The educational system of the Imperial period might have lacked relevance, but as Bishaw (2012) noted "a fairly good education for a relatively small number of citizens had under the socialist regime been transformed into quite poor education for much larger number of children".

Negash (2006) asserted that, the current government, Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front(EPRDF) that came to power in 1991 opened a new era dawned on Ethiopia. The federal system of governance equipped with an appropriate educational policy that became operational in 1994. The educational policy of the new government is thus the third policy in the history of the country since 1945. The new policy has brought many changes in the country. For instance gross enrolment ratio reaches 70 % in 2006. Besides, the Ethiopian government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular have been become extremely efficient in mobilizing external funds, which used for expansion of the education sector (Lemma, 2013). Specifically, enrolment in higher education (diploma, undergraduate and post-graduate) has been increased significantly. This rate of increase was indeed impressive by any count. What has been even more impressive in the new system was that the growth of private sector in the provision of higher education, which was not observed so far (ibid).

2.4.1. The Beginning of Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

Private higher education institutions' are one of business oriented organizations, which offer different programs, and involved in competition to provide quality schooling to the market. Beneficiaries of the service would have options to choose from many institutions, which present similar service (Omer, 2015). Private provision of higher education in Ethiopia is still in its infancy although the first privately-owned institution of higher learning dates back to 1954. Hence, higher education became no longer the monopoly of the state from this time onwards. Since the mid-1990s, the private provision sector has grown following reforms introduced by the 1994 Education and Training Policy Sector Strategy, whose objectives were to increase access to educational opportunities with enhanced equity, quality and relevance (Nwuke, 2008).

According to World Bank (2004), over the last two decades private higher education institutions are mushrooming both in the capital and in the regions of Ethiopia. This growth is caused by several reasons. As the report outlined, first and above all after the current government adopted liberalism, which was typically characterized by privatization of earlier government owned institutions, different service sectors were freed. Consequently, many investors and academicians started to enroll themselves in to it. As a result, there are a number of private universities and colleges in Ethiopia, which aim to generate profit and impart knowledge to the society.

Secondly, since education becomes one of the backbones of modernization and a power by itself at the 21st century, societies demand for higher education centers had increased instantly. To the contrary, the few public higher education institutions could not manage to satisfy all those needs. Accordingly, this gap created an opportunity for PHEIs to fulfill those unsatisfied desires. Thirdly, the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic constitution has declared that education is free of any political and religious ideology thus, making the curricular to be secular contributed for the expansion of many PHEIs.

Contrary to above, scholars like Ives and Venpa (2012) argued that, higher education should be public good, which should be provided by the State in order to ensure that equity, quality and accessibility are met. On the other hand Nweke (2012) claimed that higher education is a quasi-private good, whose benefits can be completely appropriated by private actors and as such should be privately provided. Kettunen (2013) suggested a compromising idea on which, he stated problems did not exist up on the ownership of institutions, it would rather present on the quality of education that these institutions are rendering. As he mentioned, the most likely immediate consequence of increased private provision of higher education would be a decline in the average quality of education. Supporting his idea Yezengaw (2003) mentioned that, one of the primary purposes of higher education is to provide a signal of the productivity of workers in the labour market. This effect is likely to diminish if there are many private higher education providers and there is no effective quality assurance mechanism.

The decline in quality of education has various consequences. For example as it was mentioned by (Nwuke 2008) the declining of quality of education could increase the recruiting cost for employers as they devise new mechanisms and instruments to screen out potentially low ability/low productivity applicants. Moreover, employers` would develop an attitude to neglect applicants, who graduated from PHEIs in general. Conversely, Tefera (2005) noted that, private higher education institutions are undergoing a quite transformation so as to enhance their service quality. Despite, they played a key role in the development of the nation, leaders of PHEIs regret for the lack of recognition and appreciation they couldn't get. Besides, these institutions operate under the direct supervision of the national, regional and sub-regional education offices across which accreditation authority is distributed.

Tefera (2005) continue and argued that, all PHEIs required to register and became reaccredited before they start operation. Once the institutions receives a peer - reviewed reaccredited status and operate for one year, it normally receives full accreditation then the institution is evaluated every two years. He further explained the various contribution of PHEIs are making. As he said these institutions provide access to the growing number of students, who might otherwise not be admitted to tertiary education.

Besides, they educate important portion of students particularly in business, computer science and health fields. They also enable a significant expansion of tertiary enrolments at very little additional cost to government and attract a high proportion of women students. His concluding remark was that, PHEIs required obtaining recognition from different stakeholders. In light of burgeoning demand for higher education and limited capacity of public institutions, a more favorable policy and a positive perception /attitude towards PHEIs“ are highly warranted.

2.5. Demand for Private Higher Education Institutions

According to UNESCO (2003), the expansion of access to higher education is one of the strongest arguments in favor of private provision of education in Ethiopia. The growth of private higher education sector presents opportunities that can contribute to the pool of talent and knowledge that the Ethiopian economy needs in order to be competitive in the increasingly knowledge-driven global economy of the 21st century. Thus, there exists high demand from the public to attain education at tertiary level.

