ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 21ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

MAJOR THEME: "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN HE: REALITY OR HYPE?"

MAY 9-11, 2023
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

The 21st International Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa

Theme: Sustainable Development in HE: Reality or Hype?

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Research and knowledge Management Office (RaKMO)

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Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
All Protocols Observed:

On behalf of St. Mary's University, I feel honored to be able to welcome you all to the 21st International Conference on PHE in Africa.

Before I begin my talk, please allow me to thank His Excellency Dr Samuel Kifle, State Minister for Higher Education, the Federal Ministry of Education, for being able to join us and grace the occasion despite his extremely busy schedule.

Beyond his individual commitment, this is a clear manifestation of the Ministry's generous and continued support to such national initiatives and collective endeavors.

Thanks to the increasing number and dedication of partners, participants and international experts our journey which started twenty-one years ago is still growing with remarkable pace. What makes this year's conference unique is the fact that it is being held alongside the 25th anniversary of the university's establishment.

Despite the ups and downs St. Mary's has grown from a small language school to a full-fledged university with more than 700 staff and diversified undergraduate and postgraduate studies offered in different modes at undergraduate and graduate levels.

The research contribution of the university is also increasing not only through the four annual conferences we have been holding for decades but also through the continuous publication of its three journals two of which have been nationally accredited, one recently indexed in Scopus and the third applying for national accreditation.

We are grateful to all who have accompanied us in this arduous journey with their trust, encouragement, support and professional contribution.

The theme of this year's conference is **Sustainable Development in Higher Education: Reality or Hype?** In the course of the next two days, we will listen to around 16 presentations and one panel session that speak to the general theme and subthemes such as the role of higher education in advancing employment, job creation and innovation in Africa; the contribution of PHE to achieving SDGs and Agenda 2063; embedding innovative modalities in the teaching learning eco-system; and re-orienting higher education for a sustainable future in Africa.

As usual, the conference brings together local and international speakers, higher education institution leaders, paper presenters, researchers, policy/decision makers, industries, and participants from the private and public sectors as well as regional and international organizations.

The conference aims to initiate useful debate and discussion on the roles of higher education in Africa's sustainable future. Given their critical role and contribution, higher education institutions should be active participants in the sustainable development movement which campaigns for the interests of future generations and the earth's capacity to regenerate.

In particular Africa's HEIs need to address the multi-faceted challenges the continent is facing such as poverty, enhance employment opportunities for its youth to eradicate poverty, and ultimately meet SDGs, Agenda 2063, CESA 2025 as well as other relevant regional, sub-regional and national development goals. To this effect, higher education providers are expected to be more agile, flexible and responsive to the dynamic contexts of the continent.

I hope the various sub- themes and papers to be presented by eminent scholars from different parts of the world underlie the need for addressing the multi-faceted challenges of higher education with a view to addressing the development goals in the region and beyond. As always, we pledge to make the proceedings of the conference available both in digital and print form.

Before closing, I would like to thank those who have travelled a long way to be part of this gathering and hope you'll have a very pleasant stay in Addis. I also wish to thank our partners, the FDRE Ministry of Education, the International Network for Higher Education in Africa at UKZN, University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, Association of African Universities, the African Union, and UNESCO for their generous assistance in making the conference come to fruition. My institution is grateful to each of our speakers, panelists and presenters for their hard work and commitment.

I hope this commitment and the spirit of partnership will endure in the years to come.

I am sure we will have fruitful and rewarding exchanges in the next two days with their meaningful implications to greater and sustainable Africa which we all want to see today and in the foreseeable future.

I wish you all every success in your deliberations. Thank you for your attention!

21st international Conference on Private Higher Education9-11 May 2023

H. E. Dr Samuel Kifle, State Minister, Higher Education, FDRE Professor, Olusola Oyewole, Secretary General of AAU,

Dr Tamrat Wondwosen, President and Founder of Saint Mary University,

Prof. Damtew Teferra, Fiubding Director, International Network for Higher Education in Africa

Representative of the AUC

Dear distinguished guests, Professors Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed.

It is a real pleasure and honor for me, to participate in the in the 21st International Conference on Private Higher Education. Allow me to thank the President of Saint Mary's University for taking the lead in such an important scientific event which brings various stakeholders of HED to debate and find solutions to the challenges that the African Continent must address in the 21st Century. This is a clear indication, that St Mary's University believes in the sustainability and the contributions of HED in Africa.

Investing in higher education and scientific research means betting on the quality of education, training, scientific and applied research, but also on competitiveness. Developed countries as well as emerging ones and international organizations have all placed HED at the top of their agendas. Africa and gender are the two global priorities of UNESCO.

This 21st International Conference on Private HED is taking place a year after the 3rdWorld Conference in Barcelona**:** Beyond the Limits: New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education, which identified six principles to shape the future of Higher Education namely: Inclusion, equity and pluralism, Academic freedom and participation, Inquiry critical thinking and creativity, Integrity and ethics, Commitment to sustainability and social responsibility, Academics excellence. One of the major outcomes of this conference was a roadmap to reinvent Higher education.

Dear distinguished participants,

Today, above all, Africa remains a continent of opportunity, with the youngest population on the planet, growing innovation and rising economic power. Strengthening and connecting Africa's tertiary education systems and institutions is key to widening opportunities and advancing socio-economic development.

Nearly 15 million students were enrolled in African universities in 2017, which represents less than 10% of the worldwide total of 220 million. This number has almost doubled in the last 15 years and is set to double again by 2030.

- At the same time, Africa has the fastest growing scientific production in the world but generates less than 1% of the world's research. It invests a almost 0.59% of GDP on research and development, compared to a world average of 1.79%. Inclusion is another key imperative

for higher education, particularly as the continent experiences one of the greatest migration waves in the world.

UNESCO, in response to these challenges and trends has developed the flagship programme **"Campus Africa"** with the aim at supporting African countries strengthen tertiary education on the continent through the development of integrated, inclusive and quality tertiary education systems and institutions. To reinforce higher education in Africa, the Flagship Campus Africa is focused on 4 components:

- Better connected higher education institutions and enhanced research capacities in response to the challenges the continent is facing.
- Strengthened recognition for mobility and inter-university cooperation.
- improved quality and relevance of higher TVET programmes, teaching and learning to meet the demand of labor market.
- Improved the production of quality data to support the reinforcement of higher education. Dear distinguished participants,

Let me conclude my opening remarks. UNESCO Liaison Office in Addis Ababa has focused its **2022 – 2025 strategy document on the theme of climate change: Transforming education for a more inclusive society by building a culture of resilience to climate change.** The issue of the climate emergency runs through all UNESCO programs and projects in Ethiopia and in our relationship with the African Union. Indeed, climate change and loss of biodiversity are the biggest threat to the future of the planet and humans. Finding solutions to mitigate its negative effects and adapt to changing circumstances requires a whole commitment of all stakeholders, I encourage the participants in this 21st International Conference on Private Higher Education to put the climate emergency at the heart of their action to ensure leaving no one behind.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Opening Remarks of H.E. Dr Samuel Kifle, State Minister, Ministry of Education, at the 21stInternational Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa
May 09, 2023
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to give these opening remarks at this 21st International Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa flagged by the theme "**Sustainable Development in HE: Reality or Hype?**". As the case has been for the last 20 conferences, the untiring efforts of St. Mary's University to maintain the continuity of the annual event deserves appreciation. In this regard, institutions and associations, including my Ministry, which have partnered with the University, through the years, should be noted here: the Association of African Universities (AAU), the International Network for Higher Education in Africa (INHEA), the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the African Union Commission, and UNESCO, have jointly made this annual conference keep the momentum to go forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen:
As we are conducting this conference, our world is witnessing drought, floods, fires, heat waves, and conflicts here and there. Africa's share of these misfortunes is beyond one could imagine. The panacea for these ills is no other than sustainable development. That was the vision set in Agenda 2063 by the African Union in 2015 here in Addis Ababa as a framework for 'inclusive growth and sustainable development for Africa". The impacts of all the mishaps afflicting Africa could have been minimized had we vigorously worked on implementing the flagship projects envisioned by the agenda. The question here is 'can we imagine sustainable development in Africa without meaningful development in higher education?' Truly speaking, despite the unfortunate occurrences in the continent today, there are silver linings we should emulate. For instance, the expansion of higher education across the continent, prompted by the unprecedented growth of student population, in general education, could be cited as the key to driving the sustainable development initiative.

At country level, Ethiopia has made efforts to ensure the quality of education by putting in place instruments that determine the outcome of skilled manpower. At university entry level, students were made to pass through stringent entrance exam security for the first time in the last academic year, toward ascertaining outcomes of individual performance free from cheating. Contrary to the preceding years, the results of students, who took school leaving examinations under the new rigorous exam security procedures, showed a big difference in enhancing the morale of hardworking students and reducing the undeserving university entrants to a significant level. Equally noteworthy is, upon university exit, we are instituting national exit examination for every discipline, as of this academic year, toward making higher education institutions, public and private alike, put additional effort to enhance the quality of education they offer.

On the part public universities, the Ministry has worked with them to categorize institutions after identifying their areas of excellence. To that end, a university falls in any one of agreed

upon four categories; research, applied, general or specialized university. Even more, universities have also been given directions to work towards reducing their total dependence on tax payers' money and be entrepreneurial universities. While this may take some time, their full autonomy would be assured when their dependence on public coffers is significantly lowered.

With regard to private institutions, the accreditation procedures would be overhauled to separate the chaff from the seed. The Ministry recognizes institutions, which operate respecting the rules and guidelines of the Ministry. It is also aware of the presence of others, after securing accreditation, deliver poor services and treat education as any other commodity, which is saleable upon payment. Such institutions are under investigation taking note of the closure of some others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Coming back to the major theme of this conference, we are to listen to the academic debate whether the 'sustainable development,' so envisaged, is a 'reality or a hype'. Of course, the one undeniable fact of COVID 19 and unforeseen conflicts, compounded by drought and other climate change-related catastrophes, may have, somehow, impacted the development agenda negatively. Yet, a significant number of countries have demonstrated their resilience to withstand the scourge hovering over them. Certainly, countries will be tested not by their willingness to embrace 'sustainable development', rather by the will and commitment they demonstrate to realize it. In this regard, my government sees 'sustainable development' as the only way to take one's country out of poverty. A halt to sustainable development results in assuring the continuation of poverty, the path of which no country chooses to take. This would be guaranteed if sustainable development in quality higher education is tightly embraced.

That said, my Ministry acknowledges the contributions that private higher education institutions are making to fill the gaps created by the limited capacity of public resources in my country. The same holds true for all African countries. Today's event, shall dwell on the critical issue of sustainable development with respect to higher education and, hence, the verdict would be derived from the findings of the articles and the discussions thereof.

Finally, taking this opportunity, allow me to thank, once again, St. Mary's University and its partner institutions: the Association of African Universities (AAU), the International Network for Higher Education in Africa, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE), and UNESCO.

With that note and wishing you a successful conference, I declare the conference open.

I thank you.

Blended teaching and learning in Higher education institutions: Experiences on selected Universities in Zimbabwe, James Munamati [Zimbabwe].

Abstract

Higher education is experiencing phenomenal changes as a result of the advancement and use of information technology. Blended teaching and learning is an outcome of advanced technology based learning system. The traction of blended teaching and learning approach lies in the adaptation of technology aided learning methods in addition to the existing traditional based learning. Blended teaching and learning is a combination of face-to-face and online delivery methods which influence students' perceptions of the learning environment and, subsequently, their study experiences, learning outcomes, and ultimate academic achievement. The study's objective was to explore the experiences of lecturers and students regarding blended teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. A qualitative study was conducted using in-depth interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students from selected universities. The study employed snowball sampling to select respondents from lecturers and convenience sampling to select respondents from students. In-depth interviews were conducted online using telephones while focus group discussions were done face to face. The study included five universities: University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University, Lupane State University, and Reformed Church University. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis and Nvivo Version 11 software. Findings revealed that poor technology infrastructure including poor internet connectivity, unavailability of computers and poor technical skills to execute interactive on-line teaching as the major challenges facing lecturers. The study also revealed that students continue to face challenges in accessing personal computers to facilitate blended learning. Despite these barriers, blended learning and teaching is the future of higher education, hence the need to ensure that universities have sufficient resources to support the transition. The study recommends the need to align blended teaching and learning with overall institutional goals and priorities.

Introduction

Nearly every aspect of our contemporary life has become linked to some form of technology, including in the least developed countries (Gwaka, 2018). Adoption of online education is becoming increasingly common place in tertiary education institutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that the spread of information and communication technology (ICTs) and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies. It was noted that, ICTs have the potential to accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also specifies specific targets for the use of ICTs for sustainable development in education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), infrastructure– universal and affordable access to the Internet (Goal 9), and partnerships and means of implementation (Goal 17). In the same vein, the Zimbabwe National Policy for Information and Communication Technology 2016 recognizes that in order for ICTs to act as an effective catalyst for national development,

upgrading and substantial investment in high broadband ICT infrastructure and capacity buildings are a prerequisite. In developing countries, e-learning is still in its infancy and early adoption stage, and the countries are experiencing challenges unique from developed countries(Bhuasiri et al., 2012). The uptake and use of ICTs in Zimbabwe has greatly increased in recent years. This is evidenced by the high growth registered by Zimbabwe's ICT indicators with active mobile penetration reaching 95.4% and Internet penetration surpassing 45% as of 31 December 2015, according to the 2016 Zimbabwe National Policy on Information and Communication Technology. A plethora of studies has been undertaken in higher education institutions to investigate issues regarding online learning and teaching experiences.

On-line teaching is difficult and different from face-to-face teaching which most lecturers have been used to (Smith, Passmore and Faught, 2009). Online teaching demands, not only an understanding of the content, but also an understanding of how to present the content by providing a learning environment using technology (Conceição, 2006). Lack of knowledge and skills of e-learning and teaching by students and lecturers were cited as posing a challenge to e-learning and teaching (Dzimano and Richard, 2011; Tafangombe and Kaputa, 2011). Mpofu et al. (2012) noted that the majority of lecturers (97.5%) at Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) had not received relevant training, and were, therefore, not prepared to handle online learning pedagogy. This situation poses a major challenge in implementing online teaching. Regardless of worldwide growth and adoption of online learning, African universities are yet to fully maximize this opportunity, as noted by Walimbwa (2008), who observed that lack of skills and sufficient human capacity were the major contributing factors to low online learning implementation at the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Makerere University (Uganda), and University of Nairobi (Kenya). In a related study conducted by Makokha and Mutisya (2016), the authors noted that only 32% of the lecturers used online learning as a mode of pedagogy while the rest preferred conventional or traditional mode of pedagogy to online learning. The main reason for this preference was lack of ICT skills on how to change hard copies or hand written teaching materials to technology enabled formats. In a related study, Dzimano and Richard (2011) analyzed lecturers 'web/Internet competence at the Zimbabwe Open University and found out that the majority of the lecturers (55%)were not trained on online learning and were, therefore, not competent to handle online courses. Mpofu et al. (2012), in their study on challenges of virtual and open distance learning in Zimbabwe, found that the majority of the lecturers (97.5%) had no experience in online education.

Dzimano and Richard (2011) also observed that lecturers at the Zimbabwe Open University in general lack the basic knowledge on the web/Internet. At the basic level, programs should be put in place for the capacity building for tutors in Internet/web usage which should be a priority, if online initiative is to be effective. This finding concurs with the findings by Tafangombe and Kaputa (2015) on the analysis of challenges encountered by students on the e-learning platform at Zimbabwe Open University. The findings of the study show that open and distance learning students face challenges when accessing the e-platform. Students,

lecturers and even most ICT personnel do not have the capacity to use the Vista Internet-based program. This is an e-tutoring program which allows learning to occur between the student and the tutor online. As a mitigating measure, all students, lecturers and key ICT personnel must be trained in the use of the e-platforms. Effective use of online teaching requires that teaching staff to be properly trained in using online teaching as a mode of delivery, yet very few African scholars are familiar with teaching in an online environment. This situation poses a major challenge in introducing distance education on the continent (Makokha and Mutisya (2016).

Several studies have also reported challenges of access to Internet and affordability of the gadgets and mobile services faced by students and lecturers. Mupfiga and Zhou, 2017; Muderedzwa and Chilumani, 2017). Mupfiga andZhou (2017) noted challenges which both lecturers and students faced that include access to Internet, high cost of mobile devices, high broadband costs, WI-FI connectivity and Internet speed amongst others. The study also noted that most students and lecturers do not have Internet at home; hence they cannot access their e-learning accounts. This is supported in a related study by Muderedzwa and Chilumani (2017) aimed to assess the adoption of google classroom at the Catholic university in Zimbabwe. The study noted that the biggest challenge faced by both lecturers and students is Internet connectivity.

Access to Internet due to unavailability of electricity is also a challenge encountered when conducting e-learning. In their study of Challenges of Virtual and Open Distance Science Teacher Education in Zimbabwe, Mpofu et al. (2012) reported electricity challenges which created problems of integration of ICT tools (Internet among them) into the Virtual and Open Distance Learning (VODL) program. This challenge is most found in rural areas where availability of electricity is limited (Gwaka, 2018). Power cuts were reported by Mpofu et al. (2012) who reported that the institutions bought generators to curb the problem.

Inaccessibility to the Internet is also related to access to ICT gadgets, such as smartphones, computers and laptops. Findings of the study show that while full-time lecturers had access to computers, the majority of the part-time tutors did not. Gwaka (2018) in a study on ICT usage in Zimbabwe noted that although many students could have access to mobile phones, some could not afford and very few could own a laptops. Kangai and Bukaliya (2011) established that only 5% of Zimbabwe Open University students owned or had a computer at home because computers are very expensive. Furthermore, the study contends that the majority of students as well as part time ZOU lecturers working in rural areas have no access to computers. This study shows that distance education students in Zimbabwe are experiencing technological challenges. On the contrary, Mupfiga and Zhou (2017), in a study on enhancing teaching and learning through the use of mobile technologies in Zimbabwean universities, reported higher access to technological devices. The study revealed that the majority of the students (81%) and lecturers (54%) have mobile technology devices to use for mobile learning.

Despite the challenges faced by students and lecturers, Mupfiga and Zhou (2017) observed that there are some mobile learning activities that are already happening at universities which

include uploading of material on electronic learning platform, downloading learning material, browsing the Internet for research, students' online
discussions and access of electronic resources from the universities' e-library, amongst others. The media has reported that Universities in South Africa, such as the University of Johannesburg and University of Witwatersrand have provided their underprivileged students with laptops and data bundles when they opened the universities at the end of May 2020.

As universities in Zimbabwe move towards Education 5.0 philosophy, it is imperative to embrace and move towards digitalization in the teaching and learning. The adoption and utilization of online education, particularly as a way of teaching and learning, becomes unavoidable. This literature review has presented the challenges and success in implementing online learning and teaching. Regardless of the various studies conducted on online learning and teaching in Zimbabwe presented in this literature review, it is imperative to note the difference in context brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, this study contends that there is a need to explore the experiences of lecturers and students regarding blended teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe.

Methodology

Research Method

This paper is based on a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to elicit the experiences of universities' academic staff and students regarding blended learning and teaching. Unstructured interview guide was developed by the researcher for the in-depth interviews with lecturers: this was done to capture several opinions and descriptive narratives across the five universities in Zimbabwe. Focus group discussion guide was developed to solicit students' perception on blended learning and teaching.

Participants

This study employed the snowball sampling method to recruit the lecturers from the universities. This sampling method allows chain referrals from the initial subjects and ensures that wide ranges of opinions are obtained. The participants were selected using the first researcher's primary known lecturer contacts and network selection. The initial personal contacts were then encouraged to invite individuals with similar backgrounds, and academic staff who were interested in taking part in the interview. A total of 25 lecturers were recruited and interviews were done online through WhatsApp and telephone. To recruit students for focus group discussions, the researcher used known lecturer contacts who were asked to invite students from their respective Universities. A total of 50 students were recruited from five universities: University of Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe University, Midlands State University, Lupane State University, and Reformed Church University. Qualitative research does not require the sample size to be predetermined. According to Sargent (2012), the sample size is determined by the number required to inform fully all-important elements of the phenomena being studied.

Interview protocol and data collection

A zoom link was generated and shared with the students. The researcher facilitated the focus group discussion and was assisted with a research assistant who was taking notes during the online discussions. For the in-depth interviews, questions were posted online to lecturers prior to the interview, and they selected the mode of communication which they preferred. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity during the interviews. All interviews and FGDs were conducted in English. The audio-taped responses were transcribed later.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis software (Nvivo version 11) was employed in this study. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical ideas developed during the research process guided the analytical framework (Burnard et al., 2008). The researchers interpreted the thematic results, continuously linking them with theoretical ideas and original research findings. Participants were contacted where necessary for clarification or further information.

Results

Online platforms used

There is reluctance among both lecturers and students on the use of online platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft teams, and Goggle classroom which offered virtual classroom experiences. Lecturers preferred using WhatsApp and emails as forms of doing online learning as they felt these were cost effective and user friendly to both students and lecturers. One lecturer gave the following statement during an in-depth interview:

I tried Google classroom but abandoned it after realizing that some students were failing to join the Google classroom. Further, the students complained about high cost of data bundles for them to use Google classroom platform. In the end I resorted to use WhatsApp to give audio lectures; sending learning material; giving notes and e-mail to receive assignments from the students (Midlands State University).

This concurred with a remark from another lecturer from another university: E-learning is expensive for the lecturer and student. Data bundles are very expensive. WhatsApp is relatively cheaper and can send notes and reading material (Lupane State University). The experience described in the foregoing paragraphs was also supported by one of the students in one of the Focus Group Discussions who made the following remark with the support of other group discussants:

As students we are experiencing challenges to access online platforms due to data costs. Data is very expensive and our parents can't afford to buy you data every time

Connectivity

Academic staff from all the five universities expressed that internet connectivity was not a major challenge. One of the lecturers remarked:

In terms of connectivity, the internet has been fast ever since I used my phone to connect at home (Lupane state university)

I don't have a problem with internet connectivity I have WIFI at home, at home it's at my own cost (Reformed Church University))

At the University of Zimbabwe we don't have connectivity issues given that I stay at the staff quarters so it's a walkable distance to the office where there is reliable connectivity and power supply (University of Zimbabwe).

However, some of the lecturers from other universities reported severe internet connectivity. Some academic staff articulated that their failure to connect to the internet to execute online lectures was caused by rugged terrain and remoteness of the area where their students reside. Most rural areas have poor network connectivity. These two factors interfere with internet connectivity. For instance, one lecturer from Great Zimbabwe indicated:

I have tried to use Google classroom platform and Microsoft teams but did not work, due to issues of connectivity challenges, it's a great barrier our catchment area for the university is hilly. It is also important to note that generally most rural areas in Masvingo province have poor internet connectivity for example, Zaka and Gutu. In addition, some other areas covered by the University is very hilly like Mwenezi. The geographic coverage of online learning is affected by over and above the exorbitant of cost data is also affected by the remoteness and terrain of different areas

The experience described in the foregoing paragraph was also supported by one of the students in one of the Focus Group Discussions who made the following remark with the support of other group discussants:

Where I stay, network is very poor and sometimes we don't have network for calls worse still internet connectivity. The network is not stable at all. I had to travel to the nearest Growth point in Jerera to access stable internet for online lessons. This becomes very expensive since I need to travel to access stable internet (Great Zimbabwe University)

The experience described concurred with one of the students in another Focus Group discussion who made the following remark:

We cannot talk about internet connectivity before we talk about mobile connectivity. Where I stay there is no network at all so I cannot even receive or make calls so it's impossible for me to participate

in online learning while at our rural home. I have to travel to Bulawayo which defeats the essence of learning online (Lupane State University)

Electricity Challenges

Electricity challenges was one of the themes which emerged from the study. Academic staff from all the five universities expressed concern over extensive power cuts which is being experienced all over the country. One of the lecturers remarked:

There is a serious problem of electricity shortage in the country such that most residential areas including where I am staying rarely get electricity during the day. Normally we have 12-14 hours of load shedding per day which is almost the whole day. At the university thus where there is rare load shedding but it defeats the purpose of online learning. So in essence you have to come to the university and conduct online lessons at the university premises (University of Zimbabwe)

The power cuts we are experiencing in the country are unimaginable. Most of the time we don't have electricity so teaching online becomes a challenge. Sometimes the power outage affects the internet connectivity as well giving enormous challenges for online learning (Midlands State University)

However, some lecturers expressed that they have no issues with power cuts since they have already have alternative power supply when there is electricity outage. One of the lecturers remarked:

Although we experience power cuts it doesn't affect much of our learning because at the University accommodation we use, there is backup power. Most of our students are at postgraduate level and most of them are employed which makes it easier to conduct online learning (Lupane State University)

The experience described in the foregoing paragraph was also supported by one of the students in one of the Focus Group Discussions who made the following remark with the support of other group discussants:

There is no electricity in the country that is known by everybody. In the neighborhood I came from electricity is always not there. It comes when we are already slept and its switched off before we wake up. This negatively affects online learning (University of Zimbabwe)

Adaptability to online learning

Adaptability was an important theme that emerged from the study. Participants in this study, particularly lecturers, felt overwhelmed and pressurized to learn how to use online platforms within a short period of time. There was inadequate information and technology support from the respective universities to assist online teaching and learning. When students encountered any technical problems, the lecturers were not able to assist students since some of the were also technically handicapped. Some of the lecturers stated:

You know, this is a frustrating exercise given the Zimbabwean context. No harmonizing of lecturer and student side. The pedagogy did not change with mobile teaching or learning (Midlands State University).

Shifting to online is not easy. The majority of lecturers are very late adapters of new technology in general (Great Zimbabwe State University).

Not one has been trained for this, considering that there are calculations, practical and application courses besides just theoretical courses (Lupane State University).

The experience described by lecturers was also supported by one of the students in one of the

Focus Group Discussions who made the following remark with the support of other group discussants:

There is no technical support during online learning and teaching. When you face a technical problem you have to find a solution on your own. The lecturers will say I don't know how to help you

Competency to use online teaching and learning platforms

It was necessary to find out the level of competency in using online learning platforms. This could be used for future skills in auditing tertiary institutions. The study revealed that older lecturers were overwhelmed to learn how to execute online learning which provided an interactive two-way communication by the use of a computer network so that students may benefit from communication with each other and the instructor. Consequently, some respondents in the study resorted to emailing printed notes and sending some reading materials through WhatsApp platform and Gmail. The virtual lectures were a challenge for older lecturers to accomplish. An older lecturer narrated their experience:

It's a challenge because the majority of lecturers, especially older doctors and professors, were taught in the era where there was no technology, so they are not technologically savvy. It's a technological shock, but the young generation of lecturers is comfortable with new technology (Reformed Church University). The same sentiment was reflected by a lecturer from Midlands State University: I am grossly incompetent. I have never done it before and have never had any training on its use

However, some lecturers proffered that they were very comfortable in using any online platform and were very happy to continue with blended teaching. A lecturer with vast experience in using online learning platform vividly described his competency:

I do not have any problems in using online platforms. I have been using these platforms for a long time, such as Google classroom, Zoom meetings and Skype meetings (University of Zimbabwe).

Student's technological competency and proficiency

In as much as lecturers could be willing to continue with online teaching, technological competency among students was important. Lecturers reported that their young students were technologically competent but the older students were finding it hard to switch to 100% online learning. Some students found it difficult to easily navigate the online class interface at some stage during virtual class lecture delivery. In some cases, some lecturers reported that it was difficult to teach courses which required students to have been trained prior, for instance, the use of statistical packages. Below are some of the participants' expressions:

It's a challenge to some students, especially the aged (Great Zimbabwe University) Students only know what they have been doing, i.e. coming for classes and using their computers for research not using their computers for online lectures (Midlands State University).

Cost of data bundles

The major challenge from analysis done was the cost of data. It was noted that it was a cross cutting factor among stall selected participants. We identified that cost of data negatively impacted on the uptake of online teaching by lecturers. We found this to be a predisposing factor in engaging online teaching by academic staff. The data bundle hampered the executing of online teaching. Some lecturers reported that they had several classes to be taught per
week using online platform, like Zoom. Respondents felt the universities were supposed to be responsible for providing data. Some lecturers mentioned that:

Data is very expensive to both the lecturer and students, making it difficult to conduct online lessons from home. Even if I manage, most students cannot (University of Zimbabwe).

Too expensive and data bundles have gone up recently. Salaries are too low to enable me to fund university business (Lupane State University)

Cost of data in Zimbabwe is just too high and for one to conduct a Zoom meeting with students or Google class. (Midlands State University).

The lecturers reported that their universities were not providing them with data bundles for their online teaching. On the other hand, one university made an effort to buy data bundles for their staff, and these continue using Zoom platform to carry out their online lectures. As one lecturer said:

My university is responsible for all my data cost which I use to perform all my online lectures. I do not need to worry about the cost (Reformed Church University).

Cost of smart phones and computers

In addition to the cost of data, the academic staff, as well as the students, did not have appropriate hardware/devices which were compatible with online learning. Some of the lecturers shared their experiences:

Umm…. I do not have the so called smart-phone. I have a simple gadget for basic communication (Lupane State University).

Less than 50% of my students have laptops and this affects the quality of the lecture since most of them use their phones where there is a challenge in sharing presentations, one of my students was supposed to attend a Zoom class but they did not have a computer, so they went out of their house top borrow a computer from a neighbor who was 3kilometres away from their family house. (Great Zimbabwe University).

Some of my students do not have laptops, computers and smart phones with cameras which can be used with online learning platforms (Midlands State University).

Students' response to online learning

In addition, availability of online platforms was an important theme that emerged from the

study. It is whether Zoom and Google classrooms were present during online sessions which were commonly used by lecturers. We understood as illustrated in the statement below that sometimes students' inaccessibility appeared to be caused by high cost of data, poor internet connectivity and lack of appropriate gadgets. Consequently, some lecturers were forced to abandon such interactive class learning platforms, and resorted to sending printed material through email and WhatsApp. The abandonment of these interactive learning platforms was also necessitated by students failing to attend virtual online lessons. In some cases, only a few students were able to be actively involved up to the end of virtual classroom lessons . Various students' responses were described by the academic staff:

The students' responses were negative, of course most said that they wanted it but were simply incapacitated (Midlands State University).Very convenient, but students complained about the cost of data and lack of respective gadgets such as smart phones and laptops. These challenges reduced virtual lecture attendance to 50% and at times 25% attendance (University of Zimbabwe lecturer). Students liked e-learning but lacked training in the use of relevant digital tools and software applications on e-learning (Great Zimbabwe University).

Opportunities offered by online teaching

Notwithstanding the students' attitudes towards online learning, a few lecturers felt that they had good opportunities to connect with many students through online teaching with no much pressure as compared to face-to-face learning. Some lecturers had this to say:

Online teaching provides excellent opportunities to manage even bigger classes. Physical lectures themselves lack scale, as they force a teacher to divide their attention amongst the students sitting in the classroom (University of Zimbabwe).

Maintain the traditional face-to-face lectures

Contrary to lecturers seeing online lectures as a panacea to teaching large classes, another school of thought that emerged was the fear of protecting the traditional face-to-face lecture hall teaching. The lecturers wanted to preserve the status quo and alluded to the fact that online created anti-social students in the long run, if online learning was wholly embraced in tertiary institutions. Some negative sentiments were articulated by lecturers:

Will Microsoft /Zoom/Google/Kahn take the time away from actual effective effort by gifted educators, thereby establishing another broken status quo that is hard to replace? Is there any evidence that video lectures provide enhanced learning? Microsoft is a big company that's great at branding but why do we believe this is the correct tool to provide quality education (University of Zimbabwe).

The lecturing styles will definitely change and most probably reduce the lecturer-student physical interaction. We will produce an anti-social student, or student with very limited social skills. Too much use of machines will produce more of human 'robot'-graduates. But in Africa we are so poor, and it will take long before this is achieved (Midlands State University).

In addition, they felt online teaching isolates students and removed that physical attachment which is offered in a face-to-face teaching environment. It was difficult to monitor students' progress and give immediate assessment as to whether students understood the concepts taught. Online made it hard to know if teaching was effectively done. One lecturer expressed their fears:

In my experience, this whole debacle has changed the way university teaching will be carried out in future, we now need to embrace this online way of teaching, …. but maintain the traditional way of lecturing. …. Able to control what is happening within the classroom……. you do not have the control over the online lesson…we cannot discard the traditional way of lecturing that presence in the classroom cannot be replaced (Lupane State University).

Delayed feedback from students

The negative feelings expressed by lecturers towards online teaching were further mentioned in the findings. There is delayed feedback from the students; this frustrated some academic staff and it negatively impacted on the smooth running of teaching online. Lecturers expected the students to reply to email messages, WhatsApp or voice note messages promptly hoping that these forms of interactions were found to be popular among students and lecturers in the study. Again, the issue of regular high–quality internet access and cost of data bundles seem to affect the students to speedily give feedback. One lecturer said this:

Students were locked up in deprivation and poverty issues. No or limited hardware, poor connectivity and expensive data (Lupane State University)

In addition, online teaching was taxing to the lecturers, as there was the need to check in with students and make individuals a plan to accommodate those most difficult situations. One lecturer shared their experience:

Some students might not have safe and quiet working environment, and might be involved in caring for the family and have poor internet access and might need more time to submit assignments. The students should learn to adapt to both the academic and non-academic way of life (University of Zimbabwe).

Recommendations

Lecturers supported on line learning as they perceived it to be good in delivering lectures in an efficient way especially in the era of education 5.0. It was the way to go in a global village. However, certain conditions were to be met to make online learning feasible in Zimbabwean universities in the long run. The popular recommendation among academic staff was the provision of affordable Internet and laptops to staff and students. Several participants had this to say:

The way forward is to provide enough resources for online teaching especially when it comes to internet accessibility. The respective institutions can help in the purchase of data bundles, computers or provide short and low interest loan schemes for the installation of internet facilities at staff homes (University of Zimbabwe).

Lecturers should then be adequately resourced with the latest gadgets and allowances for data bundles. University expectations to lecturers should be met by their provision of equipment and internet access (Midlands State University).

A multi-sectoral approach by government, private and public sectors in the provinces to provide internet packages to facilitate online learning is needed (Lupane state University).

I think the universities or government should subsidize internet data bundles (Great Zimbabwe University)

Other lecturers suggested the following recommendations to make online teaching feasible. They remarked: Develop university specific online learning platforms that are secure from hacking and plagiarism (University of Zimbabwe). E-learning is a way to go in future but there is a need to train both staff and students on e-learning and internet providers should improve connectivity (Great Zimbabwe University). Think through the intellectual capacity or copyright issues, risk of materials being copied (Reformed Church University).

Discussion

The study's objective was to explore the experiences of lecturers and students regarding blended teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. The findings revealed several challenges experienced by the lecturers that include poor technical skills, poor or lack of Internet connectivity, access to computers and laptops, adaptability challenges, and how to execute interactive on-line teaching. Lack of knowledge and skills were cited as challenges hampering e-learning and teaching in universities. Most of the lecturers were used to traditional face-to-face lectures and did not have ample time to be trained on conducting lectures online. The older lecturers were more overwhelmed with this online teaching compared to the younger lecturers. Similar challenges of lack of experience or training were also reported in universities in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya (Makokha and Mutisya, 2016; Walimbwa, 2008) and in Zimbabwe (Tafangombe and Kaputa 2015; Dzimano and Richard, 2011). On the other hand, the universities which could have chipped in to support their staff did not do so; yet they expected the lecturers to conduct online teaching. Technology incompetency was also reported among the students; with older students finding it difficult to work with online learning. The training of lecturers on e-learning is overdue as most universities in the developed world have adopted the new alternative teaching methods using ICT. Zimbabwean universities are seen trailing behind. Effective online teaching requires the training of lecturers and students in using online teaching and learning as a mode of not just delivery of lectures, but also interactions and discussions.

The study found that the use of online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft teams, and Goggle classroom, was limited largely due to the costs incurred when using some of these platforms. These interactive platforms are expensive and most of the students, even the lecturers, could not afford to use them. Moreover, the universities were not able to provide students with data bundles in order to access the Internet. Rather, most of the lecturers resorted to using

WhatsApp and email, which were cost effective and user-friendly. This is a challenge as most of the students, and some lecturers, cannot afford the Internet due to the economic challenges experienced in the country. Thus, the use of e-learning means leaving out the disadvantaged students. Universities should form partnerships with the private sector, especially with ICT companies, so that they can negotiate for free Internet and laptops or computers for the under- privileged students.

The majority of lecturers and students faced Internet connectivity challenges. Not all students participated as some found it difficult to access the Internet in some of the areas, especially in rural areas. The unavailability of electricity in most rural areas is a challenge which prevents them from accessing the Internet. This challenge is exacerbated by the power cuts in areas that already have electricity. This finding was supported by Mpofu et al. (2012) in their study of challenges on virtual and open distance learning in Zimbabwe. As a result, some of the students in remote areas were not able to access e-learning. If this challenge is not addressed, it widens the gap between the rich and the poor. The unavailability of the Internet was also associated with power cuts, a challenge not only faced by academic institutions, but by the different sectors of the economy.

The challenge of access to the Internet faced by both the students and lecturers could also have been related to the high cost of data bundles. While a few of the universities were making an effort to buy data bundles for their lecturers to conduct online teaching, the majority of the universities were not. The cost of data bundles negatively impacted on the uptake of online teaching by lecturers as most were not able to conduct online teaching because they could not afford data bundles. Students' inaccessibility to the Internet was also largely due to poor Internet connectivity and lack of appropriate gadgets, such as smart phones, computers and laptops. This is supported by Gwaka (2018) on his study of digital technology in a rural area in Zimbabwe who reported that while the youth could afford mobile phones, very few could afford smart phones and laptops. Some lectures were forced to abandon their online teaching, and those who continued with the teaching, disadvantaged students who could not afford. Lessons to address this challenge could be learnt from the University of Johannesburg and University of Witwatersrand in South Africa which provided their students with laptops and data bundles for the under-privileged students when they started e-learning during the lockdown in May 2020. The universities, with support from the government and the private sector, should be able to provide some of these under-privileged students with computers and data bundles, as had been done in South African universities, such as University of Johannesburg and Witwatersrand University.

Despite the challenges experienced by the lecturers, a few of the lecturers believed that the online teaching was good in delivering lectures efficiently and an opportunity to communicate easily with students as compared to face-to-face teaching. Thus, the role of ICT was critical in higher education and learning in Zimbabwe. With some of the lecturers already teaching online, this is the only opportunity for a shift from being wholly dependent on the traditional methods of teaching, that lecturers are used to, to a mixture of both face-to-face lectures and online learning in the new ICT era. Support by the university is very critical in effectively using online teaching. The rapid diffusion of the Internet has generated a

rejuvenated interest and motivation in the role of new information and communication technologies in higher education in Zimbabwe. Thus, some of the challenges experienced can be overcome by the universities establishing public-private partnerships to enable effective and quality education through e-learning.

Conclusion

Findings revealed that lecturers faced poor technical skills, poor Internet connectivity, no access to laptops and smart phones, and adaptability challenges to execute interactive on-line teaching. Despite these barriers, on-line teaching provided an opportunity of new lecturing skills in higher education in Zimbabwe, which were long overdue. There is the need to ensure that universities have sufficient time and resources to make the online transition manageable. Lecturers need to be trained in e-learning so that they deliver quality lectures professionally. Universities should provide free or affordable Internet to students as well as staff when working at home. Thus, there is the need for the establishment of public-private partnerships to provide free/affordable Internet. Universities should also support students with computers, laptops and data bundles so as to access the Internet. This can be achieved through partnerships with ICT companies.

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Effectiveness of Teaching, Learning, Research and Innovative Actions in Higher Education Institutions with Reference to Hawassa University, Ethiopia; Girma Moti Geletu (PhD) School of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, Hawassa University, Hawassa, Ethiopia

Abstract

The study examined the effectiveness of teaching, learning, research and innovative actions in higher education institutions with particular reference to Hawassa University. The study employed a mixed method with concurrent triangulation design. The researcher selected the samples of the study from the target population using convenience, purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Then, data were collected from 421 participants (research directors, college deans, school and department heads, instructors and postgraduate students) using open-and-closed ended self-constructed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document examination. The data were analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (independent sample t-test) statistics. The finding of the study showed that although exposing students to research contents and process aids understanding of knowledge construction, deep learning, networking and employability; the integration of teaching, learning, research and innovative actions inadequately contributed to technological, administrative, instructional and pedagogical innovations. The finding of the study demonstrated that conceptualization and contextualization of the nexus between teaching, learning, research and innovative actions in higher education institutions are important to promote students' knowledge construction, deep learning and self-confidence. The study recommended that the academic staff and postgraduates should participate in integration of teaching, learning, research and community services to improve their academic and professional capital. Instructors should carefully use research-informed and research-based teaching and learning strategies while planning, implementing and evaluating their instruction. Hence, Hawassa University should conduct tracer studies to evaluate graduates 'employability and quality of performance, and improve technological, administrative, instructional and pedagogical innovations.

Keywords: Academic and professional capital; innovative action; research-based-teaching and learning; research -informed teaching and learning**.**

Introduction

Background of the Study

Higher education institutions play essential roles in a society by creating new knowledge and transmitting it to students, fostering innovation and research-based educational practices among researchers in higher education (Fatima, 2014). Higher education in the 21st century has brought rapid transformation into individualized growth and social, cultural, political, economic, and technological development (Schwab, 2010). However, an increased need for accountability measures and higher education is facing the challenge of re-conceptualizing the methods and procedures used to show the quality and excellence of higher education programs (Noaman, Ragab, Madbouly, Khedra and Fayoumi, 2015) which negatively influence the implementation of both substantive and procedural autonomy. Different scholars have suggested that a quality higher education institution significantly contributes

to the sustainable development of a country. The quality of higher education and training are crucial for economies that want to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products (Schwab, 2010). Furthermore, UNESCO remarks that:

...."Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones" (UNESCO,1998, p. 1).