Due to the presence of high demand the numbers of PHEIs are growing from time to time. According to MoE, Education Statistics Report (2006), in 2004 there were only 22 higher education institutions classified as private by the Government of Ethiopia, up from 16 in 2001. In that period, most of the institutions were accredited to award certificates and diplomas only. The change in recent years was so unprecedented that the number and scale of institutions rose very rapidly and in 2006 there were 27 institutions enrolling 39,691 students for undergraduate degrees. Recent report of MoE (2009) shows that, there are more than 100 PHEIs out of these four of them are secured the status of university.

As Tefera (2005) and Nwuke (2008) indicated, PHEIs offer courses that render good employment opportunities and concentrate in social sciences, business, and computing science. On the other hand, courses such as medicine, engineering and natural sciences, because they are capital and skill intensive and thus requiring huge investment, remain the domain of the State.

Conversely Adrijana (2012) argued that, the contribution of PHEIs in Ethiopia is at best insignificant as there programs are limited with some business and social science fields. The result is that there is virtually no natural science or applied technologies research in private higher institutions in Ethiopia.

PHEIs are also criticized for their unfair geographical distributions. As Nwuke (2008) showed, most of PHEIs are based in the capital, with few branches in major towns. As he explained this is because of the prevalence of high demand in towns. Economic theory suggests that, the demand for higher education is a function of income and price (tuition, other fees and the opportunity cost) of higher education. As people get richer, their demand for higher education (and all the services it provides) also increases. Given that Addis Ababa is the wealthiest region in Ethiopia, it is therefore not unexpected that profit-maximizing private providers of higher education will concentrate where willingness and ability to pay is highest. In addition, the scarcity of infrastructural facilities and complimentary inputs outside Addis Ababa and the major urban areas raise quite significantly the cost of private provision in other parts of the country. Therefore, PHEIs strive hardily to attract customers in order to fulfill the unsatisfied demand. Hence, providing high level of quality service has become the selling point to attract customer attention and the most important driver that leads to satisfaction of stakeholders.

The foregoing literature provided facts concerning roles played by PHEIs and the existed negative perception towards their service. Besides, the beginning and expansion of PHEIs in Ethiopia was reviewed. However, most of the accounts lack to show the extent of employers' satisfaction and their prior perception before they hire graduates, who acquired their degree from PHEIs. Therefore, this research is expected to fill this research gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research method and procedures used in the study, which consists of the following sections: research design and approach, population, sample size and sampling procedure, data sources and data collection methods with analysis methods.

3.1. Research Approach and Design

Research design is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as obtains answers to research questions. The plan is the overall scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing hypothesis and their operational implication to the final analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). Based on the purpose of the research, descriptive research design was chosen. This is because as it was noted by Best and Kahn (1998) this design helps to describe and interpret the trend of events that exist now, and which existed in the past and which influences on the present situation. It also helps to explain widely varieties of data from different respondents. Whereas mixed research approach was used so as to analyze data using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Both techniques was used to overcome the limitation of using one technique. Thus, the researcher believes that the objectives of this study are best addresses through a descriptive design and by using mixed approach.

3.2. Population, Sample size and Sampling Procedure

The target populations for this study are managers, supervisors and human resource professionals of different employer companies. They are chosen as a respondent for the fact that they frequently involved in recruitment, placement and performance appraisal activities. Besides, employer companies are chosen after the researcher confirms the presence of employees, who obtain their degree from PHEIs. As it was noted, Neuman (2005) purposive sampling enables a researcher to use his/her judgment to select cases that will best enable to answer the research question(s) and meet objectives. Consequently, purposive sampling method was used for this research purpose.

Neuman (2005) added that, this method gives the researcher an opportunity to choose respondents on the ground of their knowledge and exposure to the subject matter under study. Hence, 120 respondents were participated in this study from 34 governmental and privately owned employer companies. Moreover, snow ball sampling was used so as to trace companies that recruit graduates, who got their degree from PHEIs.

3.3. Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

For this research, both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Primary data was collected through survey method. For this purpose both open and close ended questionnaires were prepared and administered to the chosen respondents. In addition to questionnaire, in depth interview was also held with individuals, who are selected purposely on the basis of their knowledge and exposure to recruit and measure performances of employees. Other than this, secondary sources mainly journals and publications of organizations were consulted.

3.4. Methods of Data Analysis

There exist different statistical techniques to analysis both the qualitative and quantitative data mainly descriptive statistics. For this research purpose the raw data collected was grouped, tallied, organized and subjected to statistical analysis tools such as, frequency and percentage analysis. For this the statistical package for the social science (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze the data. Data collected from open ended and interview were classified and organized into themes for analysis purpose.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

The researcher underwent through ethical consideration throughout the process of this research preparation. The researcher first requested all concerned respondents and confirmed their willingness for participating in the study and well informed them they have the right to decline their participation in at any time of the session. Besides, they had been clearly told the information they provide would keep confidential. Then data collection process was started by explaining to respondents about the purpose of the research. Moreover, in order to assure discretion, they were not forced to mention their names, other personal identification issues and their organization's confidential documents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents were asked about their age, educational background, work experience and type of organization they are working for and their responses are analyzed in the following table.