As a means of transformation from knowledge generation to knowledge dissemination and utilization, research on practical societal impacts has been given priority because development is unthinkable without skilled citizens who come out of a competitive type of education system in the 21st century schooling (ETP, 1994). At the center of development, teaching-learning practices and research are scholarly activities that draw high-level performances and expertise in the discipline and relevant professional experiences, together with communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills (Abraham, Girma and Solomon, 2019; Gima, 2020). When Ethiopia is moving to stand among the middle-income countries of the 2030 agenda of global sustainable development goals or the third mission, one may ask about the quality of higher education and instruction as key priority areas in the arena of development. More specifically, effective teachers possess competencies developed from research informed knowledge in teaching-learning practices (McIntyre, 2005). The key to effective teaching is the balance between theory and practice (Pacheco, 2005). This balance occurs when schools encourage teachers' use of research-based knowledge to guarantee the quality of instruction at the center.

In the Ethiopian context, much pressure on the reform agenda enables teachers to conduct more researches apart from their professional development, and to improve their practice by linking teaching to research, publishing and disseminating their research outputs, and presenting them in seminars and workshops (FDRE, 2003). The symbiotic relationship that exists among research, teaching, and learning explains the contribution of research to teaching and the quality of education on the one hand, and the opportunities that teaching creates for research activities on the other (Adane, 2000). This emphasizes that teaching, learning, and research are experience-based disciplines and are part of teachers' professional development in higher education institutions.

Despite access to the opportunities, there are many complaints that researches done by Ethiopian higher education institutions' academics did not serve the purpose of solving contextual problems in education (ETP, 1994). The exclusion of research activities from the teaching-learning process leads to the persistence of educational problems. According to higher education proclamation (No. 531/2003) that governs higher education institutions in the country (FDRE, 2003), there are important requirements in this legislation that set the framework for research in education institutions. The higher education proclamation states that "academic staff" mean employees of higher education institutions who devote 75% of their time to teaching and 25%, to research, with little modification of 60%, 25%, 15% for teaching, research and community services, respectively.

> *....It has become necessary to create an appropriate legal framework to guide higher education in achieving their missions expected of them by the government and public as the previous proclamation has shortages in its contents; and to create an appropriate legal framework to ensure quality and relevance of higher institutions, and ensure that they are center of excellence in learning, research and community service (60%, 40%); and ensure that higher institutions give due attention and priority to nationally prioritized areas and lay governance system of transparency, equity and accountability " (Higher Education Proclamation No…./2019, p.1).*

Most Ethiopian higher education institutions are not engaged in as much research and studies as is required from them (Habtamu, 2003). This shows that practitioners considered research as a marginal aspect of teaching rather than being indispensable to maintaining higher standards. Sometimes, students feel that they are just 'cheap labor' for the teachers, when they are engaged in actual knowledge production together with a teacher. This is related to the perspective of the distribution of authority (Dekker, 2016), where students and teachers in different disciplines were interviewed about their views and experiences with research-based teaching and learning. This reflects the concerns of ownerships and the challenges when students and teachers practice the link between research and teaching in joint supervision. Research-based teaching and learning involve teaching through meaningful and hands-on experiences in research. Students are researchers who ask complex questions, search for answers by conducting research, and report on their research. The teaching-research nexus is a continuum with no relationship between teaching and research at one end and a full relationship between teaching and research at the other end.

1.2. Rationales of the Study

Higher education institutions improve the relevance of their education and better prepare students for follow-up studies and the emerging demands of the labor market of the 21st century. The research activities carried out in universities are inadequate both in quantity and in quality because of challenges such as lack of research funds, fewer facilities, poor management support systems, teaching load, and shortage of qualified and committed staff (Dawit, 2014). In the Ethiopian context, higher education management is less accountable and responsible for accomplishing tasks such as creating a positive working environment, conducting research and problem-solving activities, managerial and academic decision-making, ensuring academic excellence, and mobilizing resources to fulfill educational facilities (Girma, 2020).

There are a few studies conducted on the problems associated with teaching, research, innovative actions, and learning in higher education institutions in Ethiopia (e.g. Adane, 2000; Habtamu, 2003; Dawit, 2014; Fung, 2017; Girma, 2020, Wariyo, 2020). These studies revealed that the effectiveness of teaching, learning, research, and innovative actions in higher education institutions faces a number of perplexing paradoxes. Thus, higher education, research, and teaching and learning process are key axes and change dynamics in the walk of globalization because the culture of cultivating ownership in the university community and other key stakeholders for quality issues is an effective method (Wariyo, 2020). Today,

learners view themselves as participants in creating information and new ideas (Leadbeater, 2008) because 21st century instruction is based on three pedagogical principles (3P's) such as personalization, participation, and productivity (McLoughlin and Lee, 2008). This learning occurs through authentic real-world contexts and problem solving, and constitutes powerful learning strategies to develop professional capital for creating assets in their future professional world. Forming working relationships with teachers and partners in the community and working collaboratively with peers contribute to productive learning experiences for learners worldwide (Bolstad, 2011). In this regard, graduate tracer studies show that the employment status of graduates, their academic standings, and employers' satisfaction (Girma, 2020) highlights the effectiveness of higher education institutions. Therefore, research outputs and innovation add valuable insights to different pedagogues that support learners in mastering 21st century skills and competences that best prepare them for the ever-changing world.

My experiences as a teacher, researcher, and practitioner in universities persuaded me to investigate the linkage between research practices and outputs and the teaching-learning process and evaluate the effects of research-based knowledge in augmenting the learning of students in Hawassa University. I believe that research-based teaching and learning promotes higher-order learning outcomes and critical thinking expected from higher education institutions. This investigation puts a pragmatic milestone with the belief of creating meaning through action and interaction in experience-based education (integrated teaching and research activities). This shows how the implementation of theoretical and practical ideas in curriculum resources occur (Fung, 2017) via research-informed instructional process. The researchers sought to bridge gaps associated with linking research-based knowledge and instructional practices. Therefore, the paper examined the alignments between teaching, learning, research, and innovative actions in higher education institutions, with particular reference to Hawassa University.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How well do teaching, learning and research milieus enable generation and translation of knowledge to innovative actions in higher education institutions?
2. To what extent are teaching, learning, research practices and innovative actions aligned together to subsidize sustainable development in higher education institutions?
3. To what extents are inquiry-based teaching, learning, research and innovative action preparing graduates with required knowledge, skills and innovation?
4. To what extent are higher education institutions augmenting professional competencies, professionalism and innovative actions of instructors and postgraduate students?
5. How well do higher education institutions strive to achieve excellence in teaching learning/pedagogical process, research, community services and innovative actions?

1. Significance of the Study

Practice Significance: This study assists in identifying the degree to which teaching in higher education/pedagogical practices aligns with research and innovative actions in higher education institutions. It guides academic staff, non-academic staff, learners, and the

community at large towards attaining 21st century competencies and skills to provide educational services and maintain the third mission and sustainability.

Academic Significance: It helps leaders, managers, and instructors to design their own strategies that enable them to motivate and reward best students, teachers, researchers, and leaders with the best professional, technological, and pedagogical innovations in the excursion of ensuring the quality of higher education and striving for excellence.

1. Definition of Operational Terms

Higher education is a post-secondary education given to students in higher education institutions. In these institutions, research is carried out by teachers and students to solve local, national, and international problems. Research outputs are the new knowledge or findings that are useful in solving teaching and learning, and community problems, whereas innovative action is the action to be taken to produce creative assumptions.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.Research Method/Approach

The study employed a mixed research method in which mixed model research involves mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches in all stages (formulation of the research questions, data collection procedures and research method, interpretation of the results, and final inferences) (Creswell, 2014).

2.2 Research Method and Design

The researcher used a mixed approach and concurrent triangulation design to conduct this particular study. Among the three common mixed designs, researchers used concurrent triangulation design (older name: convergent parallel) throughout their studies (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Creswell, 2014). This is less time -consuming because both qualitative and quantitative data collection occurs concurrently in the same visit to the field (Creswell, 2014; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then, compared the two databases to determine whether there was convergence, divergence, or combination (Creswell, 2014)

2.3 The Sources of Data

The target population of this study included both primary and secondary sources of data to obtain sufficient information concerning the links between teaching in higher education, research, and innovative actions. Thus, the primary sources of the data were research directors, college deans, school and department heads, instructors, and postgraduate (Master's and PhD) students selected from all campuses of the sample University. In addition, the researcher collected secondary data from secondary sources, such as international literature, policy documents, publications, legislations, and proclamations.

2.4 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of each target population will be determined by believing that the ideal

sample size is large enough to be selected economically in terms of both time and complexity, and small enough to be manageable and specific for analysis (Best and Kahn, 2006). In addition, the researcher made judgments based on four key factors in the sampling process: the sample size, representativeness, parameters of the sample, access to the sample, and sampling strategy to be used (Cohen et al., 2007).

The researcher used concurrent sampling process in which quantitative-probability and qualitative none probability purposeful sampling techniques are combined as independent sampling procedures and jointly used in this study (Creswell, 2014). The researcher selected samples from all campuses using convenience/ availability sampling technique, and included all campuses and institutes. Then, a stratified sampling technique was used based on strata such as department, schools, qualification, and specialization, followed by simple random sampling techniques to select instructors and postgraduate students from their respective colleges, institutes, schools, and departments. For a large target population like instructors and postgraduate students, the sample size was determined using the Cochran (1977) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

where n is the sample, N is the population, e is the marginal error at the 95% confidence level, and p = 0.05. In addition, the researcher used purposive sampling technique while selecting program and research directorates, college and associate deans, school directors and department heads based on criteria such as opportunities to provide adequate evidences about the study.

2.5. Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses were used to gather data. Creswell (2014) stated that employing multiple data collection instruments helps researchers to combine and strengthen the inadequacies and triangulation of data. The researcher constructed a questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument, and unstructured interviews and document extraction checklists were used to enrich the data. Questionnaires are preferred because they are easier to handle and simple for respondents to answer within a short period (Koul, 2008). Close and open-ended questionnaires were administered to instructors and postgraduate students. Unstructured guiding questions were prepared for in-depth interviews with the University administrators, and other stakeholders (directorates, deans, schools, and department heads) selected from each campus. Matt (2000) stated that semi-structured interviews are helpful because they tend to generate argued responses.

2.6 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Tools

The researcher conducted a pilot test in one none-sampled university with 154 participants (71 instructors and 83 postgraduate students) to obtain insights for establishing appropriate design and procedures for the main study. Using the pilot test result, the researcher established the reliability of the items for a meaningful data collection process (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008), and sampling adequacy by using KMO (.872 >. 600). The researcher checked the validity of the instruments through expert reading before conducting a pilot test. The reliability of the instruments for instructors and postgraduate students was found to be (α =.847 and

.823 >.8000), respectively. Based on the comments given by expert reviewers and Cronbach's alpha results, the researcher made some improvements on a few items of the questionnaires, interview guiding questions, and document analysis checklists, and conducted final data collection.

2.7. Methods of Data Analyses

Researchers have used both quantitative and qualitative methods (QUAN+QUAL) to analyze data. Pertaining to this, Creswell (2014) stated that concurrent design helps to achieve what is termed triangulation, where a comparison between different databases occur for a better effect. The researcher mixed qualitative and quantitative data in the interpretation or discussion to merge the data. This means one type of data is transformed into another type and the results of the two databases are compared side-by-side in discussions. Quantitative data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics such as average mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test.

3. RESULTS OF STUDY

The researcher analyzed the quantitative data collected using closed-ended questionnaires quantitatively, and narrated qualitative data collected using open-ended questions, semi-structured interview, and document analysis. Therefore, this section presents the descriptive and inferential results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative (textual and contextual) data analysis. It enriched and interpreted the qualitative and quantitative findings simultaneously.

3.1. Background Information of Research Participants

The descriptions of background information of the research participants, such as gender, age, qualification, position in the career structure, and total years of experiences, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Background information of research participants

Variable	Description of characteristics	F in number	In percentage
Gender	Male	284	67.46
	Female	137	32.54
	Total	421	100.00
Qualification	BA/BSC/BED	150	35.63
	MA/MBA/MED/MSC	162	38.48
	Assistant Professors	71	16.87
	Associate professors	38	9.03
	Total	421	100.00
Total work Experiences	6-10 years	38	9.03
	11-15 years	144	34.20
	16-20 years	171	40.62
	21 years and above	68	16.15

	Total	421	100.00
Total Participants of the study	Academic staffs	207	49.17
	Postgraduate students	214	50.83
	Total	421	100.00

Table 1 shows that 207 (49.17%) respondents were academic staffs and 214 (50.83%) were postgraduate students. Regarding gender balance, 284 (67.46%) academic staff respondents were male, 137 (32.54%) were female. Qualification wise, the majority of participants, 162 (38.48%) were Masters' degree holders, while 71 (16.87%) were Assistant Professors and 38 (9.03%) participants were Associate professors, and 150 (35.63%) participants were postgraduate students and first-degree holders. The data showed that the majority of the academics, 171 (40.62%) had 16-20 years of total experiences; 144 (34.20%) academic staffs had 11-15 years of total experiences, 68 (16.15%) academic staffs were with greater than 21 years of total experiences and only 38 (9.03%) respondents were with less than or equal to 10 years of total experiences.

The findings indicated that the majority of the academic staffs were academically well-qualified and at senior positions in their career hierarchies. From this, one can deduce that the sample academic staff profiles nearly meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the MoE policy (HERQA), which suggests that the university academic staff profile should be (50% Master's and 50% PhD and above). Regarding updating professional competencies required for 21st century classrooms, Hawassa University provided smooth and collaborative intervention in capacity-building programs through HDP and CPD endeavors and organizational capacity enhancement (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Kennedy, 2016). Therefore, they can evaluate the alignments between teaching and innovative research actions in higher education institutions by identifying best practices and changes.

From 456 respondents, only 421 fully participated in the study. From the remaining 35 participants, 28 did not return the questionnaires and seven, did not participate in the interviews. Thus, 198 academic staffs and 214 postgraduate students completed and returned the questionnaires, and nine academic staff members actively participated in the interviews.

3.2 Conceptualization of Teaching, Learning, Research and Innovative Actions

Table 2: Conceptualization of teaching, learning, research and innovative actions

SN	Indicators of conceptualization of alignments	Academic staffs		Graduates		t-test	p-value
		M1	SD1	M2	SD2		
1	Aligning academic staffs' research interests with teaching activities	2.869	.6787	2.961	.6749	.689	.332
2	Allocating flexible times, funds and resources for research and teaching responsibility	2.761	.7188	2.817	.6331	.475	.546
3	Academic freedom of researcher-teachers to shape curricula with up-to-date developments	2.716	.7459	2.669	.7508	.544	.477

4	Responsibility of allocating teaching and research duties to junior and senior staffs	3.115	.4981	3.078	.4877	.781	.244
5	Developing benchmarking standards to monitor and evaluate enquiry-based learning.	2.575	.8610	2.581	.8215	.657	.364
	Cumulative average M and SD	2.807	.7005	2.821	.6736	.677	.354

P–value is accepted at 0.05 level of significance

Keys of determining cutting points: Average mean, M= 1.00-2.99- poor; 3.00- the ideal mean; 3.01-3.99- moderate; M =4.00-5.00-very good.

Table 2, item 1 reflects that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.869, M2 =2.961, t (.689) =.332, p >.05). This suggests that the average means are higher than the ideal mean. The independent sample t- test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents pertaining to the practices of aligning academic staffs' research interests with teaching activities. Thus, both groups of respondents were not satisfied with the efforts of aligning the two disciplines to ensure quality of instructional system. Item 2 summarizes that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.761, M2 =2.817, t (.475) =.546, p >.05). This suggests that the average means of both academic staffs and graduate students were less than the ideal mean. The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Item 3 ensures that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.716, M2 = 2.669, t (.544) =.000, p>.05). This suggests that the average means of academic staffs and graduate students were less than the ideal mean. The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Both categories of respondents showed less satisfaction with academic freedom of teacher-researchers to shape curricula with up-to-date developments in their disciplines. Similarly, item 4 shows that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.716, M2 = 2.669, t (.544) =.000, p>.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents indicating less satisfaction with the academic freedom of teacher-researchers to shape curricula with up-to-date developments in their disciplines.

Item 4 indicates that the average means of respondents was (M1=3.115, M2 =3.078, t (.871) =.244, p >.05). This indicates that the average mean scores of both the academic staffs and graduate students were higher than the ideal mean. An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no a statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Item 5 indicates that the average means of the respondents were (M1=2.574, M2 = 2.579, t (.657) =.364, p>.05). This suggests that the average means of

both the academic staffs and graduate students were less than the ideal mean. An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no a statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. They did not appreciate the benchmarking standards developed to monitor and evaluate research and inquiry-based learning.

In addition, it was evidenced from the open-ended question that the perspectives about

conceptualization, and practices of integrating teaching and research outputs were not given attention or institutionalized (open- ended question, March, 2022).

Moreover, one of the interviewees, R5 clarified that

'*Though integrating teaching and research outputs are essential to improve quality of education in general and that of graduates in particular, more attention is given to teaching rather than undertaking research activities. According to my college then, the two disciplines are under implementation separately. No one was worrying whether the research output is recycled or not' (R5; March 20, 2022).*

Furthermore, R1 confirmed that

'The legislation itself doesn't give emphasis to integration of the two disciplines. The legislation of Ethiopian higher learning institutions set the framework of higher education proclamation that states "academic staff" means an employee of higher education institution who devotes 75% of his time to teaching and 25% of his time to research. This has made the academic staffs to give more time for teaching rather than being engaged in doing research, and resulted in poor nexus between teaching and research activities' (R1; May 7, 2022).

The other interviewee, R8 extended the argument as

> *'There is often integration between research outputs and teaching to some extents likeusing problem-solving methods, inquiry, laboratory and projects. The colleges or institutes announce for the academic staff to apply, compete and conduct interdisciplinary, disciplinary, internationally funded projects annually according to the schedule of the University. However, the equilibrium shifts in that there were no mutual relationships between teaching-learning process, research outputs, training and social services' (R8; March 20, 2022).*

In addition, the document analysis results show that the teaching-learning process, research, innovation, and technology transfer act separately. However, although some research results theoretically trace back to the quality of teaching and learning processes and technological innovation in higher education institutions, nothing is stated about their integration, although the proclamation aligns them together (March, 2022).

These findings align with Clark's (1997) finding that the modern integration of research activities with teaching and learning promotes quality of instruction. Thus, exposing students to research content and

processes aids students in understanding knowledge construction within the discipline, enhances deep learning, and promotes confidence, networking, and employability (Walkington, 2015).

3.3 Research-based Teaching and Learning

Table 3: Research-based teaching and learning

SN	Indicators of research-based teaching and learning	Academic staff		Graduates		t-test	p-value
		M1	SD1	M2	SD2		
1	Postgraduate curricula revolve around enquiry- based activities to promote collaborative problem-solving activities, field trips and simulations.	3.279	.5781	2.788	.7143	7.698	.000
2	Researcher-teachers and students engage in enquiry process and teachers act as partners that are more experienced and students as learners.	2.917	.5822	2.887	.6518	.489	.532
3	Across my colleges, schools and departments, researcher-teachers work as partners on authentic research activities.	3.427	.6301	2.819	.6690	8.733	.000
4	The practices of different curricula focus on conducting research and enquiry as learning of students	2.907	.6599	2.898	.6981	.879	.142
5	Research process completes with replicating dissemination of practices; mini-conference, posters, panel discussion and publications.	3.091	.6107	3.066	.5597	.812	.209
6	Students read abstracts or media reports on research outputs to publicize with positions and arguments at the cutting edges of their disciplines	2.882	.7108	2.895	.6982	2.117	.087
7	The researcher-teachers are autonomous to be engaged in critical reflection, enquiry into their own teaching and learning approaches.	3.218	.5901	3.112	.6300	.477	.544
8	Students learn the skills to do research through inquiry-based curricular practices, active learning and meaningful learning of researcher-teachers.	3.498	.6549	2.789	.5578	9.557	0.000
Cumulative average M and SD		3.092	.6271	2.907	.6474	.556	.465

P-value is accepted at 0.05 level of significance

Table 3, item 1 reflects that the average means of respondents were (M1=3. 279, M2 =2.788, t (7.698) =.000, p <.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents on whether or not the existing postgraduate curricula/programs were designed

around enquiry-based activities. Similarly, item 8 asserted that the average means of respondents were (M1=3.498, M2 =2.789, t (9.557) =.000, p <.05) although independent sample t-test confirms that there was statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents on whether or not students learn the skills to do research through inquiry-based curricular practices, active learning and meaningful learning of researcher-teachers. Likewise, item 2 summarizes that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.917, M2 =2.887, t (.489) =.532, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. The item related to no. 4 demonstrated that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.907, M2 =2.898, t (.879) =.142, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents.

Item 3 of the same table shows that the average means of the respondents were (M1=3.427, M2 = 2.847, t (8.733) =.000, p <.05). An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents pertaining to researcher-teachers' work as partners in authentic research activities. Moreover, Item 5 shows that the average means of respondents were (M1=3.091, M2 =3.066, t (.812) =.209, p >.05). An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Thus, the researcher assessed that the completion of research process was in ways that disseminate best practices, mini-conferences, posters, panel discussions, and publications. Item 6 reveals that the average means of the respondents were (M1=2.875, M2 =2.895, t (2.117) =.087, p >.05). An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. The respondents were less likely to that professional experiences direct student to read abstracts or media reports on research outputs to publicize positions and arguments at the cutting edges of their disciplines. Item 7 summarizes that the average means of the respondents were (M1=3.218, M2 =3.112, t (.447) =.544, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents regarding researcher-teachers' academic autonomy.

Additionally, one of the interviewees, R1 commented that

….'No one was initiated to develop research-based curricula to ensure the nexus between teaching and research. The instructional materials are usually looks like learner-centered but they do not assist learners to integrate research-based knowledge and teaching learning processes which entirely needs a focus on inquiry-based activities. Therefore, she stated that there were inadequate understanding and implementation of research-informed instructional practices at both graduate and undergraduate levels' (R1; May 17, 2022).

Similarly, one of the interviewees, R9 suggested that

….'*Both academic staffs and postgraduate students participate in spontaneous to-and- fro movement in teaching, research and community services to ensure quality of education and achieve the third mission as well. I think, most of the time the implementation of teaching-learning process occurred theoretically without the*

support of projects. Individual staff needs research competencies and understanding to support students involved in learning through some form of research activities or inquires' (R9, April 28, 2022).

….. Furthermore, the analysis of policy document results showed that higher education institutions are expected to implement research-based teaching to solve a country's economic, social, and cultural problems, and maintain quality of education in general, and that of graduates, in particular, to contribute to the sustainable development of a country (March, 2022).

Therefore, the findings are linking with by the findings that while the research has certainly shaped and in effect endorses our focus on the curriculum, it does leave open and uncertain the extent to which organizations need a research presence (Gray et al., 2013)

3.4 Research-Informed Teaching, Learning, and Teaching-Influenced Research Table 4:

Research-informed teaching, learning, and teaching-influenced research

SN	Indicators of research-informed teaching, learning and teaching-influenced research	Academic staff M1	SD1	Graduates M2	SD2	t-test	p-value
1	Researcher-teachers participate in research-informed-teaching while planning, implementing and evaluating teaching and learning	2.868	.7122	2.769	.7513	.456	.565
2	The researcher-teachers develop and enhance research processes and outcomes based on their engagements in teaching and research activities.	2.698	.7608	3.109	.5691	4.283	.000
3	Research-informed teaching is critically important both for and beyond the students' experiences and research excellence.	2.787	.7582	3.218	.7190	3.985	.000
4	The university works on creating knowledge, transmitting to students and societies via innovative actions.	3.357	.7109	3.208	.7593	.625	.436
	Cumulative average M and SD	2.928	.7355	3.076	.7009	.621	.440
	P-value is accepted at 0.05 level of significance						

Table 4 item 1 reflects that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.868, M2 =2.769, t (.456) =.565, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Likely, item 2 summarizes that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.698, M2 =3.109, t (4.283) =.000, p <.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents pertaining to the efforts of researcher-teachers to develop and enhance research processes and outcomes on the bases of their engagements in teaching and research activities. Item 3 ensures that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.787, M2 = 3.218, t (3.985) =.000, p <.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was

statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents whether or not research-informed teaching is critically important both for and beyond the students' experiences; practices result towards teaching and research excellence. Moreover, item 4 shows that the average means of respondents were (M1=3.357, M2 =3.208, t (.625) =.436, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents.

Pertaining to the research informed teaching, R5 suggested that

> *….'Obviously, higher education institutions are known by conducting research on top of training graduates in different disciplines. However, the approaches of training varies among the disciplines in that some are following research-informed approach but there are difficulties of conceptualizing and contextualizing to the local level. Yet, some disciplines are totally theory-based and you cannot see any practicalities at all' (R5; April, 28, 2022)*

Furthermore, the results of the document investigation regarding pedagogical praxis in higher education institutions showed that research-influenced teaching is essential for creating top young scholars, although the experiences of our country's Universities showed that the shortage of resources takes the central spheres. Hence, learners were not influenced to learn through research-informed teaching although it is highly encouraging and productive (April, 2022).

3.5 The Effects of Integration of Teaching- Learning and Research Outputs

Table 5: The effects of integration of teaching, learning and research outputs

SN	The effects integration of teaching, learning and research outputs	Academic staff M1	SD1	Graduates M2	SD2	t-test	p-value
1	The nexus between teaching, learning and research outputs enhanced pedagogical innovation**;** teaching and learning methods, assessment for learning	2.968	.5822	2.987	.6588	.422	.535
2	The nexus between teaching, learning and research findings improved educational innovation, curriculum improvement and professionalism of academic staffs	2.781	.7301	2.811	.7091	.525	.638
3	The nexus between teaching, learning and research outputs improved technological innovation and learning technologies	2.457	.8542	3.116	.6998	4.917	.000
4	The nexus between teaching, learning and research outputs improved administrative, innovation: management system and its properties	2.891	.6107	2.778	.6698	.831	.332
5	The nexus between teaching, learning and research findings improved ideological innovation; programs, public lectures, academic debates, sports and competitions	2.615	.6810	2.498	.6884	.922	.241
	Cumulative average M and SD	2.742	.6916	2.838	.6852	.757	.406
	P-value is accepted at 0.05 level of significance						

Table 5 item 1 demonstrates that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.958, M2 =2.987, t (.422) =.535, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Item 2 summarizes that the average means of respondents were (M1=2.781, M2 =2.811, t (.525) =.638, p >.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was no a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Moreover, item 3 shows that the means of respondents were (M1=2.457, M2 =3.116, t (7.217) =.000, p <.05). The independent sample t-test confirms that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents on whether or not the nexus between teaching and research outputs resulted to technological innovation; improved learning technologies for distance education or online learning and e learning.

Item 4 showed that the average means of the respondents are (M1=2.891, M2 =2.778, t (.831) =.332, p >.05). However, an independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents. Finally, Item 5 summarizes that the average means of the respondents was (M1=2.615, M2 =2.498, t (.922) =.241, p >.05). An independent sample t-test confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents.

In strengthening the above findings, one of the interviewees, R7 explained that

....'The balance between teaching-learning process and research outputs was very weak and by implication it resulted to low standards of quality of graduates. Instructors understood that the implementation of teaching-learning process occurred by instructors alone. Non- practitioners or external researchers conduct the research with having expectations of being implementing by instructors and students' (R7; May 14, 2022).

Moreover, another participant, R6 suggested that

...'The trends of department in integrating knowledge-based teaching-learning process were on-and-off depending on the thematic and financial phenomenon of the university. It was impossible to play your roles and responsibilities without sufficient resources like human, material and financial resources. The trends of conducting research in my college was primarily not to improve teaching-learning process and it was for community service as the purpose of the funder but many findings were shelved except few findings which were implemented via professional training. Occasionally, academicians usually conduct researches for academic promotion and fulfillment of their degrees from the side of students' (R6 ; May 15, 2022).

Thus, cultivating ownership in communities of universities and other key stakeholders for quality issues is an effective method that fully contributes to different innovations in higher education institutions (Wariyo, 2020).

3.6. Findings and Discussion

Based on the mixed data collection procedures, a researcher identified the following findings. These are:

1. The integration of research activities with teaching and learning processes promotes quality of instruction when students hands-on and minds-on research contents and processes, which leads them towards knowledge construction within the discipline, enhances deep learning, and promotes confidence, networking, and ensues employability. However, there were inadequate conceptualization and contextualization practices of aligning teaching research outputs and innovative actions in HwU. The cumulative average means and standard deviations, of academic staffs and postgraduate students were less than the ideal mean.

2. HwU practiced research-based teaching moderately although some professional concerns like inquiry- based curricular practices, active learning and meaningful learning of researcher-teachers required further improvements. The cumulative average means and standard deviations of the academic staffs and postgraduates were near the ideal mean. The instructional materials were learner-centered, but they did not assist learners in integrating research-based knowledge and inquiry-based teaching-learning processes.

3. HwU practiced research and teaching-influenced research moderately. The cumulative

average means of respondents were near the ideal mean. Although Hawassa University encourages researchers to publish articles in reputable journals, they were doing research only for the purpose of academic promotion and fulfillment of degrees.

4. The effects of integration of teaching, research, and innovative actions did not significantly contribute to technological, administrative, instructional, and pedagogical innovations. The cumulative average means and standard deviation of academic staffs and postgraduate students were less than the ideal mean.

5. International literature suggests that 80% of knowledge from informal education, and only 20% of knowledge from formal education. However, the academic staffs and postgraduate students of higher education institutions did not use their time effectively for both teaching and research works.

6. Although the nexuses between teaching, learning, research, technological, and pedagogical innovation strengthens and realizes the generation of new knowledge and transfers it to students and wider communities were loose, they have paramount importance to improve and contribute to ensuring sustainable development goal (SDG4) i.e ensuring quality of education.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

The study concluded that conceptualization and contextualization of the nexus between teaching, learning, research and innovative actions in higher education institutions are important to promote students' knowledge construction, deep learning and self-confidence. This practice calls for collaborative participation of academic staffs and postgraduates students in the integration of teaching, learning, research and community services to improve their academic and professional capital.

In addition, it is important for instructors to use research-informed and research-based teaching and learning strategies while planning, implementing and evaluating their instruction. These practices are indispensable to produce competent graduates with critical thinking, originality, and creativity through construction of large pools of knowledge based on inquiry, research, projects, field trips, laboratory and findings of study as inputs and outputs

4.2. Recommendations

A researcher forwarded the following feasible suggestions for practice. These are:

1. The alignments of teaching, learning, research, and innovative actions were poorly conceptualized and contextualized. Therefore, concerned bodies should make awareness creation training, seminars, public lectures, and workshops to modernize research-informed and based teaching in higher education institutions.

2. The practical experiences should direct students read abstracts or media reports on

research outputs to publicize positions and arguments at the cutting edges of their disciplines. Academic staffs and postgraduates should implement spontaneous to-and-fro movement in teaching, learning, research innovation, and community services to ensure quality of education to address sustainable development goal

3. The awareness, willingness and motivation of some graduate students and instructors to exercise inquiry- based activities in instructional practices were negligible. Researcher/teachers should participate in research-informed teaching while planning, implementing, and evaluating their teaching and learning. Thus, the nexus between teaching, learning, research and innovative actions should contribute to improving learning technologies, managerial, ideological, instructional and pedagogical innovations.

4. Higher education institutions in Ethiopia should develop a culture of conducting graduate tracer studies/surveys to determine the profiles of graduates such as their academic standings, employment status, and employers' satisfaction. The results of tracer studies help strengthen the nexus between teaching, learning, research, and innovative action in higher education institutions.

5. To ensure the effectiveness of teaching, learning, research, and innovative actions in HEIs, research directorates, educational leaders, instructors, and graduate students should develop commitment and possibilities in ensuring the linkage between research-based knowledge and inquiry-based teaching and learning processes.

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The role of Student Voice to Achieve access, Relevance, Equity and Quality of Higher Education: A South African experience. Mthokozisi Emmanuel Ntuli1 & Damtew Teferra2

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Abstract

The inclusion of student voices in different aspects of higher education has evolved in the African continent over the years. While the literature explicates it as student participation in decision making structures as significantly contributing to contemporary debates to bring about transformative approaches to higher education, student voices have been characterized by recent manifestations in the form of student movements using social media to galvanize support. African students have waged struggles to hold institutional leaders and governments accountable to principles of equity and social justice to support a developmental state. In South Africa, students protested in favor of decolonized higher education, including curriculum reform and unaffordable fees under the banners of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, respectively. Through a lens of critical mass theory, the study analyses student voice by assessing the nature and essence of its recent manifestations towards achieving access, relevance, equity and quality of higher education. The study proposes that universities and governments should acknowledge student voices as a catalyst and positive force for political, economic and social transformation. Thus, an environment that supports and encourages positive forms of student voices should be created. This study adds to the body of knowledge by providing a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of student voices in the African continent and recommends ways to promote its positive aspects for furthering the transformation of society. It concludes that African governments and universities need not only focus on their role in advancing awareness of social justice but also create an enabling environment for students to become constructive agents of societal change.

Keywords: *Student voice, Student Activism, Access, Equity, Relevance, Quality, Higher Education, South Africa, Africa*

Introduction

Student Voice has long been prevalent in the African continent. Students have participated in struggle for freedom, independence, and equitable and sustainable development. At the beginning of the 20th century, African students joined the struggle against the colonial rule and in favor of independence and against apartheid in South Africa (Boahen, 1994; Luescher, 2005). During the post-colonial era, student voices have pushed for the end in the one-party states, economic and social injustices and in favor of democracy (Boahen, 1994; Chenoufi, 1994). The declaration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations and establishment of African Agenda 2063 has culminated in student voice playing a pivotal role to pressurize governments and political leaders to deliver to their commitments (African Union Commission, 2015; Ntuli, 2019; United Nations, 2015).

The manifestation of student voices in the African continent concerned embarking on an ambitious goal to expand access as well as advocate for equity, relevance and quality of higher education (Amutuhaire; 2023; Klemencic & Luescher, 2016; Mzangwa, 2019). The contemporary modalities of student voice have manifested by the emergence of protests movements with social networks utilized to garner support (Booysen, 2016; Fomunyam & Teferra, 2017; Luescher, Loader, & Mugume, 2017; Ntuli & Teferra, 2017). By and large, the contemporary literature has shown that the use of social media as a form of communication greatly enhances the strength of student movements (Ntuli & Teferra, 2017).

This study examines the role of student voice to achieve access, relevance, equity and quality of higher education. Through a lens critical mass theory, the study analyses the nature and essence student voices to bring about transformation in higher education, with a particular focus on its recent manifestations. It seeks to contribute a new dimension on the use of student voices and its implications for transformation of higher education in the African Continent to achieve access, equity, relevance and quality (Amutuhaire, 2023; Hailu, Lee, Halkiyo, Tsotniashvili, Tewari, 2023; Machingambi & Wadesango, 2012).

The outline of the study constitutes five sections. Section one articulates the study's objectives while section two presents a review of the literature on student voices in the African continent and South Africa. The third section presents the theoretical framework used to analyses the study and theoretical and conceptual lens to examine the phenomenon in the study. The fourth section provides a detailed discussion and analysis of the phenomenon of student voices in the African continent through a lens of critical mass theory with a focus on recent hashtag manifestations of student rebellion in the form of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in South Africa. Section five presents a conclusion of the study.

African Framework - Agenda 2063

Over the past half a century (1963-2013), the African continent has paid a particular attention on addressing the legacy of her colonization by the Europeans and apartheid system in South Africa (Boahen, 1994; Beale, 1992, Mackay, 2015). In 2013, the African Union led the decolonization process and committed itself to achieve the Pan African Vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent (African Union Commission, 2015). That vision is driven by citizens of the continent, while representing a dynamic force in the

international arena. To attain this vision, the African Union silver jubilee anniversary summit ordered the African Union Commission, under the auspices of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other agencies to prepare a continental 50-year agenda through a people-driven process outlining the "Africa We Want", namely Agenda 2063 and to achieve the 17 SDGs as pronounced by the United Nations (African Union Commission, 2015; Ntuli, 2019; UN, 2015).

National Development Plan (NDP) of South Africa

The National Development Plan agenda is aimed at that seeks to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality in South Africa by 2030. By drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, augmenting the state capacity as well as promoting leadership and partnerships throughout the society, the NDP goal is set to be achieved (Buys, 2018; National Planning Commission, 2013). South Africa has made remarkable progress in the transition from apartheid to democracy thus far. She has made progress in building an inclusive society, rolling back the shadow of history and broadening opportunities for all South Africans (National Planning Commission, 2013; Naidoo & Maré, 2015).

Furthermore, institutions that promote a democratic and transformative state have been built with a constitution that enshrines a rights-based approach and envisions a prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist democracy that belongs to all its people. However, healing the wounds of the past and redressing the inequities caused by the apartheid system and racial segregation, remain constitutional imperatives. Access to services has been expanded and a non-racial society has begun to emerge. Millions of people that were previously excluded have access to education, water, electricity, health care, housing and social security. About 3 million more people have been absorbed by the labor market compared to 1994, with the poverty rate declining and average incomes growing steadily in real terms (National Planning Commission, 2013).

The South African government has developed nine objectives in its National Development Plan objectives, and these include the following:

1. promoting economic development and eradicating unemployment,
2. developing economic infrastructure,
3. promoting environmental sustainability and resilience,
4. promoting inclusive rural economy,
5. transforming human settlement,
6. improving education and training from early childhood development (ECD) to PhD,
7. promoting health care for all, building safer communities and
8. building a capable and developmental state, fighting corruption, nation building and social cohesion (National Planning Commission, 2013).

The performance of existing higher education institutions has covered both ends as it ranges from world- class to mediocre. Continuous quality improvement is needed as the system expands at a moderate pace. A major challenge is that poor school education increases the cost of producing graduates, and a relatively small number of black students graduate from universities. Thus, increasing participation and graduation rates, with the option of a four-year university degree, combined with bridging courses and more support for universities to help black students from disadvantaged backgrounds, is likely to yield higher returns.

There is a targeted increase in enrolments at higher education institutions by at least 70 percent by 2030 so that access to higher learning is augmented to about 1.62 million from 950 000 in 2010. The NDP concerns to increase the number of students eligible to study towards maths and science-based degrees to 450 000 by 2030, raise the percentage of PhD qualified staff in the higher education sector from the current 34 percent to over 75 percent by 2030 and produce more than 100 doctoral graduates (National Planning Commission, 2013).

Student Voices in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Altbach (1984; 1999) put forward that student activism can serve as a conscience of societies and a canary in a coal mine. Similarly, delays in implementing plans to meet transformation agenda has led to the student voice playing a significant role to raise the alarm.

To begin with, shortly after the first democratic government in South Africa took the political power, implemented its own home-grown SAP. This commitment to a neoliberal and capitalist path of development and redistribution meant that numerous post-apartheid expectations, such as free education, had to be deferred (Cele, 2015; Luescher, 2013). The resulting financial exclusion of many poor black students led to frequent clashes between students and university administration on many campuses (Koen, Cele &Libhaber, 2006).

The manifestations of student voice in post-apartheid South Africa have taken different forms including student representation in university decision-making structures and student protests (Koen, Cele & Libhaber, 2006; Cele, 2008; Luescher, 2008). Koen et al's (2006) study discovered that the student unrest was impelled by issues such as unaffordable fees, access, insufficient student funding and racism in South African higher education institutions. They observed that while universities have been open to negotiations with students, taking to the streets has generally been the most effective tactic to effect reforms. Student voices have been manifested through various strategies and tactics that range from cooperative and constructive forms to antagonistic and oppositional ones (Klemencic, Luescher & Mugune, 2016).

Cele (2008) noted that student voices tended to be firstly expressed constructively to address issues or concerns before protest actions were resorted to. Klemencic et al (2016) averred that student voices have taken different forms and shape which influenced by the way students organize, namely formal and informal manifestations of student voices. Formal activism involves institutionalized form of student representation by elected Student Representative Councils (SRCs) to represent student issues (Klemencic et al, 2016). This form of expressing student voices is construed as "bounded" (Teferra & Ntuli, 2021). The informal form involves mobilization of students to wage a protest to collective demonstrate their power to bring about reforms (Klemencic et al, 2016; Oxlund, 2016).

While some students consider sitting on numerous committees as proving opportunities to learn and as a way of rubbing shoulders with policy makers (Klemencic et al, 2016), others would inversely pursue more than simply a voice in decision making but they utilized a collective effort to bring about reforms (Taft & Gordon, 2013). Brookes, Byford & Sela (2016) noted that the legitimacy of student participation in university governance structures

is merely a tactic of co-option of students or 'tame' dissent. In addition, they indicated that protest movements provided a real opportunity to demonstrate the student power. Furthermore, they noted that there was inherent tension between student participation to carve a suitable place in a status quo and protest movements to change it (Klemencic et al, 2016).

However, Luescher (2008) observes that student activists involved in decision making forums may subversively require activist support from their constituency to defend and possibly extend the gains made by previous generations, whether they are legally enshrined. Klemencic et al (2016) noted that, where formal mechanisms were absent, student activists tend to vent issues and raise their grievances through demonstrations and other vicious forms of student actions. Equally, Cele (2015) noted that formal and informal expressions are indicators of the effectiveness of different forms of activism and the responsiveness of the dominant policy maker to the student voice.