Table 4.1: Profile of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Age	26-30	18	15
	31-35	41	34.2
	36-40	35	29.2
	Above 40	26	21.7
	Total	120	100
Educational Background	Bachelor's Degree	55	45.8
	Master's Degree	59	49.2
	PhD	6	5
Work Experience	0-5 Years	13	10.8
	6-10 Years	41	34.2
	11-15 Years	56	46.7
	Above 16 Years	10	8.3
Organization Type	Governmental sector	60	50
	Private (non-governmental) sector	60	50
Respondents Position	HR Officer	33	27.5
	HR Head	37	30.8
	HR Manager	25	20.8
	General Manager	25	20.8

Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

Analysis of respondents' age on table 4.1. indicated that, 34.2 % ranged from 31- 40; 29.2% from 36 - 40; 21.7 % were above 40 and only 15 % from 26 - 30. Concerning years of service as HR professional, 46.7 % had 11-15 years of experience; 34.2 % between 6 -10 years; 10.8 % less than 5 years; and 8.3 % more than 16 years. This implies that, respondents are experienced enough to provide relevant response for the study. Concerning their educational background, 49.2 % had Master's degree while 45.8 % Bachelor's degree and the rest 5 % had Ph.D degree. This indicates that, all respondents had enough educational background so as to give appropriate responses. Regarding the type of their organization, half or 50 % of the respondents were government employees while equal percentages of the sample sizes were working for privately-owned organizations. This proportion facilitates a bias-free conclusion.

4.2. Employers Perception on the Educational Quality of Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs).

Table 4.2: Perception of Employers about the educational quality of PHEIs

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Employers perceive PHEIs as a provider of low quality of education.	Strongly Agree	51	42.5
	Agree	20	16.6
	Disagree	28	23.3
	Strongly Disagree	21	17.5
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

As shown in the above table, respondents were asked about their perception of the educational quality of PHEIs. Accordingly, 42.5 % strongly agreed that PHEIs provided lower quality education, while 16.6 % somewhat agreed to this notion. Those who strongly disagreed to the statement were 17 %, while those who only disagreed constituted 23.3%. This indicates that, most employer companies perceived PHEIs education quality as low. Respondents further indicated factors for developing such perception. They attributed it to the lack of full-time instructors in PHEIs. They believed that most PHEIs hire part-time instructors where commitment and stability are questionable. Besides, they assume PHEIs have limited teaching aids, which significantly caused a quality problem in their service. Furthermore, informants believed that, PHEIs assessment procedures are simplistic and graduates lack skills required of them. Interview results also confirmed the above result. As informants explained there exists a negative perception of the educational quality of PHEIs. This is because such institutions put more emphasis on income generation than delivering quality education.

Nevertheless, respondents have also indicated the availability few notable PHEIs that are known for their educational quality and that there is no denying the fact that there are many institutions operating with minimum quality. Hence, the tendency of respondents was to consider all PHEIs as deficient in the educational service they provide to their students.

4.3. Level of Knowledge, Skill and Job Discipline of Graduates of PHEIs.

Table 4.3: Knowledge, Skill and Job Discipline of Graduates from PHEIs.

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Graduates from PHEIs have enough knowledge.	Yes	92	76.7
	No	28	23.3
	Total	120	100.0
Graduates from PHEIs acquired enough skill.			
	Yes	84	70.0
	No	36	30.0
Graduates of PHEIs developed good job discipline.			
	Yes	40	33.3
	No	80	66.7

Source : Computed from survey result, 2017.

As the literature indicates, employers require competent employees, who have acquired enough knowledge, skill and job discipline for the proper accomplishment of assigned tasks. Besides, competent employees are important for personal and organizational growth (Shah 2009, Adrijana, 2012). Therefore, respondents were asked about the knowledge, skill and job discipline of employees, who acquired their degrees from PHEIs. As it is indicated in table 4. 3 out of the total 120 respondents 76.7 % confirmed that graduates, who came from PHEIs have sufficient knowledge for the job required. Whereas 23.3 % of respondents claim that graduates from PHEIs lack sufficient knowledge as compared with government students. This implies that graduates from PHEIs have enough knowledge so as to accomplish tasks for which they are hired. Respondents further explain that their prior perception is found contradicting when they see the actual performance of graduates, who taught at PHEIs.

When it comes to skills of graduates, most respondents 70 % answered that they believed that PHEIs' graduates were equipped with the necessary skill during their stay at their respective education institutions. 30 % of respondents however disagreed and said that they lack the appropriate skills as compared to graduates coming from public institutions. This implies that, graduates from PHEIs have enough skill so as to accomplish the task they are assigned to perform. This goes in line with what Roger and Dudge (2013) argued that what is perceived can be substantially different from objective reality.

The last point presented in table 4.3 was about the job discipline; the result revealed that the majority, 66.6 %, replied that graduates, who acquired their degree from PHEIs, have disciplinary problems. In the contrary, 33.3 % of respondents disagreed. Besides, interview result with key informants is in line with the previous responses. The interview respondents criticize the employees for lack of punctuality, for failure to follow the dressing code of the organization, and for mal-treating clients. This might imply that, despite their sufficient knowledge and skill, the graduates were not trained well enough with regard to disciplinary issues.

4.4. Employment Opportunity of PHEIs Graduates

Table 4.4: Employment Opportunity of Graduates coming from PHEIs

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Graduates from PHEIs have good employment opportunity.	Yes	48	40.0
	No	72	60.0
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

Human Resource officers, who were involved in recruiting, selecting and hiring of job applicants were asked about the PHEIs graduates’ employment opportunity. Their response revealed that, 40% of them agreed that graduates from private educational institutions have good employment opportunity whereas the majority (60%), agreed that graduates from PHEIs face employment problems when compared to their public counterparts. This implies that graduates from PHEIs face more employment problems than those public institutions graduates do.