Student Voices via Protest Movements

The literature showed that as protest movements were prolonged for some time, they tended to become larger in support and more vicious in its form (Moja, Luescher & Schreiber, 2015). The student voice that seeks to promote expansion of access to quality higher education, fee remission, better facilities, elimination of symbols of apartheid and in South African universities, has culminated in protest movements (Fomunyam & Teferra, 2017; Langa, 2017; Moja, Luescher & Schreiber, 2015; Ntuli, 2020). In 2015 and 2016 academic years, student voices were characterized by waves of protest movements in South African universities that swept across the country and beyond (Luescher, Loader & Mugume, 2016; Ntuli & Teferra, 2017).

University of Cape Town students protested in favor of the removal of the statute of Cecil John Rhodes, which was mounted at the university entrance. The statue was construed as a symbol of colonization and racial inequality (Fomunyam and Teferra, 2017; Ntuli, 2020). The protest movement was organized using social media under the banner of #RhodesMustFall. It emerged based on the perception that debates on colonial history in the universities were inadequate. The campaign culminated in students across the country joining the struggle to dismantle colonial or apartheid symbols their universities. The campaign resonated to other countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and more, raising the question that if at UCT it was the Rhodes statue that had to fall, what must fall in their own contexts (Luescher et al, 2017).

Subsequently, there was an emergence of another protest movement against unaffordable fees as that was construed as causing a barrier to access higher education. The protest commenced at Wits university over fee increase and galvanized under the banner of #FeesMustFall movement (Booysen, 2016; Luescher et al, 2016).

The manifestation of student voices took different forms such as class boycotts, various marches such as a march to the parliament of the Republic as well as marches to the ruling party headquarters and the State President official residence. It is important to note that social media was used as a mobilization tool to garner

support (Luescher et al, 2016). The utilization of social networks was conceptualized by Manuel Castell as internet-age networked movements (Castell, 2015). The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements were digitally driven and utilized platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and more (Luescher et al, 2016).

These capacitated the protests movements to mobilize students across political ideologies, to unite as a collective force against symbols of colonization or apartheid and to forge changes in fees and access to higher education (Booysen, 2016). Digital platforms enable the protest movements to secure the removal of colonial symbols, including Rhodes' statue in higher education institutions as well as achieving a no fee increase in 2016. Subsequently, the State President established Heher commission to assess the feasibility of free higher education in South Africa (Luescher et al, 2016).

The commission report found that it would not be feasible and proposed for the establishment of the income contingent loan (ICL) with state guarantees (Heher Commission, 2017; Mlambo, Hlongwa & Mubecua, 2017). Consequently, concerned about the dilemma of qualifying students in financial distress, the State President made a pronouncement for the introduction of higher education for the poor families effective from January 2018 (Heffernan, 2018). This represented the largest victory by students since the inception of democracy.

Theoretical framework

The Critical Mass Theory (CMT) was used to provide a theoretical and conceptual lens to the study. The theory illuminates the understanding about the nature and essence of the manifestation students voice in the African continent. The Critical Mass Theory began as a conversation with Mancur Olson's Logic of Collective Action in 1965 (Pecorino, 2015). Olson challenged conventional wisdom by arguing that unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interest (Udéhn, 1993).

The theory shows that the interdependent decisions by adequate number of people, i.e., critical mass, accumulates into collective action to achieve the bring about change. The theory is utilized in this study to explain any context involving a group of people large enough to achieve the desired change, i.e., articulation of student voices in this context (Snow, Della Porta, Klandermans & McAdam, 2013). A critical mass performs in a different way from group members and can produce public good when some individual members of the group have not contributed anything, i.e., free-rider concept while, the critical mass initiates and is able to ignite widespread collective action.

The theory suggests that unity and solidarity is more powerful in collective actions than organizational capacities (Lichbach, 1994). It recognizes that outcomes of the scale of collective actions are reliant on two independent variables: namely marginal returns and heterogeneity. The marginal returns signify the characteristics of the production function, which demonstrate the way an individual's contribution produces outputs of collective good. In the diminishing marginal returns scenario, the assumptions are made in the production

function that the efforts of the first few contributors achieve the greatest effects while subsequent inputs achieve progressively less as compared to the initial inputs. Inversely, the accelerating marginal returns reflect that the successive inputs by contributors achieve more toward public good than the few initial ones.

The heterogeneity variable explains how a few keen and ingenious people who contribute to the initial phase of low returns lay the platform for widespread contributions for the public good. The fundamental notion that collective action begets public good makes the theory applicable to different scenarios where collective interests occur (Marwell & Oliver, 1993). For example, in political activism (Kurzman, 1996) and online activism (Ghobadi & Clegg, 2015). The theory is relevant to student activism since activists engage in collective action, which results in the desired changes (public good). Activists do not have official leadership and often come together using social, print, and electronic media (Ghobadi & Clegg, 2015).

Discussions

The study examined the role of student voice to achieve access, equity, relevance, and quality of higher education in the African continent with a particular focus South African experience. The analysis was conducted through a lens of the critical mass theory to illuminate our understanding of the phenomenon studied. The critical mass theory began with the conversation by Mancur Olson's Logic of collective action in 1965, outlining that the number of people needed to participate in the collective action should be large enough (critical mass) to achieve the desired change. Furthermore, it highlights that a particular device should be in place to enable people act in their common interest. The theory then outlines the two independent variables: namely marginal returns and heterogeneity as vital elements for collective action to bring about change.

The study examined the literature on student voice or student activism in the African continent. It showed that African student voices have been prevalent in 20th Century as students joined national struggles against colonial rule and apartheid in South Africa. In addition, it indicated that South African higher education system was fragmented by the apartheid system which divided citizens along racial lines resulting in the black race accessing limited and subservient higher education while white race was accessing superior education. Furthermore, the study showed that in the post-apartheid era, student voices included the involvement of students in university decision-making structures to represents the needs of their peers and making an advance to influence changes in higher education system and other socio-economic conditions affecting their peers.

However, despite the democratic dispensation in South Africa, it emerged that the inequalities, colonial symbols, lack of transformation in university cultures as well as unaffordable fees were persistent in the higher education system. The study indicates that the persistence of these issues culminated in students taking to the street which resulted in the emergence of protests movements under the banners of #RhodesMustFall in March 2015 and #FeesMustFall in August the same year. The student voices presented new modalities in which student organized themselves in the form of protests movements using social media to mobilize for participation.

The literature indicated that through the new modalities, students achieved the biggest gain since democracy as the colonial symbol and other symbols of apartheid were removed from universities and no fees were

increased from 2016 until the introduction of free education for the poor in 2018. While these achievements were made, the literature shows that the student struggle continues to defend and advance their gains.

Drawing from the critical mass theory, protest movement were observed as having membership which worked interdependently and collectively to achieve their goal. In addition, the initial groups that coined protest movements were found to be large enough to impact changes in the system. Furthermore, the study presented two independent variables that were obtained from the theory as inherent elements in student activism to effectively achieve its goals. These variables were marginal returns and heterogeneity. The study showed that the marginal returns variable consisted of two versions as more members joined to the initial groups that started protest movements to impact change (critical mass). These were diminishing (decelerating) marginal returns and accelerating marginal returns.

Drawing from the above, the study indicated that the initial activists who organized protest movements had a sufficient large number to impact bring about reforms. It further showed that as more people were galvanized (using social networks) and joined protest movements, the protest intensified. That could be interpreted as yielded accelerating marginal returns in the protest movements. Also, drawing from the literature, the existing studies showed that this pattern was prevalent in protest movements in South Africa. As protest movements were prolonged for some time, they tended to intensify and became larger in support and more vicious in its form (Moja, Luescher & Schreiber, 2015).

Furthermore, Luscher and Klemencic (2016) postulates that while #RhodesMutsFall and #FeesMustFall protest movements originated at UCT and Wits respectively, protests movements intensified as participation was galvanized using social media, which culminated in the spread of protest movement across other universities in South Africa and beyond. While these protests movements began in the former English white universities and spread across the country, and beyond. These universities became initial groups in which protests movements were galvanized, hence dubbing them the “critical mass”. However, the notion of diminishing returns could not be overlooked discounted as there were some free riders, especially those who were supporting the campaigns virtually with no boot on the ground. These members clicked the buttons on their devices to support the protest movements without participating in real activism.

The second variable is heterogeneity which denotes the quality of or state of being diverse in character or content of the group. It explains how a few keen and heterogeneous people who contribute to the initial phase of low returns lay the platform for widespread contributions for the public good. The central point that collective action can result in public good makes the theory applicable to study of the role of student voices as it involves student actions in the form of protests movements using social media to mobilize support. Drawing from the critical mass theory with a particular focus on heterogeneity variable, protest movements were initiated by a group of students (activists) who were able to make an impact to bring about change (critical mass).

The theory is relevant to student activism since students engaged in collective action, which resulted in achieving the desired changes for public good. The variable of heterogeneity shows that people from diverse interests and backgrounds initiate a collective action for public good. While these people may differ, they united and shared a collective goal to achieve. Drawing from the literature, the variable of heterogeneity in the protest movements that swept across

South Africa and beyond was evident as students from diverse beliefs worked collectively.

This is in line with Badat (2016) explanation of social movements as consist of individual students and members of the different student organizations took a collective action for public good. During hashtag movements students from individual students and heterogenous political student organizations took a collective action against colonial symbols and unaffordable university fees. The collective actions of the critical mass and marginal returns variable accelerated the returns towards the achievement of results.

The variable heterogeneity was observed in the "unbounded student activism model" (Teferra & Ntuli, 2021) about the contemporary modalities in which students organize to pursue a particular cause. The model showed that the heterogenous group of individuals collectively participated in protest movements to pursue their common goal. Protest movements entailed heterogenous people who formed the critical mass such as SRCs, individual students, diverse student political organizations, rival activists, and other stakeholders that draw heterogenous from the extremes to the centre to engage in a collective action.

The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, catalyzed by social media, are cases in point. It should be noted that once movements have pursued their causes to the point where their goal is attained, they may return to their original roles or states. The protest movements did not have formal leadership and students came together using social media to mobilize for physical protests. The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall is a case in point.

To assess the outcomes and impact of the manifestations of students voices in the African continent, the study found that the goals of the protest movements were achieved. Firstly, Rhodes' statue and other symbol of colonization or apartheid were successfully removed. This propelled the struggle for advancement of the agenda of decolonization of higher education in South Africa. Secondly, the issue of fees was addressed as the government made an announcement for a no fee increase in 2016 and 2017 and subsequently granted free higher education for the poor. Hence, the collective effort of the critical mass was effective to bring about the public good.

Conclusion

Student voices have become integral part of universities in the African continent for some years. Students participated in various struggles to bring about transformation in African higher education and achieved numerous gains. In South Africa, #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements is a case in point. Despite those achievements, student protests were prevalent at the beginning of 2019 in various universities against accommodation shortages, delays of disbursement of student allowances and other issues. That culminated in temporary shutdown of some universities due to violent protests. The study concludes that student activism would have a pivotal role in achieving access, equity, relevance and quality of higher education.

Students would engage in dialogues or protest movements using social media to galvanize support as strategies to for transformation. Through dialogues and protest movements using social media, student voice could play a significant role to fast track the achievement of access, equity, relevance and quality of higher education and subsequently to the attainment of SDGs 2030 and African Agenda 2063. The study proposes that universities and governments should take cognizance of student voices as a catalyst and positive force for

political, economic and social transformation.

Thus, an environment that supports and encourages positive forms of student voices should be created. This study adds to the body of knowledge by providing a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of student voices in the African continent and recommends ways to promote its positive aspects for furthering the transformation of society. It concludes that African governments and universities need not only focus on their role in advancing awareness of social justice but also create an enabling environment for students to become constructive agents of societal change.

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Harnessing Employability Skills in Higher Education Programs of Post-Pandemic Africa Yekunoamlak Alemu3 (PhD), Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Abstract

These days, there is educational expansion in some African countries at all levels (primary, secondary, vocational training, and tertiary). Nonetheless, the education system needs to travel a long distance in order to improve the quality of education. The pandemic posed limitations on face-to-face learning. Moreover, higher education institutes (HEIs) focus on knowledge with inadequate consideration for value and skill formation. Consequently, youth unemployment has become one of the serious challenges facing the continent. This could be because graduates lack soft or employability skills. By way of addressing these challenges, the paper aims at exploring the gaps, challenges, and trends in graduates' employability that affect the higher education environment in Africa so as to promote entrepreneurial culture and self-reliance. In order to achieve these objectives, different methods including desk review, theoretical sketch, and reflections from practice coupled with country examples on skills approaches were employed. Qualitative review of experience was selected to examine the comparative viewpoints of challenges and opportunities in graduate employability studies. The approach and materials consulted were chosen depending on policy relevance, appropriateness to the context, and benefits to draw lessons for the post-pandemic African HEIs. Accordingly, research-based documents were thematically organized and analyzed. Based on research findings and institutional examples, in many African countries, the unemployment rate for graduates of HEIs has been found to be higher than 30%. Both endogenous and exogenous factors from the supply and demand sides contributed for the employability problems. Finally, policy options were forwarded in order to fill the gap between the existing state and what HEIs strive to be in the direction of employability development opportunities.

Keywords: Employability Skills, Higher Education, Post-Pandemic Africa

1. Background of the Study

From Africa's nearly 420 million young people aged 15-35, one-third are unemployed; another third are vulnerably employed, and only one in six has secured a job. The challenge is not just unemployment but underemployment (AFDB, 2015, p.1). Employers also complain that university graduates lack the relevant skills to be effective in the workplace (Dodoo & Kuupole, 2017). Despite the attempt to improve the level of graduates' skill, unemployment and informality are the main challenges for the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2020a).

By way of enhancing graduate employability and reducing unemployment, Bennett (2016) described employability as the ability to find, create, and sustain meaningful work across lengthened working lives and multiple work settings.

There is educational expansion in African countries. Nonetheless, the education system needs to travel a long-distance to improve quality. The pandemic posed limitations on face-to-face learning. Moreover, HEIs focus on knowledge with inadequate consideration for value and skill formation. Consequently, youth unemployment has become one of the serious challenges facing the continent. Graduates also lack employability skills. Economic downturn, massification, and commercialization of higher education have fueled competitiveness for the graduates.

Based on LI-WAY (2019) skill sector assessment findings, employers usually mentioned that graduates have unclear direction and goals with very little understanding of their career path, low self-confidence and poor motivation, low level of academic qualification with very inadequate basic skills, lack of drive, ethics and enthusiasm for the work, undeveloped leadership potential, inadequate preparation for work, and unrealistic salary and benefit expectations.

2. Objectives of the Study

Higher education institutes have been the leading center in teaching-learning, research and community services. In light of this background, the paper tries to examine the graduate employability experience of African HEIs from the perspective of current practices, challenges encountered, and future prospects. Based on this central objective, the study seeks to:

1. explore existing practices, gaps, and trends in graduate employability that affect the higher education environment in Africa; and

2. examine the employability development opportunities at African higher education institutions.

3. Research Approach

This study aimed at investigating practices, gaps, and emerging trends in graduate employability of African HEIs, which is one of the policy debates in higher education. In order to achieve these objectives, different methods including desk review, theoretical sketch, and reflections from practice coupled with country examples on skills approaches were employed. Hence, the research method was qualitatively oriented desk review and meta-analysis complemented with secondary sources including documents, and previous studies on employability of HEIs.

Review of experience was selected in this study to examine the comparative viewpoints of challenges and opportunities in graduate employability at African higher education. This approach tried to assess both endogenous and exogenous factors. The materials consulted were chosen depending on policy relevance, appropriateness to the context, and benefits to

draw lessons for the post-pandemic African HEIs. In this respect, research-based documents that focus on graduate employability of higher education in Africa were thematically organized and analyzed.

In order to support and guide the experience-based reviews for higher education graduate employability, different theoretical and analytical models or frameworks were used.

Review of Related Literature

This section discusses theories, models, concepts of graduate employability at African HEIs.

Employability Theories and Models

Employability Theories

According to Gazier (1998), employability theories are classified into the following seven stages based on historical perspectives.

Table 1: Employability Theories

No	Theories	Explanation and Timeframe
1	Dichotomic Employability	This approach emerged in the beginning of the 20th century in Britain and America. It made a distinction between those that are/can be employed and those that cannot be.
2	Socio-Medical Employability	This theme emerged around the time of World War II in the USA, Britain Germany. It focused particularly on social, physical or mental deficits that ma individuals unfit for employment.
3	Manpower Policy Employability	This account developed mainly in the USA in the 1960s. The focus was on the ga in individuals' knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the labour market
4	Labour Market Performance Employability	This emerged internationally towards the end of the 1970s. This concept focuses o measurable labour market outcomes that result from specific policy intervention These measures typically include period employed, hours worked and wage rates.
5	Flow Employability	This is a primary French account, which emerged in the 1960s. It was radically different from the earlier approaches in focusing primarily on the demand side and the accessibility of employment within local and national economies.
6	Initiative Employability	This account developed in the late 1980s in the North American and Europea resource development literature, which was starting to discuss concept of the end the “Salary man” who worked for large corporation from leaving colleges. With t notion of a job for life, this account argued that career development brin successful skills and attitudes for job.

7	Interactive Employability	Recognizing the importance of individual agency, this account tries to balance the with a development of the French flow employability concerning structural factor Hence, employability of the individual is relative to employability of others in t labor market

The aforementioned theories of employability discussed perspectives at different period of time. In a relative sense, the manpower policy employability and initiative employability that deals with gaps in knowledge, skill, and attitudes and career development were considered as proper theoretical lens for this study.

Employability Models

Although there are varies employability models or frameworks, in this paper, the *magic bullet* and *graduate employability development* models will be discussed.

Figure 1: "Magic bullet" model of employability

Source: *Harvey (2001)*

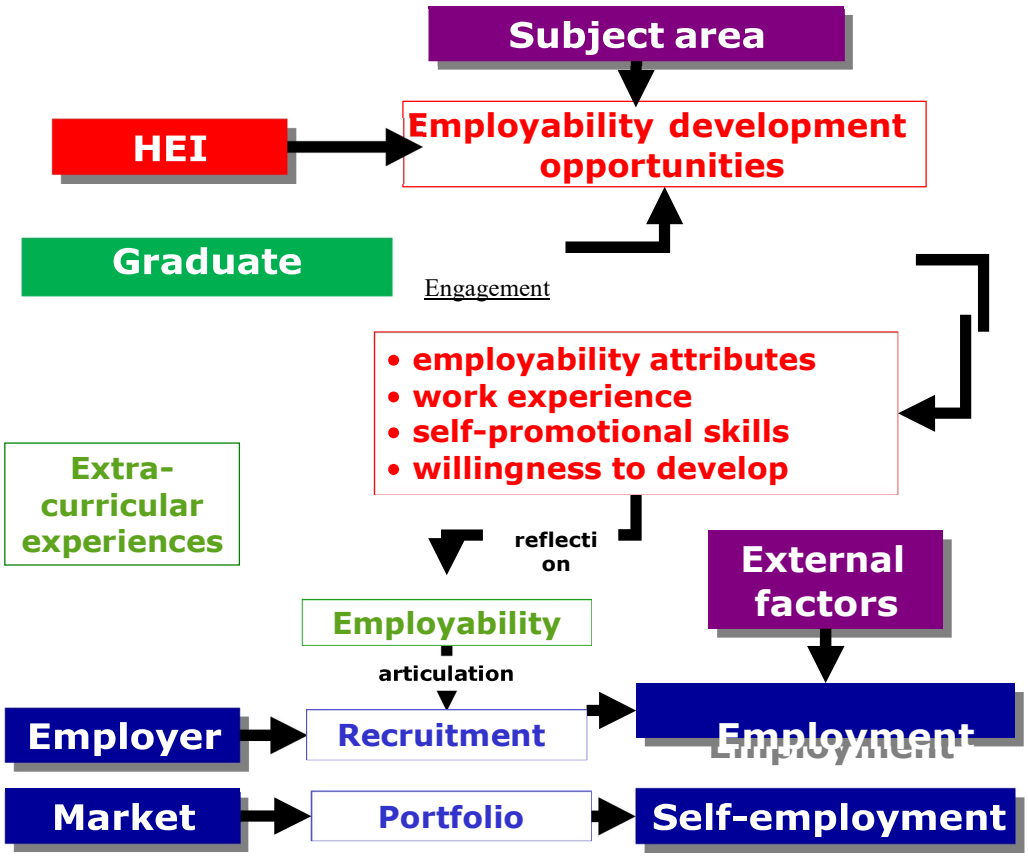
Figure 1 depicts a simplistic and very specific employability model which tries to explain whether graduates get jobs within a limited period after graduating. Nevertheless, this narrow approach is deceptive and does not measure the attribute development of graduates except simply relaying on graduation rates from a department or university (Harvey, 2002).

A rather more realistic and holistic approach of graduate employability development was prepared by Harvey and Morey (2002) in order to addresses a range of factors. This model defines employability in relation to how individuals engage with opportunities, and reflect on and articulate their skills and experience. As illustrated in Figure 2, the model consists of three sections: employability development opportunities, the three processes involved in facilitating the activities, and the parties involved. Employability development opportunities involve support provided centrally by the university, including career management skills, guidance and experiences- both practical and theoretical- as mainstreamed in the curriculum.