Interview from HR officers also confirmed that due to the existing negative perception, PHEIs' graduates stay unemployed for longer period of time as compared to public graduates. This implies that the existing negative perception prevents graduates from being hired at different organizations. Literature also confirmed that though PHEIs work hard to enhance their service quality, employers perceive private higher education as inferior to public higher education (Kettunen, 2015). Consequently, the prevalence of such perception affects the employment opportunity of private higher education graduates.

4.5. Effects of Perception towards Employers Selection Decision

Table 4.5: Impact of Perception on Employers Selection of job applicants

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Level of extent employers decisions are affected by the existing negative perception.	Very high	68	56.7
	High	27	22.5
	Low	22	18.3
	Not affected	3	2.5
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

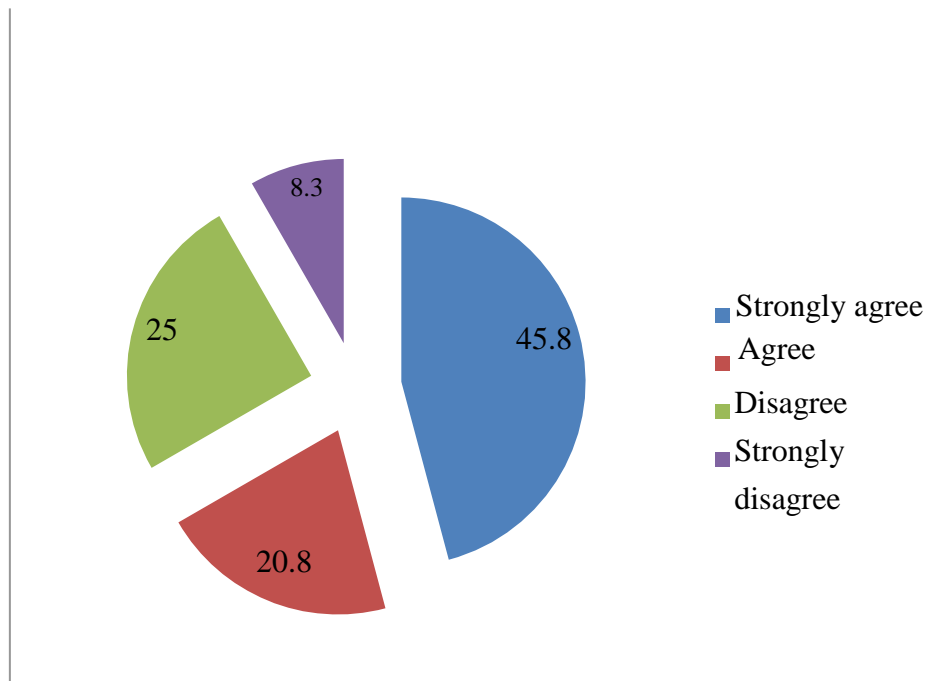
As indicated in table 4.5 above, 56.7 % agreed that their respective organization is very highly influenced by the existing negative perception on the service quality of PHEIs. 22.5 % also showed that, they are highly affected. Only a small percentage 18.3 % and 2.5 % agreed they are not severely affected by the existing negative perception. This implies that despite the fact that graduates acquire the necessary skills and knowledge, graduates from PHEIs are not preferred for different vacant positions. This shows that most employers are affected by the existing negative perception. As it was understood specifically from interview result, government organizations assume that they are more in favor of public institution graduates. Hence, during recruitment graduates from public universities are given priority.

As Robins and Dudge (2013) noted, managers usually forced to pick up individuals out of the pool of job applicants with requisite qualifications and competence to fill jobs in the organization during the process of selection. At this critical time they can be affected by different perceptions thus, results of the study also support this fact.

4.6. Employers Preference during Recruitment

Graph 4. 1: Organizations Preference from Public and Private Higher Education Institutions.

Employers were asked about their preference from the pool of applicants for their vacant positions and their responses are charted as follows.