There is a distinction between employability potential of the individual (a matter of self-development) and actual employment of the individual (a matter mediated by external factors).

The graduate has to choose to engage with the employability development opportunities offered by the institution. Besides, graduates engage in co-curricular activities, and work

experiences. Thus, employability development incorporates the development of employability attributes, work experience, the development of self-promotional and career management skills, and willingness to learn and reflect on learning (Harvey, 2002).



Source: Harvey and Morey (2002)

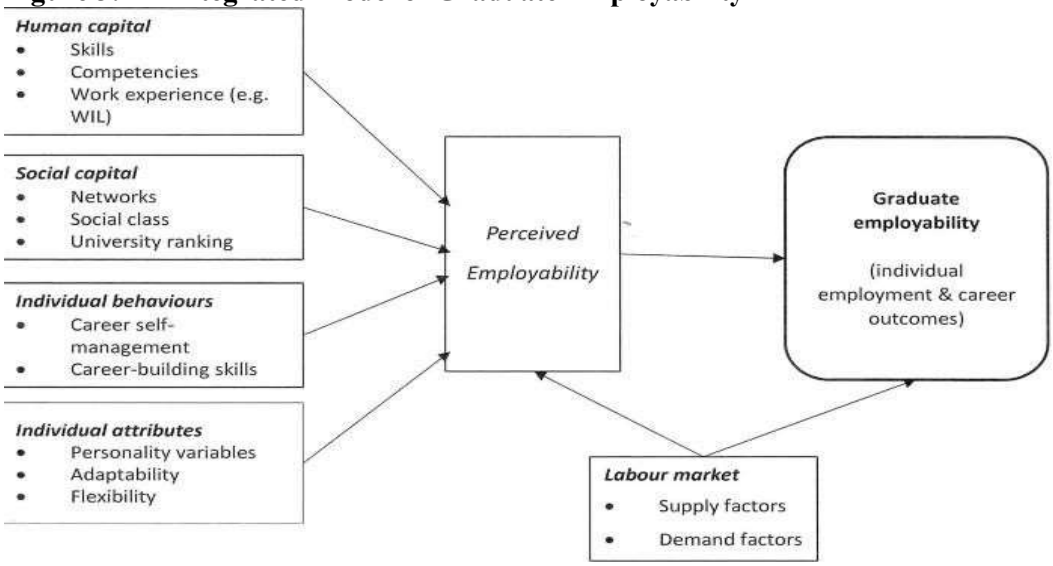
The above graduate employability development model is being used because of its wider and comprehensive nature applicability.

A relatively more integrated and holistic approach of graduate employability was developed by Clarke (2018) in order to address various factors. As depicted in Figure 3, this model incorporates the human capital, social capital, individual behaviors, and individual's attributes that underpin an individual's perceived employability, in a labor market context, and that, in combination, influence employment outcomes.

Based on the wider employability literature, the aforementioned six key components of graduate employability are found to be vital to explore and conceptualize the concept of graduate employability in higher education.

It seems that there is a gap between the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) versus the role of the individual in building the requisite skills and attributes that facilitate employment opportunities. That is why graduates strive to get or create jobs upon completing their studies. This indicates need to reconsider institutional and individual perspectives of employability (Clarke, 2018).

Figure 3: An Integrated Model of Graduate Employability



3. An integrated model of graduate employability.

Source: Clarke (2018)

In support of the above integrated model, distinctions were identified among three competing descriptions of graduate employability: possession (human capital); position (social capital); and process (career self-management). (Holmes, 2013; cited in Clarke, 2018).

The integrated model tries to take in to account six dimensions that influence the state of graduate employability. This study, however, stresses on graduate employability development model due to its holistic nature and employability development opportunities at HEIs.

1.1. Concepts of Employability Skills

Meaning of **Employability Skills**

As indicated in the existing literature (e.g., Abas-Mastura, Imam & Osman, 2013; Azami Zaharim et al., 2012; Gill, 2018; Salleh et al., 2017; Lowden et al., 2011; Warwick & Howard, 2015), the term *employability skills* can be interchangeably used with other terms such as *transferable skills, generic skills, life skills, soft skills*, *behavioral skills, enterprise skills, key competencies, core skills, common skills, work skills, functional skills, essential skills,* and *people skills*.

According to Gill (2018), employability can be defined as a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that enable graduates to gain employment and be successful in their careers, benefiting themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. Cranmer (cited in Gill, 2018) suggests such employability skills need to be incorporated into teaching and learning experiences so as to enhance graduates' ability to get jobs. The amount of development and nurtured skills making graduates ready for work in the curriculum is defined as the level of graduate employability (Azami Zaharim et al., 2012).

Robinson (2000) also defines employability skills into three general categories: (i) basic academic skills – e.g. reading, writing, arithmetic; (ii) higher order thinking e.g. reasoning, thinking, creativity; and (iii) personal qualities – e.g. self-control, team spirit. Employability could further be classified into two broad groups: ability of the student to get a job after graduation, and capacitating the student as a life-long learner (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001).

The development of information communication that is prevalent in the knowledge society demands broad and transferable skills (employability skills), which promote mobility. In a system that involves flexible work organization, highly specialized job-specific skills may become obsolete unless updated (Mane, 1999). On the other hand, research by Autor, Levy, and Murnane (2003) suggests that computers were reducing jobs which address routine problems.

In support to this, the National Research Council (2010) has provided the following five generic preliminary definitions of the five 21st century skills that are relevant in HEIs and workplaces:

1. adaptability,
2. complex communication/social skills,
3. non-routine problem-solving skills,
4. self-management/self-development, and
5. systems thinking.

According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk, "learning how to learn was best achieved by developing basic academic skills, not narrow vocational training" (Mane, 1999: 418). Hence, skill content of job is becoming academic and generic. This is because "academic skills help workers develop the occupation/job-specific skills that are directly productive, but cannot be a substitute for them" (Bishop - in Mane, 1999: 418).

Based on UNESCO (1997: 11), "the curricula should be designed to develop in the learner work awareness, that is, a self-questioning attitude that asks: what else could I do with my skills? Thus, people losing a job should not then feel they are unemployable but rather, search for other outlets for their competencies." Similarly, Yorke (2006) described employability skills as a set of achievements – skills, understanding and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

This study relies more on the Bennett (2016) frame of reference that defines employability as ability to find, create, and sustain meaningful work across lengthened working lives and multiple work settings.

In sum, employability or soft skills are basic transferable skills that promote mobility and necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job.

Employability Skills versus Hard Skills

According to Abas-Mastura, Imam and Osman (2013), soft skills/ employability skills can

be defined as having a wide variety of basic knowledge, values, and life skills that are necessary to obtain and keep a job. Similarly, as to Salleh et al. (2017), soft skills/ employability skills refer to skills, attitudes, and behaviors, other than technical capability, to enable an individual to engage and advance in the constantly changing demands of the work setting and to remain as an asset to employers. These are skills that cut across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer (Abas-Mastura, Imam & Osman,2013) and that are necessary for both personal and career success and fundamental to good performance in the job (Salleh et al., 2017). In contrast, hard skills refer to the more specific, teachable skills, and are usually related to professional knowledge (Salleh et al., 2017).

Skills have become determinants of individual's ability to get a job, retain employment and move flexibility in the labor market (Riordan & Rosas, 2003). Employability skills are basic transferable skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job. Unlike occupational or technical skills, employability skills are not entirely job-specific, instead they display more of generic attributes that cut horizontally across all types of jobs (service, industry, etc.) or vertically across all job levels including entry-level worker to the senior position (Robinson, 2000).

In this era of globalization, a balance of generic and job-specific skills is required for training systems and organizations to stay competitive. In this respect, it is worth to mention the practice of South Africa's National Skills Development Strategy that focuses on re-establishment of linkages between learning and work (Abdelkarim & Ahmed, 2003a).

Accordingly, the Table below tries to summarize the differences and complementary nature of soft and hard skills as illustrated on the review of Edge-point Learning.

Table 2: Difference and Complementary Nature of Soft and Hard Skills

Technical (Hard) Skills	**Employability (Soft) Skills**
Teachable skills can be learned	Personality-driven skills and lifelong skills
Measurable	Hard to measure
Easily defined	Difficult to define
Mostly about "**what you know**"	Mostly about "**how you act**".
Specific	Universal
Examples: Bookkeeping, Maths, Engineering	Examples: Creativity, Collaboration, Adaptability
Determines 25% of job success	Determines 75% of job success

To this end, employability or soft skills are core abilities and personal attributes that complement hard or technical skills**.**

Employability Skills are Different from Employment

Employment and employability are not the same. Although are related terms, there are some variations in perspectives as depicted in Table 3 below.

Table 3: **Employment versus Employability**

Author	Employment	Employability
Lees (2002), p 3	Being employed means having a job	Being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain employment and progress through the workplace
Lees (2002); Knight and Yorke (2004)	Deals with having a job	Refers to the capacity of the graduate to function in a job and be able to move between jobs, thus remaining employable throughout their life
Harvey (2005), p 13	Is just about getting a job	Is about developing attributes, techniques, or experience for life. It is about learning, and the emphasis is less on "employ" and more on "ability"
Trought (2011)	A degree allows a graduate to enter the sector and get a job	But it is employability skills that will differentiate them from the crowd and, therefore, be more likely to secure the position.
Yorke & Knig (2007), p 158	Employment is dependent c factors such as the state of the economy an patterns of discrimination in the labor market	"Employability" is interpreted in term of a **graduate's suitability f appropriate employment**.
Holmes (2017)	Refers to the number of graduates employed and the types of jobs they do	Refers to the attributes that graduate s attributes which make graduates worth

Importance of employability skills

The following discussion shows the importance attached to employability skills:

1. Employability skills are cited as among the most important skills by employers (Hart Research Associates, 2015).

1. Lack of employability skills contribute to a "talent shortage" (Manpower Group, 2012).

2. The demonstration of employability skills is correlated with better hiring rates, success on the job, and earnings (Lippman et al., 2015).

3. Employability skills are considered as a ticket or passport for entering into job, staying with the job, and facilitating mobility or being successful in the job.

4. Once students understand the skills and characteristics that most employers seek, they can tailor their job search communications (resume, portfolio, cover letter, etc) to showcase how well their background aligns with their requirements.

Challenges of Employability Skills

5. Employers criticize college output as having their heads full of theories, concepts and principles but graduates are often ill-equipped to deal with real life situations.

6. Implementation of active learning, industrial needs, internships, and partnership schemes are found to be some of the challenges of employability (Ito, 2014).

7. Soft skills are a lot harder to teach in the world of work' Wall Street Journal Article,' (2002)

1. According to Kagan (2003), we are facing a life skill crisis. This crisis can be conceptualized as a catastrophic imbalance between the need to boost academic achievement than the need to boost life skills.

2. For the happiness and success of our students and the productiveness and success of our society,
as educators, we need to admit, face and address life skills crisis.

Employability skills, if properly nurtured, enable HEIs graduates to be self-reliant and productive. However, when these life skills are missing, graduates will lack confidence and fail to meet employers' expectation.

How to Build Employability Skills?

With regard to employability development interventions, research has indicated different graduate employability strategies that need to be accomplished by students or alumni associations, HEIs, industries, and NGOs.

For instance, students can focus more on private sector employment and be encouraged to form alumni associations (ADEA, 2015) that can provide career advice (including mock interview, CV writing, & other job searching techniques) and create network with companies in order to organize job fairs.

In this part, therefore, various employability enhancement programs aiming at improving employability of HEIs graduates are mentioned.

Based on the University of Sydney Careers' Center, university students are expected to:

1. Make the most of opportunities within their studies to develop employability skills, eg, through group project work, presentations, student exchange programs, internship subjects, industry and community project units, and mentoring programs.
2. Get involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs and societies, sport, public speaking, special interest groups, or community activities, as these experiences will also

provide students with evidence of skills for job applications.

3. Gain work experience through internships and vacation work, voluntary work for not-for-profit organizations, casual work and paid part-time work relevant to their field.

4. Maintain a record (or portfolio) of work experiences, volunteering roles, and activities. Make a note of skills gained and qualities demonstrated. Gather evidence of achievements and outcomes, including positive comments made by supervisors, peers and customers, and include these in their portfolio.

According to Garwe (2015), initiatives taken by HEIs to improve graduate employability include developing students intellectually, personally, and morally; preparing relevant and need- based curriculum, enhancing workplace learning and entrepreneurial mindset; providing learners with information and guidance to help them in career decision making and initial job search; promoting internationalization through exchange schemes; and facilitating internship programs.

Based on the ADEA (2015) policy brief on How to improve the Employability of Higher Education

Graduates, the unemployment rate for graduates of HEIs is found to be higher than 30% in many African countries. In relation to this, the following suggestions were made in order to improve employability for higher education graduates:

1. Review and renew missions and visions of HEIs to give them a sharper focus on science, technology and innovation;

2. Focus more on African languages and other social science subjects which can support nation- building and national cohesion;

3. Strengthen the demand orientation of the courses taught and research carried out in HEIs to make them more relevant and location specific;

4. Increase opportunities and incentives for collaboration between industry and HEIs and strengthen links with industry by getting industry players involved in curriculum design, evaluation and innovation activities;

5. Workplace training and work-integrated learning (WIL) should be a central part of any training system. Also, entrepreneurship education has a key role in educating students to create or start new ventures; and

6. Undertake periodic tracer studies on the absorption of graduates into the labor market so as to support HEIs to establish a wing for labor market information system and make curriculum adjustments (ADEA, 2015).

As indicated in the above section, employability development opportunities of HEIs contribute to the success of graduates by enabling them to be on their own. In essence, these initiatives need to join hands among HEIs, graduates, employers, chambers, NGOs, and etc.

Review Results and Discussions on Graduate Employability of African HEIs

According to Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), which regulates higher education in the East African Community's five countries – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – the challenges of HEIs graduates in fulfilling current labor market requirements are due to shortage of essential skills like communication, decision making, team-working, critical thinking, and problem- solving. IUCEA's research also revealed about employers concerns about ill-prepared graduates (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016; Nganga 2014). Likewise, employers anxiously perceived that graduates have the capacity, but are unable to prove themselves and display evidence of skills (Hugh-Jones 2008).

Based on the works of different researchers in the literature, HEIs graduates employability skills gap could be attributed to theoretical lectures with limited practical instructions, rote learning or memorization methodologies, poor learning environment, lack of staff with industry experience, outdated curricula, and overloaded facilities (McCowan, 2015; Guàrdia, 2021; Okolie, 2019).

In order to improve the above-mentioned graduate employability skills at HEIS, careers advisory services, internships and work-based learning opportunities, alumni job fairs, and other networking activities for job search need to be strengthened (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016).

This section, therefore, tries to summarize and portray HEIs graduate employability country specific examples supported by evidences from previous research-based literatures.

5.1. Basic Data on HEIs Graduate Employability/Unemployability

Experiences of HEIs show that some graduates from African universities want formal jobs, and are opting for voluntary unemployment. It was also observed that too many graduates exist with qualifications that are not in demand. Moreover, graduates lack work experience and employability skills demanded by the market. As a result, only 49% of graduates are fit for jobs (Garwe, 2015). Based on this premises, Table 4below presents basic data of HEIs situation in the direction of graduate employability and unemployability.

Table 4: Data on Graduate Employability and Unemployability

Data on Employability Situation of HEIs	Source
"Too many graduates but where are the jobs?"	Daily Nation" (12 Oct 2014)
"Job crisis – graduates turn to vending"	Daily News (5 Nov 2013)
Kenya: 38.9% young Kenyans are jobless	Business Daily (Feb. 24 2020)
Ghana: Unemployment rate of university graduates is 11.6%	Ghana Statistical Service (2012)
Nigeria: Over 42% of Nigerian youth remain unemployed	Enterprise NGR (May 20 2022)
Ethiopia: 42% public university graduates unemployed	The Reporter (Dec. 3 2022)
Tanzania: 61% of graduates from Tanzanian universities are unfit for jobs	Nganga (2014)
Uganda: 87% graduates can't find jobs	Daily Monitor (Jan. 10 2021)

The British Council (2014) tried to address the challenge in four African countries through the research, "Can Higher Education Solve Africa's Job Crisis"? According to this study, although there is rapid expansion in the HEIs of the continent with growing number of young graduates, concerns were forwarded regarding the capacities of African HEIs in preparing properly trained graduates that can transform the continent. Moreover, it is difficult to get unemployment data for university graduates. To this end, there is growing realization of concerns about the graduate employability. The following study of British Council (2014) tried to show what we know and what we do not know about HEIs graduates in a relative sense by suggesting gaps and future research directions.

Table 5: What We Know and What We Do not Know about HEIs Graduates

What We Know	What We Do not Know
There is alarming graduate unemployment problem in Sub-Saharan Africa	The nature and causes of graduate unemployment (there is a lack of information on the labor market, on transitions from university to work, and the link between disciplinary area & employment prospects)
Employers are dissatisfied with the skills and qualities of graduates	The qualities and needs of graduates (there is a severe lack of information on the knowledge, skills and values that graduates actually possess)
Universities have severe quality challenges	What universities should be doing (evidence-based research is lacking in order to gauge the impact of students' learning on employment outcomes

5.2. Review of Findings on Employability Studies

The following section is devoted to empirical or research-based studies on employability context of African HEIs from the supply and demand sides incorporating both individual (graduates) factors and institutional perspectives.

Although most studies on employability heavily relied on supply side factors with individual attributes and KSAOs (knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes) that support graduates' school-to-work transition, the demand side factors in the labor market including number and type of job vacancies, skill requirements, degree of competition for jobs and location of possible employment are also found to be vital (McQuaid and Lindsay 2005).

Charner (1988) identified the following reasons given by employers for not hiring young people for entry-level jobs:

1. low grades and low levels of academic accomplishments;
1. lack of goals, lack of preparation for the interview, poorly motivated;
2. lack of enthusiasm, lack of drive, little evidence of leadership potential;
3. excessive interest in security and benefits, unrealistic salary expectations;
4. inadequate preparation for type of work, inappropriate background; and
5. lack of extracurricular activities.

The summary of 14 studies by Natriello (1989) concerning attitudes of employers on entry-level job requirement suggest that: i) employers place greatest importance on employee attitudes, ii) employers emphasize basic skills over job-specific skills, and iii) employers deem it important for workers to have an understanding of the work environment.

The study by Okolie, Nwosu, and Mlanga (2019) revealed that graduate employability is still relevant to the HEIs of developing countries. The results of his research indicated that sufficient teaching and learning resources and qualified instructors contribute to the development of graduate employability skills. Regarding the labor market and HEIs partnerships, awareness of labor market needs by HEIs can promote the graduates' outcomes and their career prospects. Considering the roles of universities, Ma'dan, Imail, and Daud (2020) identified that teaching and learning development program and partnership with industry were found to be critical to enhance graduates' employability.

From the perspectives of HEIs on young people's readiness for work, National Research Council's (2010) report which incorporated more than 400 business leaders and managers ranked the relatively top three important skills from among 20 skills. To this end, job success of new workforce entrants were determined by: (1) professionalism/work ethics, (2) teamwork/collaboration, and (3) oral communication. However, science knowledge was ranked 16th in growing importance.

With respect to students' perspective on employability, the views of undergraduates regarding employability development schemes were not clear although learning theory confirms that motivation and commitment of learners is a prerequisite for effective outcomes. Conversely, employers continue

to report that graduates are not ready for the world of work, and lack some of the most basic skills needed for successful employment. This study explored the views of over 400 business and management undergraduate students. The results indicated that there is limited alignment between views of students and other groups (Tymon, 2013).

Even though, employers are responsible for graduate employability, HEIs have a role to play in enhancing employability development programs. Accordingly, the strategy for employability challenge in four Sub-Saharan Africa countries revolve on updating of curricula and orienting course content towards employer demands; expansion of internship programs; and introduction of entrepreneurship courses (British Council, 2014).

Karadisi (2012) has undertaken a study in Tanzania to investigate how effective HEIs at Dar es Salaam were imparting employability skills to their graduates. Accordingly, 77% of the respondents revealed that the employability skills imparted by universities and colleges were not effective in developing learning either for entrepreneurship or for paid jobs. Conversely, problem-based learning (where students work in small groups on projects) at the University of Botswana enhanced students' employability skills (Moalosi et al., 2012).

Regarding the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on higher education, the study by Babalola and Kolawole (2021) concluded that HEIs expected to train graduates for post-Covid-19 in-demand employability skills through innovatively prepared curricula with virtual learning component, which empowers graduates to get or make jobs in the post-pandemic labor market. Mudditt (2020) also stated that the Covid-19 breakdown altered the professional work environment via remote working and virtual arrangement.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) made it possible to support life after the Covid-19 pandemic through new ways of interactive digital learning and working that paved opportunities for creativity, critical thinking, communication and application in order to carryout virtual career fairs with mock interviews, student showcases, recruitment skills training, etc.. Students in HEIs need to be prepared for an all-rounded personal development so as to solve real complex challenges in a much more turbulent and changing condition than just a traditional classroom and work situations. To this effect, HEIs, in collaboration with industries, expected to design work-study programs that combine theory with practice (Brownlee, 2020).

All of the above studies revealed the existence of ill-prepared students and skill mismatch at African HEIs. Hence, such situations necessitate to make use of ICT (digital skills) and institutionalize employability development programs.

5.3. Graduate Employability Experiences of Selected African HEIs

The succeeding discussion deals with experiences of HEIs in five African countries with respect to key research results and possible recommendations in the direction of employability development initiatives by considering both supply and demand side factors.

Table 6: Graduate Employability Experiences of Selected African HEIs

Countries Experience On Graduate Employability	Findings from Employability Studies	Suggested Alternatives on Employability Development
Nigeria (Okolie et.al, 2019)	HEIs give less attention to generic skills poor learning environment, lack of staf with industry experience and over-dependence on 'theoretica content' teaching	Mandatory enterprise education and the need for inclusive study
Tanzenia (Kalufya and Lucas Mwakajinga, 2016; Mgaiwa, 2021)	Higher education (HE) programs have been nonreactive to the changing priorities of the country's development plans and a need to focus on work-based learning & internship	Developing university-industr linkage, aligning HE wit national development plan s curriculum reviews, an strengthening quality assurance systems
Uganda (Ngoma and Ntale, 2016)	Skills inadequacy observed due to failure of HEIs to convey relevant skills through students' career training & social networking orientation	Psychological capital, social capital and career identity of graduates expected to counteract the employability problems
Kenya (Kalei, 2016)	HE system focused on attaining grades in examinations instead of striving on requisite skills that are demanded by the labor market	Partnership between HEIs and business/industry is of great importance in improving graduate employability
Ethiopia (Fenta, et.al., 2019; Tesfamariam & Jeilu, 2021; Tamirat, 2022).	Graduates' transition from HEIs to workplace is a multifaceted factor & there is lack of coordination between HEIs system and the job market. Most of the HEIs also exhibited limitedcapacity and structures to respond to the need of employers	HEIs-industry ties need to be strengthened by enacting policies and strategies that enhance graduates employability. A further study on skill mismatch also suggested

In order to scale-up graduate employability initiatives in Africa, understanding of the individual, institutional and contextual factors are found to be vital. Getting certificates and degrees from HEIs is not sufficient to improve employability of graduates, thereby enabling them to stay competitive in the

job market. With respect to this, HEIs, in collaboration with internship providing companies, need to arrange work-based learning opportunities for the graduates in order to develop their work culture and enhance their work readiness.

Concluding Remark

The review of experiences from African HEIs revealed that the level of graduate employability was found to be low and entangled with different internal (supply) and external (demand) factors. To this effect, HEIs are expected to invest on employability development programs by creating strong link with public and private employment agencies. It is also important to strengthen alumni associations so that they provide career counselling and guidance, job searching support, and organize job fairs. From the demand side, companies and chambers should take part in curriculum revision of HEIs and be willing to provide internship opportunities to the graduating students by way of fulfilling their social responsibilities.

As employability skills are 21st century transferable skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job in the post-pandemic era, African universities, in consultation with employers, need to focus on quality of learning (including blended learning that makes use of digital learning with face-to-face instruction), reputation, relevance of courses for the labour market, and preparedness of students to get or create jobs. HEIs are also expected to invest on creating more employability development opportunities in order to reduce unemployment and enhance graduate employability.

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An Exploration of Normative Frameworks and Accountability Mechanisms on the Promotion of Women's Leadership and Decision-Making Positions: Universities in Focus Mohammed Yimer4

Abstract

Like other areas of life, the sensitivity of customary practices and the subsequent accountability mechanisms promoting women's leadership and decision making also has a visible correlation with the existing North-South digital divide. Women in the south continue to be agents of change and subjects of the fruit of their labor in many respects. Despite the recent improvements introduced by the Prosperity Party to involve women in political leadership, in Ethiopia, where women account about fifty percent of the population, their participation in leadership and decision making is limited. One of the key areas where rumors are mounting in this regard is higher education institutions. Specifically, the study explored the existing customary frameworks promoting women's leadership, evaluated the status of women in leadership and decision making in middle and top level positions in the sample universities and identified the limitations in accountability mechanisms. To respond to the aforementioned objectives, the study employed qualitative research approach, exploratory design, cluster and purposive sampling techniques. Key Informant Interview (KII) was the dominant data collection technique. Data was collected from 14 sample universities. Consequently, the study found that the existing normative frameworks in the selected institutions on the promotion of women in leadership and decision making are insignificant, not clearly and precisely stated, the abrogation of which is not subject to accountability. The status of women in leadership and decision making is apparently low, accounting about 9% of leadership positions in sample universities. The study also found that despite the mere existence of norms that seem to promote women to positions, there are no meaningful accountability mechanisms in place. Finally, the study found that in most cases women may hold leadership positions, but their decision-making role may be waived off and given to a male counterpart. In a nut shell, women's participation in university leadership is sluggish, showing no significant change. The institutional norms and the accountability mechanisms are not effective to alleviate the problem. This indicates that patriarchal thinking still continues to shape the *modus operandi* of institutions.

Keywords: Women, Leadership Positions, Universities, Norms

1. Introduction

In Ethiopia, women constitute about half of the country's population. However, in societies where traditional or patriarchal values remain strong, many women found politics as unwelcoming and even hostile to participate in and hold leadership positions (Gelashe et.al., 2015). It is generally agreed among writers that sustainable change requires the engagement of stakeholders at all levels. When it comes to international engagement, however, local perspectives that continue to deprive the rights of women are too often overlooked (Natalie, 2019).

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Ethiopia has signed a number of international agreements the aim of which is to revitalize the rights of women. Most of these agreements are, however, group rights the abrogation of which is not clear, nor the violation of which is justifiable. Instead, every institution is granted the autonomy to develop its own institutional normative frameworks that are supposed to empower women in many respects. This study tried to investigate these customary frameworks and their applicability in the higher education institutions of the country. Moreover, it also tried to assess the accountability mechanisms in the event of failure.

1.1 Problem Statement

There are a number of studies on various crosscutting issues including gender. Studies in this regard include the role of women in conflict management, gender stereotypes in the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Eagly and Carly,2003); Barriers to Women's Leadership (Tahani, 2019; AAUW, 2016; Pranathi and Remya, 2021); and Advancing the Rights of Women in Leadership (Natalie, 2019). None of them, however, investigated the normative frameworks and accountability mechanisms on the promotion of women's leadership and decision-making positions. In the international arena, research in women's leadership in higher education have been done in the US and Canada, with a dearth of literature on women's leadership in higher education in Asia, and only six studies have been done in Vietnam till 2019, with only two studies done before 2017(Greeni, 2021).

Therefore, the absence of a growing body of researches which focus on gender norms and its implication on women's access to leadership positions, particularly in the higher education sector calls for thorough investigation.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study had the following objectives:

1. To explore the existing customary frameworks promoting women's leadership;
2. To evaluate the status of women in leadership and decision making in low, middle and top level positions in the sample universities;
3. To identify the limitations in the accountability mechanisms.

2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study applied exploratory research design, as the issues under discussion involve exploration of normative frameworks adopted under different higher education institutions and their accountability mechanisms across the country.

We often conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue. A research design includes decisions about conceptualization, theoretical and methodological considerations, and finally identification of the contribution your research will make to the development of knowledge in a particular area (Cheek, 2008).

2.1 Research Approach

On the basis of the study objectives, the study employed qualitative research approach. The study adopted qualitative approach because the concepts embedded in the topic, institutional normative frameworks and accountability mechanisms, are issues which are subject to qualitative discussion and analysis. Therefore, neither quantitative, nor mixed approach is appropriate for this study. Instead, qualitative approach is an approach whereby a researcher typically gathers multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, rather than relying on a single data source. Then, the researcher reviewed all of the data and made sense of it, organized it into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources.

2.2 Sampling Technique and Samples

The Ethiopian higher education institutions are clustered in to four different categories: research universities, applied science universities, science and technology universities, and comprehensive universities. The researcher selected the five sample respondents from each category. Generally, about 14 women respondents were purposely selected for key informant interview. Accordingly, the sample respondents were selected on the basis of their knowledge, academic rank and their participation in leadership in their respective institutions.

2.3 Data collection techniques

Key informant interview (KII) was the instrument used to collect the relevant data. Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in their community. This was conducted asking people in one-on-one conversations. The study used KII, for one reason, because there was challenge to access a group of women in the required criteria to arrange focused group discussions in selected higher education institutions. For the other, as far as the samples are selected on the basis of their commendable knowledge, seniority, academic rank and their leadership experience, the researcher was convinced that the issue could be better discussed through key informant interview rather than FGD.

Data Analysis

Up on the completion of the interview process, the researcher prepared and organized the data. This stage involved identifying and interpreting patterns and themes in qualitative data. Finally, the researcher synthesized reports in accordance with the stated objectives.

3. Data Presentation and Discussion

Gender norms may discourage women from entering leadership positions in two ways. Especially in contexts where the work environment, team members, and evaluation criteria are male-dominated, women are severely discriminated against and underestimated (A. Eagly & Carli, 2003).

While global progress has been made over the last two decades, countless social and institutional barriers exist to women pursuing leadership positions.

3.1 The existing customary frameworks promoting women's leadership

Institutional mindsets are the most significant barrier and are a major reason that we don't see more women at the top levels of leadership. People make assumptions about women at work and as leaders based on their stereotypical roles in society. Often, women are limited in their advancement because of neglecting opportunities that are supposed to enhance skills including the decision-making ones. Without any empowerment schemes, higher education institutions in our country usually plan to bring women to different leadership positions in their annual plans. The questions are: firstly, how can one appoint a women leader without equipping her with the necessary skills that enhance her executive capacity? Secondly, what is the motive behind the move to appoint women in leadership position? Most of the time, people in different top management levels talk about the fact that they feel good when bringing women to leadership positions and consider planning to offer a leadership position for women as a significant step towards handling grievances of women, which is entirely ridiculous. Women, apart from being half of the population of the country, have potentials for the effective use which could be a cure for the myriad of development challenges. The aim to bring women to leadership positions must, therefore, be focused towards exploiting the exceptional talent that women are endowed for problem solving, decision making and managing organizational conflicts.

With slight differences, similar institutional norms bind all categories of higher education institutions. In

some institutions, the top level manager offers leadership positions to women up on whom he has confidence to discharge the responsibilities bestowed; in some others, there is no room to offer positions without equal contest among their male counterparts. This time, women have five point privileges unlike their male colleagues. The discussants made clear that it is common to read from position advertisements that women are highly encouraged. Practically, that is a superficial norm which institutions use to portray their image as democratic and civilized. In a rare scenario, when there are no potential candidates for a vacant post, women may get opportunities for appointment in leadership positions. In all institutions, the common office held by women is gender directorate. The limitation of institutional normative frameworks is not reflected in leadership posts only. Sample discussants depicted that institutions lack frameworks to provide separate funding schemes allocated to women for research works. Institutions should have norms that favor to finance projects in which the lead investigator or some members are women. In general, the institutional norms in different institutions are not inviting for women to aspire for leadership positions. On the other hand, making the appointment criteria pro-men might be translated to penalizing women from assuming leadership positions, making the destiny of women in the hands of men and the underutilization of women potentials for community development. Unless they get the opportunity to serve their community, they will have no means to bring out their capacity. Consequently, social norms diminishing women's roles to some areas of work may take the upper hand and continue the vicious circle of poverty.

3.2 The status of women in leadership and decision making in middle and top level positions

It is noted that generally women account about half of the Ethiopian population. Their participation as staff members of the higher education sector is not significant. Likewise, as shown in the table below, the number of women in leadership positions in different institutions across the country is extremely low in comparison with the positions held by male counterparts.

Table 1. Women in Leadership Positions in Sample Universities

			No. of Women in Leadership Positions			
Institutional Category	Name of the Institution	No. of Dep'ts	Dep't Heads	No.of offices	Deans, Directors, Coordinators	Vice Presidents and Above
Research Universities	AMU	92	6	27	6	1
	Hawassa Univ	95	7	31	4	0
	Jimma Univ	89	5	34	3	1
	AAU	121	7	37	6	2
Science & Technology Universi	AASTU	41	2	16	2	0
	ASTU	45	3	16	1	0
Applied Science Universities	Wollo Univ	82	3	20	4	1
	Wolkite Univ	55	3	17	2	0
	Dire Dawa Univ	67	4	19	2	1
	DMU	69	3	17	3	0
Comprehensive Universities	Mek.Amba Uni	40	4	13	2	0
	Woldia Univ	45	2	15	3	0
	Worabie Univ	50	2	14	3	0
	Debark Univ	40	0	11	1	0
Total	14 Universities	931	51	287	42	4

\Author's own computation from the sample institutions

As depicted in the table above, at department head level, there are about 931 offices out of which only 51 are held by women. At the same time, at college dean or coordinator or director levels, there are about 287 offices out of which only 42 are held by women. Moreover, at vice president or president level,

there are about 70 offices out of which only about 6 are held by women. Dire Dawa University is the only university of the sample institutions currently led by a women Vice President.

In total, about 96 leadership positions are currently held by women in the sample institutions. This accounts about 9 percent of the leadership positions. Thus, the data indicates that the status of women in leadership positions is significantly low. Of all leadership positions, women's presence is better in middle level leadership positions than the lower and top level positions.

3.3 The limitations in the accountability mechanisms

Since the post 2018 national reform, the country has witnessed a good progress towards involving significant number of women in ministerial positions. However, the societal perception considerably lags behind. The Pew Research Center provides us a good insight with regard to how societal perception continues to underestimate women and their natural agency. It states that women tend to be given social sector portfolios, like health, education, social welfare, and gender and culture, while men are given portfolios that are perceived as more powerful, like finance and defense. In the same vein, the key informant raised a similar issue in Ethiopia when Aysha Mohammed assumed Ministry of Defense (October 2018-April 2019) for the first time in the history of the nation. That time, there were tremendous uproars on how such a huge position should be offered to women. Basically, this is civil position and the responsibilities include the devising of policies that empower the national defense sector and institutional reform works, among others. The debates, we heard around were heart touching in many respects because it entirely implied that women are not fit for such executive positions.

The reality on the ground with regard to the sample institutions is that though the institutional normative frameworks exist, they do not have any accountability mechanisms when they fail to work. For the sake of smartness, offices post calls for vacant leadership positions with a promise encouraging women highly. These promises are not applicable, and even in situations in which both sexes score the same points, women are not given priority to the position. Even when a complaint appears after the competition, the point which is not subject

to neglect is when the committee missed the five points which are allocated for affirmative action for women. The common denominator in all institutions in which women may come to leadership positions is when they are capable enough to defeat their rivals in the competition. In the scenario where women lag behind in many respects, the existing frameworks should integrate gender sensitive approaches.

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

The study found out that the existing normative frameworks in the selected institutions on the promotion of women in leadership and decision making are insignificant, not clearly and precisely stated, the abrogation of which is not subject to accountability. The status of women in leadership and decision making is apparently low, accounting about 9% of leadership positions in the sample universities. The study also revealed that despite the mere existence of norms that seem to promote women to leadership positions, there are no meaningful accountability mechanisms in place. Finally, the study asserted that, in most cases, women may hold leadership positions, but their decision-making role may be waived off and given to a male counterpart. While women may be given decision-making power, they may not be gaining substantive influence. Formal changes in law and processes are necessary, but if they are not accompanied by shifts in social structures, institutional reforms can be shallow and limited.

In a nut shell, women's participation in university leadership is sluggish, showing no significant changes since the undemocratic regimes of the past. In higher education institutions, the institutional norms and the accountability mechanisms in place are not effective to alleviate the problem. In some of the sample institutions, there is not any accountability mechanisms adopted in this regard. This indicates that patriarchal thinking still continues to challenge the global march to social justice for women.

Recommendations

Different stakeholders should aggressively work to assist women in their endeavor to migrate out of problems that dwarf societal transformations.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth should collaborate with the Ministry of Education to open windows of oversight and ensure the equitable participation of women in leadership positions in higher education institutions. One of the mechanisms might be the quota system, where some executive offices are allocated to women. The other could be the application of the quota system to offer scholarship opportunities to women. Through education, women will have ways to leverage their skills and expertise

to break social and institutional barriers. Having a third degree is, for instance, a requirement for assuming presidential positions in Ethiopian higher education institutions. But, the number of women

with PhD qualifications is so low, which seems a systematic instrument that tend to exclude women from assuming key leadership positions in higher education.

Other none governmental offices like the UN Women should work in collaboration with the concerned ministry to look for avenues for women empowerment. Launching projects around women empowerment might be a good opportunity to enhance the capacity of women and endorse institutional values that will remain customary practices. If it is accustomed, for instance, no one will contest the offering of a leadership position for women without any competition.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education should push the university presidents to take the participation of women in leadership positions as a serious program in a sustainable manner. There should also be accountability mechanism for those who fail to respect the empowerment of women. Such a refusal should also be considered as a refusal to accept gender equality and human right.

Gender offices are common in every higher education institution, but their accountability is to the institution. Fundamentally, gender offices should be accountable to the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth. If they become autonomous, these offices would have the opportunity to observe the applicability of the institutional values.

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Yoseph G., Serkalem Y., Kebede Y., Zebiba M., (2022). Roles of women in conflict resolution in someselected woredas of North Shewa zone.

Teachers' and student' perception about the labor market: Daniel Zewdie St. Mary's University, Ethiopia

Abstract

Currently, it is difficult for recent graduates to find jobs in the labor market due to the scarcity of jobs and their inability to satisfy the requirements of employers. The business community feels that graduates are lacking human skills. Higher education institutions that produce graduates in the business fields ought to investigate course offerings, pedagogics, theory and practice integration, training on transferable skills, etc. This study was, therefore, envisioned to examine teachers' and students' perceptions about teachers' role in getting ready students for the labor market. To meet the purpose of the study, quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. The samples were selected using stratified, and purposive sampling methods. Atotal of 556 samples were included in the study (419 3rd & 4th-year students, 72 teachers, and 12 Deans and Department heads). Data were collected using questionnaires, interview, and document analysis. The data were analyzed and triangulated using descriptive and inferential statistics. Most of the instructors (72-90%) confirmed that they have been creating students' interest and developing a positive attitude to their profession, integrating theory with practice, and orienting students on employability skills; On the contrary, between 33% and 47% of students opposed teachers' view regarding accessing adequate information about companies; the sufficiency of employability skills; changing their attitude to the labor market; participating in extracurricular activities to their career-related skills. It was found that there is a statistically significant mean difference between teachers' and students' positions concerning creating interest and developing positive attitude to their profession/ CIDPAP (t104.234= -9.612, P<.001), linking theory to practice/LTP (t102.562= -7.794, P<.001), orienting on the relevance of employability skills/REMPS (t483= -8.552, P<.001) and knowledge and skills about the world of work/KEWW(t313.255= -5.909, P<.001).The one-way ANOVA also indicated that a statistically significant mean difference among the different departments regarding CIDPAP (F (4, 408) =5.372, P<.05), LTP (F (4, 408) =3.652, P<.05), and REMS (F (4, 408) =6.423, P<.05); yet, vis-à-vis students' KEWW; there is no significant mean difference across departments. Largely, students', deans', and department heads' perceptions didn't validate teachers' perceptions. Thus, improving teachers' perceptions and role in preparing professionally competent graduates that fulfill the labor market requirements is a top priority that needs due attention.

Keywords: Teachers' & students' perception, pedagogical skills, course offering, theory-practice integration, employability skills, labor market

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Justification

Higher education institutes intend to produce professionally qualified graduates. To this end, they run undergraduate programs in different areas of studies and provide courses in varying modalities (i.e., regular, extension, and/or distance learning). Currently, most such institutes mainly focus on offering courses in Business, and Accounting and Finance fields to produce

graduates in the field of Marketing Management, Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management and Accounting and Finance.

In the different economic sectors, in general, and the labor market, in particular, the economic transaction is developing fast. Due to such a change, having professionals with better skills, competencies, and experiences is

highly required. The job market demands competitive ones, and the contest for qualified graduates is becoming fierce.

These days, it is difficult for recent graduates to find jobs for two main reasons: the scarcity of jobs in the labor market and the inability of graduates to satisfy the demands of employers. Such reasons are the driving forces for the proliferation of applied learning and creating internship opportunities as part of the universities experience for all students.

According to Dictionary.com, (2020), internship is defined as any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession. For Ebner, Soucek, and Selenko, (2021), internship isa vital part of first-degree programs that demands exercising practical skills to students' future professional career. Internships are considered as "high-impact practice" that universities should firmly inspire students to engage at their stay in higher education. Internships are also perceived as a new type of universal education requirement, planned to impart the fundamental skills, knowledge, and competencies students will need to prosper in life, work, and society. They also offer the employer the opportunity to bring new ideas and energy into the workplace, and develop talent and build a pipeline for future full-time employees (O. Neil, 2010; and Kuh, 2008).