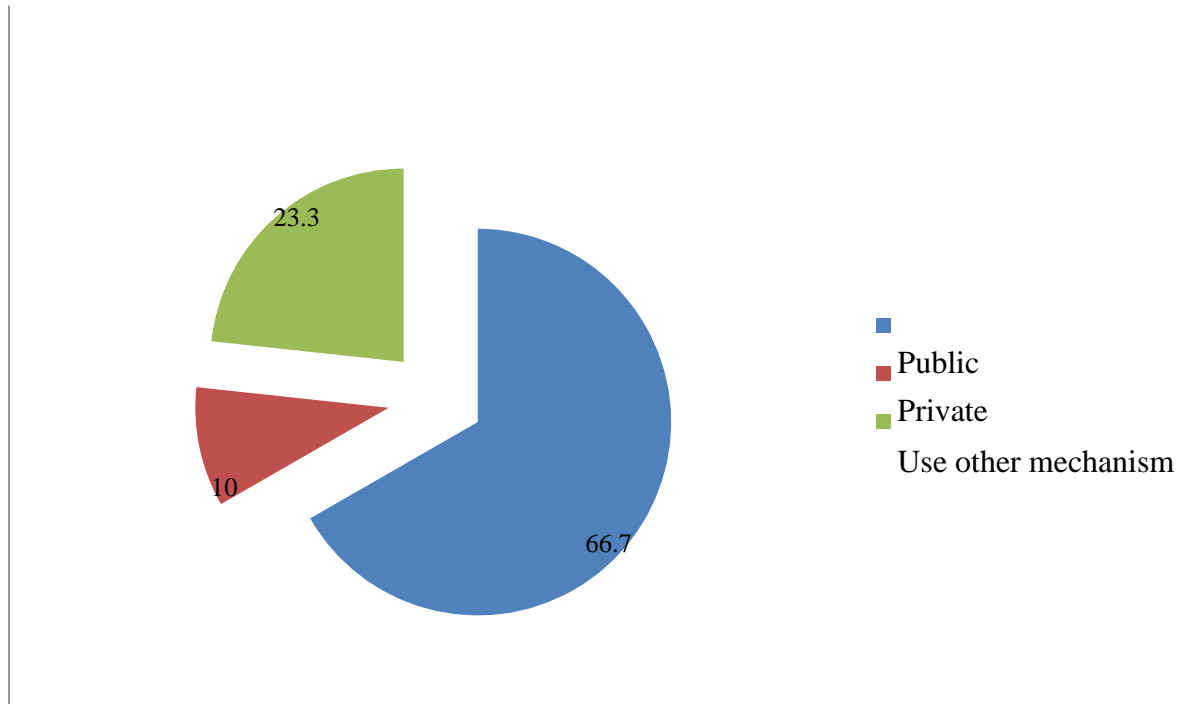


Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

Respondents were asked where their preference lies when choosing job applicants, good percentage of respondents 45.8 % strongly agree and 20.8 % agree that their primary preferences are graduates from public universities. 20.8 % disagree and 8.3 % strongly disagree to the notion of preferring public higher education graduates only are insignificant percentage. This indicates that most organizations prefer graduates, who acquire their degree from public universities to those who do so from PHEIs.

4.7. Employers Choice when Applicants Score Equal Result

Graph 4. 2: Employers best preference when applicants score the same result.



Source : Computed from survey result, 2017.

As it is indicated on the above graph 4.2, 66.7 % of respondents agreed that they prefer graduates, who attain their degree from public university even when two candidates score the same result in employment exams. On the other hand 23.3 % of respondents agreed that instead of choosing the type of organization, they prefer to use another selection mechanism when candidates score similar result after examination. It is only 10 % of respondents replied that they prefer private graduates. This implies that, during the process of screening if applicants score similar result the one, who come from a public university is given priority.

4.8. Employers Consideration during Recruitment

Table 4.6 : Organizations Consideration during Recruitment

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percent
Employers consider the type of institution where graduates are coming from during recruitment	Strongly Agree	69	57.5
	Agree	20	16.7
	Disagree	14	11.7
	Strongly Disagree	17	14.2
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Computed from survey result,2017.

Employers may use numerous selection methods when they are interested in gathering information about potential candidates. As Greer (2011) pointed out, during background check employers consider work experience and recommendations. Besides, they may prefer to hire graduates from institutions with strong reputations. Results of the study also show this fact. As showed in table 4. 6, 57.5 % strongly agreed that during the process of selection employers consider whether the degree is acquired from PHEIs or not. Similarly, 16.7 % of respondents agreed that they give attention to where the degree is acquired. On the other hand, 11.7 % disagree about where applicants are taught. The rest 14.2 % strongly disagree and they give emphasis on only for academic achievements. Thus, as it is confirmed by respondents, employers decisions are highly influenced by the institutions where graduates come from. Therefore, it can be concluded that employers give more attention to the type of institutions that applicants are come from.

4.9. Employers Recruitment Policy

Table 4.7: Organization's policy not to hire graduates from PHEIs

Statement	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Employers have a policy not to hire graduates from PHEIs	Yes	0	0
	No	120	100
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Computed from survey result, 2017.

As shown in the table 4.9 100% of respondents confirmed about the non-existence of organizational policy of not hiring graduates from PHEIs. This indicates that, employer companies did not have an established organizational policy about disregarding applicants from PHEIs. This shows that applicants, who have obtained degrees from PHEIs would be considered for employment, particularly if they obtained their degrees from a notable institution. However, when an employer knows a candidate has earned their degree from PHEIs, there is a clear negative bias toward that candidate. These results signal misalignment between policies and practices of employers. Furthermore, this finding is similar to the result of Saint (2006) that found employers preferred job applicants from public institution to those from private institutions.

Interview result also reveal the same result where informants agreed that most organizations did not have such a policy yet they are informally oriented to recruit or give priority for public university graduates. Thus, it is possible to conclude that though there is no written policy to disfavor private applicants, employers are highly inclined to hire graduates from government universities for various reasons.

4.10. Employer's Satisfaction

Table 4.8. Satisfaction of Employers towards Performance of Graduates from PHEIs

S.N	Item	Highly satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Highly dissatisfied	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Knowledge of the job	41	34.2	55	45.8	7	5.8	17	14.2	-	-
2	Quality of job accomplished	37	30.8	60	50	6	5	17	14.2	-	-
3	Effective use of time to accomplish tasks	34	28.3	58	48.3	7	5.8	21	17.8		
4	Creativity and innovativeness	38	31.7	59	49.2	10	8.3	10	8.3	3	2.5
5	Ability to solve problems	41	34.2	62	51.7	3	2.5	11	9.2	3	2.5
6	Professional competency	37	30.8	70	58.3	-	-	10	8.3	3	2.5
7	Communication skill										
7.1	Oral communication	49	40.8	47	39.2	3	2.5	18	15	3	2.5
7.2	Written communication	34	28.3	62	51.7	7	5.8	17	14.2		
8	Team work	48	40	58	48.3	4	3.3	10	8.3		
9	Speed of accomplishing a task	38	31.7	54	45	11	9.2	14	11.7	3	2.5
10	Respecting organization's code of conduct	10	8.3	43	35.8	2	1.6	50	41.6	15	12.5
11	Respecting ethical concerns	18	15	39	32.5	10	8.3	43	35.8	10	8.3

Source : Computed from survey result, 2017.

In order to measure performances of employee, who acquired degree from PHEIs, respondents were asked questions and their response is analyzed and interpreted as follow. As shown in item 1 of table 4.8, 34.2 % of respondents were highly satisfied with the ability of private higher education institutions graduates. 45 % were also satisfied. It was only 5.8 % of respondents who were neutral while 14.2 % expressed their dissatisfaction with the knowledge of graduates. This implies that graduates from PHEIs are equipped with satisfactory knowledge in order to accomplish jobs that are prescribed in their job description.

Respondents were also asked to measure how well jobs are accomplished by graduates, who came from PHEIs; 30.8 % were highly satisfied while 50 % were satisfied with quality of jobs accomplished by employees, who came from PHEIs. Only 5 % were neutral and 14.2 % dissatisfied. This shows that employers' are satisfied with the quality of performances that are accomplished by graduates from PHEIs. As mentioned by Catharina (2009), employers' require talented and skilled workforce, who can make their organization creative and innovative in the competitive business world. As indicated in item 4 of table 4.8, 49.2 % and 31.7 % were satisfied with their employees' creativity and innovativeness in the working environment. On the other hand 8.3 % and 2.5 % of respondents were dissatisfied. Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that employers'' are satisfied with the creativity and innovativeness of their employees, no matter where they were educated.

As shown in item 5 of table 4. 8, 51.7 % of respondents were satisfied with the graduates' ability to solve problems related with the job they are assigned to do. 34. 2 % were also highly satisfied though, 2.5 % were undecided and 9.2 were not satisfied with employees. Thus, as employers'' are represented by HR professionals, they confirmed their satisfaction with graduate's ability in solving problems related with their job.

With regard to professional competency, as indicated in table 4.8, 58.3 % and 30.8 % satisfied and highly satisfied, respectively. Only 8.3 % and 2.5 % were dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied respectively with professional competency of graduates from PHEIs. Thus, this implies that employers are satisfied with graduates'' professional competency, which every employer seeks most.

As it was mentioned by David (2007), communication skill is a foremost skill for a successful accomplishment of a given task. In this regard, 40.8 % and 39.2 % of the respondents were highly satisfied and satisfied respectively. The rest were dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied. The analysis of result shows that, employers“ are satisfied with communication, particularly oral communication skill of PHEIs graduates.

Pertaining to written communication skill, responses similar to the above were gathered. 51.7 % and 28.3 % were satisfied and highly satisfied respectively. The rest were either dissatisfied or undecided. From this it is possible to conclude that, most employers companies are satisfied with written communication skill of PHEIs graduates. Regarding graduates involvement in team work 40 % of respondents were highly satisfied and 48.3 were satisfied. Only 3.3 and 8.3 % were undecided and dissatisfied, respectively. Therefore, we can say that employers are satisfied with team work ability of PHEIs' graduates.

Concerning meeting deadlines 45 % of the respondents are satisfied while 31.7% were highly satisfied with PHEIs graduates. Only small percentages were undecided or dissatisfied. This implies that employers are satisfied with their PHEIs graduates meeting deadlines. Organizations usually develop their own code of conduct, which needs to be respected by employees and this was the other point that employers“ were asked about in this research. Table 4.8 above shows that 41.6 % and 12.5 % of respondents were dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied respectively. It was only small proportions 8.3 % and 35.8% of respondents, who were highly satisfied and satisfied, respectively. An insignificant percentage was undecided. This shows that, despite employers“ satisfaction with other important matters that measure employees’ performance, they are dissatisfied with PHEIs graduates respecting the various codes of conduct that their organization has laid down.

The last issue presented on table 4.8 was about ethical concerns of employees, who graduates from PHEIs and 32.5 % replied satisfied while 15 % agreed about their high level of satisfaction. Whereas 8.3 % were neutral while 35.8 % were dissatisfied. The last 8.3 % confirmed their high level of dissatisfaction. From this result it is possible to conclude that, employers most frequently observed ethical problems from their employees, who graduated from PHEIs.

4.11. Performance Appraisal Results of Graduates of PHEIs

Table 4.9 : Performance of graduates from PHEIs and public universities

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Graduates from PHEIs score less than public graduates	Strongly agree	31	25.8
	Agree	9	7.5
	Disagree	35	29.2
	Strongly disagree	45	37.5
	Total	120	100.0

Source : Computed from survey result, 2017.

Managers, who involve during performance appraisal, were asked about frequently observed performance of their employees. Besides, HR professionals were asked to give response to this question by referring documents about performance result of alumni from PHEIs. Accordingly, 37.5 % and 29.2% of respondents strongly agree and disagree, respectively that PHEIs' graduates are poor performers. It is only 7.5 % from total respondents, who agree and 25.8% strongly agree that they are poor performers. This implies that, PHEIs graduates not low performers as perceived.

As literatures suggest performance of employees can be measured by task performance, citizenship and counter productivity (Greer, 2001). Most managers believe good performance means doing well on the first two dimensions and avoiding the third. Results of the study also show that graduates from PHEIs' are good at performing tasks per the expectation, hence the perception of employers' are found different from the objective reality.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter briefly restates the research problem and reviews the major methods used in the study. The major sections of this chapter summarize the results and discuss their implications. Additionally, recommendations for further research will be provided.

5.1. SUMMARY

As discussed in the first chapter a student can complete a tertiary level of education at PHEIs. However, recognition of a degree obtained from such institutions leaves much to be desired. Research has shown that employers are not always willing to hire applicants with a degree acquired from PHEIs (Mizanur, 2013 Kettunen, 2015). Currently, there exist more than 100 institutions in Ethiopia offering tertiary education for students and a large amount of research has focused on students and family perceptions of PHEIs service. But this study addresses the gap in the literature concerning employment of graduates, who obtained a degree from private institutions and examines policies and practices that employers use in their hiring process. Additionally, this study adds to the body of knowledge about employers' perception during selection methods in the recruitment of job applicants for professional positions.

In order to achieve the above objectives a questionnaire was prepared, which contained three sections. Section one deals with demographic characteristics of respondents. The second and third section contains questions about employers' perception and satisfaction respectively. Further, key informants were also selected from sample size to obtain detailed information.

After the quantitative data was collected, it was identified and analyzed through SPSS version 21 and the percentages with frequency were reported. Besides, data obtained through open ended questionnaire and interviews were also analyzed qualitatively in narrative and descriptive structure to answer the following research questions.

- How do employers perceive the educational quality of PHEIs?
- What is the perception of employers with regard to hiring graduates, who earned their degrees from PHEIs?
- What are the policies and practices of employers“ regarding hiring graduates from PHEIs?
- What is the extent of employers“ satisfaction with the knowledge, skill and job discipline of employees who graduated from PHEIs? and
- What is the level of employers“ satisfaction with the performances of employees, who graduated from PHEIs?

Thus, each of the five research questions are answered and summarized as follows. The findings obtained in this study demonstrated that employers’ have developed a negative perception towards the educational quality of PHEIs in general. The problem is more glaring during recruitment in that employers“ given a strong preference to a graduate with a degree from public universities compared to private ones. Therefore, if employers had to choose between a public and private higher institution graduates, most of them would go for the candidate with a degree from public higher educational institutions. With regard to the third research question, the findings in this study showed that employers do not have a policy of not hiring graduates, who come from PHEIs. But practice shows the reverse. Hence, such contravention would obviously jeopardize the growth and expansion of PHEIs.

The findings of the last two research questions showed that employers are satisfied with their employees, who acquired their degrees from PHEIs particularly with their skill and knowledge. However, most of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with their job discipline. Periodic performance appraisal also shows that graduates from PHEIs lack the discipline the job require.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

This study presents the information obtained from selected HR professionals and managers, who are responsible for recruitment, employment and placement of job seekers. In other words, it is an attempt to investigate the attitude of employers concerning employment of graduates obtaining a degree from private higher educational institutions. The study also uses a theoretical framework on perception and satisfaction theories to check conformity of the findings with the existing literatures. The study has shown that if employers had to choose between a job applicant with a degree from private and public higher educational institutions they would opt for the latter. The study is, therefore, in line with the review of literature and generalizes most employers decisions can often be distorted by their perception while having job applicants.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the bases of the findings obtained and the conclusion reached the following recommendations are made.

- Despite the prevalence of negative perceptions, private higher education institutions are still on the go. Therefore, government bodies such as Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency(HERQA) should strive hard to strike a balance between the needs of employers and the intensity of training PHEIs offer.
- Private higher educational institutions should take the initiative to create awareness among employers about the quality of their education.
- Decision makers particularly HR people should refer to their respective policies and standard to make sure their decision are not affected by their perception.
- PHEIs should inculcate their trainees with work discipline so that they can be successful in life.

- PHEIs need to create a stronger partnership with stakeholders particularly with employers. This will help them make necessary correction and improvements in their handling of trainees.

- More research is necessary at comparing the quality and effectiveness of degree acquired from private and public higher educational institutions. In particular, a study could explore how students feel their degree program prepared them for employment.

- Further research should be carried out to find a solution to the prevailing negative perception attached to the quality of education offered by PHEIs.

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Appendix I
ST. MARY’S UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Questionnaire to be responded by HR Officers and Managers

Dear Respondents,

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather information on the perception and satisfaction of employers’ towards private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. The study is required for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) in General Management. Hence, your genuine information is highly decisive to the success of this study. The researcher assures you that the information you have provided is very confidential and only serves for academic purpose.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part 1. General Information

Instructions: Please circle on the relevant alternatives of your respective answers and write your answer on the space provided.

1, Age:

1. 20 - 25 2. 26 - 30 3. 31 - 35 4. 36 - 40 5. Above 40

2. Sex:

1. Male 2. Female

3. Educational Background:

1. Certificate 2. Diploma 3. Bachelor’s Degree 4. Master’s Degree 5. Ph.D

4, Work Experience:

- 1. 0 - 5 Years
- 2. 6 - 10 Years
- 3. 11 - 15 Years
- 4. Above 16 Years

5. Which of the following best describe your organization?

- 1. Government sector
- 2. Private (non-governmental)

6, Which of the following best describes your current position in your organization?

- 1. HR officer
- 2. HR Head
- 3. HR Manager
- 4. General Manger

Specify if any other

Part 2. Employers’ Perception on the Educational Quality of PHEIs’.

1, I feel the quality of the degree /diploma acquired from PHEIs“ is too low compared to public ones

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Disagree
- 4. Strongly disagree

2, How do you perceive the educational quality of private higher education institutions in Ethiopia?

- 1,Very high
- 2, High
- 3, Equal with public one
- 4, Low
- D. Very low

3, If your answer for question no. 2 is low or very low what are the possible reasons ?

- 1. Most of PHEIs“ instructors are part timers hence they are not committed.
- 2. PHEIs“ equipped with little or no teaching aids.
- 3. Assessments are simple and not uniform.
- 4. Marks are easily given.
- 5. If any other please indicates on the following space.

.....
.....

4, Do you think students, who graduate from PHEIs have equal knowledge with those who graduate from public ones?

1, Yes

2, No

5, If your answer is no for question No. 4 , explain your reasons please.

.....
.....

6, Do you think students, who graduate from PHEIs have equal skill with those who graduate from public ones?

1. Yes

2. No

7, If your answer is no for question No. 6 , explain your reasons please.

.....
.....
.....

8, Do you think students, who graduate from PHEIs have equal job discipline with those who graduate from public ones?

1. Yes

2. No

9, Do you think graduates from PHEIs“ have equal employment opportunity with the public ones?

1, Yes

2, No

10, If your answer is No. for question no. 9 please mention your reason below.

.....
.....

11, To what extent your organization is affected by the perception towards the service quality of PHEIs'?

- 1, Very high 2, High 3, Low 4, We are not totality affected

12, In reviewing an application for a job, our organization prefer graduates from public institutions than private ones .

- 1, Strongly agree 2, Agree 3, Disagree 4, Strongly disagree

13,What is your best preference during recruitment if a graduate apply from private and public institutions?

- 1, Public 2, Private 3, It doesn't matter

14, In our organization during recruitment we are more likely to consider academic achievements than whether or not the applicant has attended education at public or private institutions?

- 1, Strongly agree 2, Agree 3, Disagree 4, Strongly disagree

15. In choosing between two job candidates, who appeared equally qualified, we would be more like to choose the one with a degree from

- 1, Public 2, Private 3. Use of other mechanism

16. Does your organization has a general policy of to not hire graduates from PHEIs'.

1. Yes 2. No

17. If your answer is yes, explain the reason behind please.

.....
.....

Part 3. Satisfaction of Employers towards Performance of Graduates from PHEIs'

1. How do you rate your satisfaction on employees', who graduated from PHEIs'' on the following variables?

No	Variables	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
1.	Knowledge about the job					
2.	Quality of job accomplished					
3.	Effective use of time to accomplish the organization's task					
4.	Creativity and innovativeness					
5.	Ability to solve problems independently					
6.	Professional competency					
7.	Communication skill					
7.1	Oral communication skill					
7.2	Written communication skills					
8.	Team work					

9.	Speed of accomplishing a task					
10.	Respecting organization's code of conduct					
11.	Respecting ethical concerns					

Part 5. Performance Evaluation of Employees Graduated from PHEI's

1, In our organization we have found that during performance appraisal graduates from PHEIs" scoreless result than public graduates?

- 1, Strongly agree 2, Agree 3, Disagree 4, Strongly disagree

Thank you for your participation in this study!

Appendix II

Guiding Questions for In-depth Interview

1. How do you perceive the educational quality of private higher educational institutions?
2. What is the perception of employers“ towards hiring graduates from private higher educational institutions?
3. Do you think alumni from PHEIs acquire sufficient knowledge, skill and job discipline that the job require them?
4. What do you think about the employment opportunity of graduates from PHEIs?
5. What is your organization’s best preference when graduates from public and private institutions score the same result? And why?
6. Do you consider seriously the type of organizations where graduates coming from? Why?
7. Does your company develop a policy not to hire graduates from PHEIs?

Appendix III

List of Employer Companies Selected for this Study.

S.N	Name of Organization
1.	Abay Bank
2.	Abyisianya Bank
3.	Addis International Bank
4.	Admas University
5.	Anbessa International Bank
6.	Aqua Safe Bottled water S.C
7.	Awash International Bank
8.	Center of Catering and Tourism Institution
9.	Commercial Bank of Ethiopia
10.	Dashen International Bank
11.	Debub Global Bank
12.	Enat Bank
13.	Environment Protection Authority
14.	Ethio telecom
15.	Ethiopia Shipping lines
16.	Ethiopian Airlines
17.	Ethiopian Wild Life and Conservation Authority
18.	Federal Ministry of Education

19.	ICT Development Agency
20.	Kotebe Metropolitan University
21.	MAERSK Ethiopia
22.	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
23.	National Tourism Organization
24.	Nib International Bank
25.	Niyala Insurance S.C
26.	Oromiya International Bank
27.	Rift valley University
28.	St. George Beer S.C
29.	St. Mary's University
30.	Tsehay Insurance S.C
31.	United Bank
32.	Unity University
33.	Water and Sewerage Authority
34.	Wegagen International Bank