Internships bring different benefits to students (i.e., apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom to real- world, increase their marketability, expand their professional network; acquire the soft skills; and get the opportunity for learning and receiving feedback from employees' relations.

Although participation in internship has lots of benefits, its implementation has limitations in our context and its outcomes are poorly understood. To mention a few, interns have frequently reported that companies assign them to do routine works not relevant to their profession; they do not allow them to be present everyday due to inadequate space; supervisors are not assigned by organizations; and mentors assigned from their universities are not supporting them as expected. Generally, the duration, which is not more than two months, is not adequate to help interns to achieve as required.

On the other hand, employers are dissatisfied with recently graduating students, thinking that they have gaps in the necessary discipline-specific skills and soft/transferable skills. Due to these problems, employers hesitate to hire graduates. Furthermore, the shortage of jobs is increasing from time to time. Thus, higher education institutions need to investigate their working scheme regarding course offerings, pedagogics, and the link between theory and practice.

To this effect, it will be more decisive to relate classroom course works with what is taking place in companies. The intention is to create opportunities for students to have better knowledge, skills, and experience about the labor market.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The main purpose of higher education is to deliver high-quality education to students so that they fit the labor market demand of today's business and economy (Altbach, Gumport, and Berdahl, 2011).

Globally, universities are gradually shifting their core business from knowledge transfer toward more practical and employment-focused curricula that prepares students for professional careers and employment (Moore & Morton, 2015). University graduate attributes are designed to reflect student outcomes with regards to 21st century skills and capabilities, keeping in mind the profession and the professional standards of the industry.

Gaps have been identified in Europe with graduates from 13 countries expressing dissatisfaction with their tertiary education training (Fernandez, Lopez, and Lampon, 2014). More than 40,000 students from the United Kingdom,

France, Italy, and Spain are reported to lack the required job skills, and the skills they have acquired at university are believed to be of limited practical workplace use (ANECA, 2007).

Likewise, Jackson (2012) analyzed the concerns of United State, United Kingdom, and Australian employers about graduates' skill gaps required in the labor market, especially in 'critical thinking', 'developing initiative' and 'self-awareness". Several pedagogical methods need to be practiced based on the rationale that students' skills be matched to employer and workplace needs (Coll et al., 2011). Along with this, such initiatives should improve the employability or 'work readiness' of students, which is a primary goal of most work-based learning programs (Freudenberg, Brimble, and Vyvyan, 2010).

Billett (2011) stated that work-based learning experience could be enhanced in HEIs when implanted in the classroom to promote student learning in a practical setting through the application of theoretical knowledge by reflecting on professional practice. Deloitte (2015) skills acquired in HE are likely to contribute little to the labor market demands. Gaps are attributed to a detachment between HE programs and industry practice and disparity in employer and academic perceptions on the meaning of graduate work-readiness.

Moreover, the pedagogical approach in university education has been guided by the traditional approach in which the link between theory and practice is missing (Tomlinson, 2008). Actually, employers understand the importance of work-based learning (WBL) that equips students with workplace experience and enhancement of work-related skills before their graduation (Patrick et al., 2008).

There has always been a gap between employers' expectations and what universities are producing. Nowadays, in the business and industry, employers are calling for universities to generate better prepared graduates who possess a high degree of technical competence and are possibly work-ready (Peach and Gamble, 2011).

As stated by Jackson (2013), WIL programs have become increasingly important in addressing employers and business demands for graduate employability development. Graduate employers strongly favor work experience. This can be realized with WIL, which is assumed to provide the labor market advantage. Some evidences show that the WIL augments employment outcomes. Moreover, the graduate-level employment should measure

the relative value of different forms of WIL (Purcell et al., 2017; Jackson and Collings, 2017; Roberts, 2017; and Mason et al. 2009).

The literature indicates that preparing young people to enter the labor market is becoming a thoughtful duty and responsibility of universities. Thus St. Mary's University has to evaluate and reflect on the relevance of its programs and the employability of its graduates. Most importantly, it needs to critically investigate the pedagogical approaches and assessment system that are employed in preparing students for the labor market.

In this regard, the key actors in the educative processes are teachers and students. Therefore, examining their perceptions and role on how the teaching and learning process ought to be to meet the demands of the labor market in producing the human power with the right knowledge, skills, competencies and generic skills is quiet important.

Additionally, the last two academic years, different NGOs (i.e., Digital Opportunity Trust (dot. Ethiopia), Center of African Leadership Studies, Golden Sales and Marketing, Elebat Management and Technology and others) have been frequently requesting the list of our graduates with the intent of providing short–term training on employability skills, professional ethics, business skills, digital marketing, digital education, and life skills for job creation opportunity. Others like Dereja. Com, WISE and Reach for Change, who have signed MoU with the University, have collaboratively given continual orientations and training on career development, employment readiness, job search skills, interview skills, and entrepreneur mind set to improve the employability of graduates and to guide them how to be self-employed by engaging in startup businesses. This condition shows that the NGOs and the business community think that graduating students are lacking the necessary transferable skills. However, all these

NGOs are always in a hurry prioritizing and fulfilling their organizational interest in accordance with their own schedule without considering the schedule of our University. This condition triggers to raise a question: Can't the University be effective and complete in producing graduates with all the required skills? Basically, three conditions (i.e., the prevalence of the necessity to improve the application of the internship, the skills gaps identified from previously conducted researches, and the NGOs and business community's assumptions that graduates have employability skills gap) are the ones that motivated the researcher to carry out this research.

1.3 Basic Research Questions

This study has attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their role in preparing students for the labor market through relating course offerings to the world of work?
2. How do students perceive the role of teachers regarding practically linking course delivery with the labor market demands?
3. Is there a statistically significant mean difference between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding pedagogics in the provision of courses relevant to the world of work?
4. Is there a statistically significant mean difference in teachers' perception concerning their

role in preparing students for the world of work across departments?

5. Is there a statistically significant mean difference in students' perception concerning teachers' perception in preparing students for the world of work across departments?

6. Do the curricula incorporate the necessary learning goals, contents and pedagogics to enable students' understanding about the labor market?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objective

The aim of this research is to determine the overall teachers' perception and their role in preparing students for the world of work through course offerings related to the demands of the labor market.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

In line with the research questions, the specific objectives of the research are to:

1. investigate teachers' perceptions and role in preparing students for the world of work;
2. examine the extent to which students perceive the undergraduate degree programs in St. Mary's University in preparing them for the labor market;
3. assess students' perceptions of the influence of teachers' pedagogical skills on the relevance of the undergraduate degree programs across different disciplines;
4. determine the mean difference between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding aligning course provision with the labor market demands; and
5. find out if there exists mean difference between teachers' and students' views regarding teachers' perception and role across departments.

1.5 Significance of the Study

One of the main objectives of higher education is to provide its students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the labor market. This task is particularly important in the context of today's novelty-pushed, skills- based, globalized economies. It also corresponds to one of the main expectations of students.

As stated by OECD (2014), higher education institutes exert their effort to produce graduates with robust skills, as meant by an academic degree, diploma, or other qualification. This indicates to employers that a graduate has the competencies, interest, and aptitude to work in certain jobs since, for many jobs, higher education qualification is a vital demand. It also corresponds to one of the main expectations of students that will enable them to get a good job after their studies. Besides, the higher education system strives to develop a wide group of skills mentioned as soft skills that involve a range of skills required to perform tasks across a variety of workplace settings. The soft skills include important cognitive skills such as literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, analytical reasoning, and critical thinking; and social and emotional skills such as communication, teamwork, perseverance, initiative, leadership, and self-organization (OECD, 2015). These skills are essential to the success of individuals and firms. They enable graduates to adapt to changing demands within a job, or move easily

from one job to another during their careers as the labor market evolves.

Nevertheless, still the unemployment rate is high due to scarcity of jobs and gaps between labor market needs and skills of graduates; their lack of practical skills and information about career choices; and employers' dissatisfaction with graduates' competencies, consequently, brought a significant number of graduates not meeting the needs of the labor market. Therefore, the relevance and quality of the courses that are offered in higher education are becoming questionable. In light of this, conducting such a study on teachers' and students' perception about teachers' role in preparing students to fulfill the demands of the labor market has the following significances. It is:

1. important to analyze the pedagogical approaches employed by teachers to relate theoretical concepts to real- life situations in the world of work;
2. essential to investigate and understand whether teachers have been providing students with practical learning opportunities relevant to the labor market;
3. essential to explore whether students are gaining real work experience and meaningful support from their immediate course instructors;
4. valuable to comprehend whether students have been achieving skills and experience in their special field of study;
5. vital to assess whether instructors have been offering the necessary guidance, feedback, and responsiveness as professionals;
1. helpful to examine whether students have received orientation on companies' goals, rules, regulations, and procedures;
2. useful to learn how SMU is trying to respond to the demands of stakeholders and balance labor market requirements with other priorities; and
3. Finally, the result of the study may serve as a source for future studies related to similar issues.

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Delimitation of the study

This survey was confined to one private university. Most importantly, it was delimited only to third year students who were given more business courses in major areas the last three years, and, therefore, are assumed to have better understanding of how the courses were treated/presented by their instructors.

1.6.2 Limitation of the study

It is quite obvious that variables like motivation, intelligence, rate of learning, individual difference, nature of the courses, teaching learning materials, assessment system, facilities etc., as a whole influence students' academic achievement. However, this study was limited to investigating teachers' and students' perceptions about teachers' role in preparing students for the labor market. More specifically, it was limited to assessing whether teachers are appropriately selecting and using pedagogical skills and instructional materials or not in order to help students achieve the required knowledge and skills.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

This part of the research mainly focuses on organizing and summarizing variety of study findings relevant to the study area.

2.1 Roles of Higher Education in Producing Competent Graduates

The primary goal of higher education is to offer quality education and produce professionally qualified graduates who contribute to solve social and economic problems. Universities are required to generate knowledgeable and skilled human power for industries to run businesses effectively and efficiently. On the other hand, industries are assumed to add value to the economy through manufacturing, trading, service provision, and export business activities. In this way, the value to the national economy can be strengthened if both industry and university work collaboratively (Abra, Nauman Abbasi, and Saqib 2021).

According to Abra, et al., (2021), the industry is the major employer of university graduates; yet, it is unfortunate that the current graduates lack communication skills, technical skills, subject matter knowledge, and other ethical values. So, it is quite useful if research focuses on investigating the requirements and preferences of the industry for business graduates coming to the job in their industrial units.

Students' expectations have always been high to find a better way of preparing for joining the labor market. At the same time, employers require graduates with abilities and skills that fulfill the demands in the labor market. Yet, there is still a gap between deliveries of HE services and needs of individuals and organizations (Nicolescu and Paˇun, 2009).
For better relationship between higher education and the needs of practice, employers expect universities to include other instructional methods, such as practical case studies, discussion groups, presentations of business reports and reports for the client, or students' internships (Low et al., 2016). For example, job offers for students are the most common form of cooperation between universities and companies, but cooperation in developing curricula and study program is the least common (AQU, 2015).

Unfortunately the university-industry link here in Ethiopia appears to be discouraging. This is because universities are not producing skilled and competent graduates as expected to fit to the demands of employers in the labor market. It is, therefore, vital to improve the connection between universities and industry. Moreover, investigating the structure and pattern of business education pedagogy in terms of its curriculum, training, research, and linkages is vital.

2.2 Employability Skills

According to Rowe and Zegward (2017), the term "employability" is understood as skills and personal attributes to be achieved by graduates to guarantee employment. Normally, employability skills comprise a set of skills grouped as generic skills (e.g., teamwork, communication skills, organizing, planning), discipline-specific skills (skills in different professions), and personal attributes (e.g., self-confidence, resilience, loyalty, integrity).
Similarly, Rothwell and Arnold (2007) stated that employability is the ability to acquire employment and to keep the job one has or to get the job one wants. For Vanhercke et al., (2015), individuals' perceived employability is one's perceptions of the "possibilities of

obtaining and maintaining employment". Employability is shaped by many factors, but education is a major determinant of employability for graduates.

Understanding and exploring the student perspective of how higher education can enhance or limit their opportunities of employment is crucial (Donald et al., 2017; and Jackson, 2015). Though the relationship between education and employability is assumed to be strengthened, still many graduates leaving university today are often jobless (Okay-Somerville and Scholarios, 2014).

Clarke (2017) elaborates that graduate employability chiefly deals with aspects of human capital, such as knowledge, skills and processes, and the broader perception of employability refers to a person's variables (personality, attitudes, and career-oriented behavior), labor market variables, and current employment. So, she suggested an extensive pattern of employability of graduates, and identified five key dimensions: human capital, social capital, personal behavior, personal attributes, and the labor market. This model helps to differentiate areas of individual responsibilities of graduates and those of cooperation between universities, employers and industry. On the other hand, Garcia, Montero, and Almeida (2018) explain that practical and theoretical content, together with methodological and employability competencies, and collective career-related experience, have a positive impact on students' perceptions of their preparedness for transition to work. Such findings suggest that it is relevant for graduates to gain transferable skills from engaging in activities that encourage commercial awareness, teamwork, leadership and communication to achieve academic success.

2.3 Employers' Expectations of Graduates

These days, employers in different companies are dissatisfied with graduates' discipline specific skills, in general, and their soft skills in particular. They expect graduates to be professionally competent and need to have employability skills.

Regarding this, Janková, (2015) indicated that lack of practical experience and having no adequate discipline- specific skills were the main reasons for rejecting graduates to be employed. Likewise, Low, Bêtes, Rue & Allen, (2016), Muyako and Seedwell (2015), and Naveed, Jabeen & Ullah, (2014), have long confirmed that the perception of the quality of graduate employability skills is different between employers and graduates. As a result, graduates' lack of essential skills is one of the most common problems in their employment (Clarke, 2017; Messum, Wilkes, Peters and Jackson, 2017; and AQU, 2015).

On the other side, Muyako and Seedwell (2015) have shown that employers expected graduates to have less communication skills and more specific technical skills in the technical and economy oriented sectors. A research conducted in economic and IT sectors has shown that employers consider generic employability skills (such as punctuality, time management, responsibility, and communication skills) more important than discipline-specific skills (Naveed et al., 2014).

In a similar study, employers in the UK regard operational skills required for the job (solving complex problems, technical and practical skills) and those necessary for interpersonal

relationships (time management, customer care) as the greatest weakness of their job applicants. In the case of already employed workers, employers

perceived their greatest weaknesses in the area of working with people (such as time management, teamwork, customer care, emotional intelligence, employee motivation, persuasion of others) as well as comprehensive analytical skills (UKCES, 2016).

One of the critical problems of teaching in higher education is the problem of integrating theory with practice. Instructors are expected to relate concepts with real-life situations; they also need to use real –life examples that enable students to clearly understand subject matter, and generate cases and project works that provide wide range of opportunities to explore the labor market. Employers expect universities to incorporate pedagogical approaches, such as practical case studies, discussion groups, presentations of business reports and reports for client, or students' internships for creating better relationship between higher education and the needs of practice (Low et al., 2016).

Employers regard the integration of work experience into the curriculum as the best form of cooperation. Likewise, studying employers' expectations of graduates' competencies can serve as a basis for the higher education curricula, thus supporting graduates' employment and their successful job performance (Muyako & Seedwell, 2015). Moving from education into the labor market is a major career transition, which requires academic attention (Pinto and Ramalheira, 2017).

2.4 Pedagogical Approaches for Course Delivery

Regarding pedagogical skills, Siegfried, Saunders, Stinar and Zhang (1996) stated that earlier studies designate that despite difference in class size and types of institution, introductory courses in economics, and business area are taught mainly through lecture. Students and instructors are accustomed most to lecture method that makes students passive recipients, and focuses on conveying information from the instructor to students. Likewise, Skudiene, (2012) stated that the major limitation of the lecture method is that it does not encourage students to think actively and participate in constructing knowledge.

The importance of business education in today's knowledge-based economy is undisputable, but not only the education content but also the instruction methods used matter a lot. Problems of sufficient and appropriate instructional methods for business courses are widely discussed in different academic and practical settings (Jeļena, Zane, Jelena and Jekaterina, 2016).

As to studies on teaching methods and their application, Christie, (2016), and Entwistle et al., (2015) investigated the teaching and learning environment as an interactive system, and using learning technologies in university teaching has effects on differing learning environments. Others such as Garner, (2016), Gan et al., (2015), and Fleisher, and Bensoussan, (2015) identified specific teaching methods for business students, such as case studies, group projects, interviews, developing journal articles, problem solving skills, videos, involving interactive digital media (testing their accuracy and trying to identify the most effective ones), as well as insights into students' perceptions of the most helpful pedagogical approaches for teaching soft skills.

Interactive instruction methods like seminars, tutorials, case study, project/problem-based learning, and workshops promote deep understanding of the subject matter, and the organizational realities, combined with creative and innovative thinking (Datar, et al., 2015). Similarly, Jeļena, et al., (2016) also differentiated seminar and case study as the most valuable teaching methods in the business and management classes by students. Using mostly interactive instruction methods for skill training and providing information are significant for developing business and management competencies.

According to the perspective of university teachers, the most important skill is problem-solving skills generated through the case study method. More importantly, there is an agreement among teachers at all levels that the case method enhances problem- solving skills among students (Abra, et al., 2021).

Concerning academic engagement, regular attendance at lectures seems to be negatively associated with students' perceptions of their preparedness if it is not backed by developing practical collective work involvement that could have a positive effect on their preparedness for work (Garcia, et al., 2018).

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

In this section of the study, methods and procedures of sampling, data collection, and analysis of procedures employed are treated.

3.1 Research Design

The research was an ex-post facto design in a sense that the researcher does not have direct control over the independent variables because they are inherently not manipulated. More broadly, a mixed-methods design that helps to collect, analyze and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data was employed. The study covered teachers' and students' perceptions about teachers' role in preparing students for the world of work. The study area of this research is St. Mary's University, found in the capital city, Addis Ababa, at Lideta Sub-city, Woreda 09, adjacent to Wabi Shebelle Hotel.

3.1.1 Population and Sampling

The target population of the study were 1380 third year regular degree program students (536 in Accounting and Finance, 422 in Marketing and Management, 229 in Computer Science, 169 in Management, and 24 in Tourism and Hospitality Management), and 211 fourth-year students studying in Computer Science field. Besides, all permanent teachers (79), faculty deans (3), department heads (4), belong to the study population. To take the sample students from departments and academic years, a stratified sampling technique was employed.

3.1.2 Determining Sample Size

To select the required sample size from students and teachers, Yamane's formula (1967) was employed as follows:

n = N where n= sample size; N= Target population e (moe) = margin of error (0.05); N = 1380+211= 1591 students

$\{1+N^{e2}\}$

n= 1591 = 1591 = 399.74 Thus, the sample to be considered was, n= 400

{1+1591*0.0025} 3.98

From the target population of 1591, at a 95% confidence level and ± 5% precision level, a sample size of 400 students is presumed to be representative (Yamane, 1967). Hence, 347 (86.75%) third-year students, and 53 (13.25 %) fourth-year students were selected proportionally and made to participate in the study. Similarly, from a total of 78 regular teachers, 65 were randomly selected; however, adding 7 others, 72 teachers were considered for the study. A similar procedure was practiced to determine the sample size involved in the study.

n = N where n= sample size; N= Target population e (moe) = margin of error (0.05); N = 78 teach

$\{1+N (e^2)\}$

n = 78 = 78 = 65.3, sample size, n= 65

{1+ 78*0.0025} 1.195

Table 1: **Summary of the Sampling Units**

No	**Year of entry**	**Quantitative data**						**Qualitative data**			
		4th-year students		**3rd-year students**		**Teachers**		**Top managers & officers**	**Deans**	**Dep't heads**	**Total**
		N	**n**	**N**	**n**	**N**	**n**	**n**	**n**	**n**	
1	2018/19	211	53	----	----	78	72	5	2	5	137
2	2019/20			1381	419						419
Total sample		211	53	1380	419	78	72	5	2	5	556
Sampling techniques		Stratified & Simple Random Sampling						Purposive sampling			

N- Target pop, n- Sample size

As observed in Table 1, for collecting quantitative data through a questionnaire, a total of 419 students and 72 teachers were selected using stratified and random sampling techniques, respectively. On the other hand, 12 individuals (top managers, deans, department heads, and officers) were purposively selected as key informants. Therefore, a total of 556 participants were involved in providing the required data for the study.

3.2 Sources of Data

3.2.1 Primary Sources

The primary sources of data were students, teachers, deans, department heads, and directors/heads of different offices.

1. Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of data were documents like degree program curricular, course modules, education policies, standards, guidelines, operational manual for career and internship unit, research study results, and other relevant documents.

2. Data Collection Tools

To collect adequate and reliable data, questionnaire, and interview guide and document analysis were employed. To gather the required data from teachers and students, two questionnaires with the same items (19 in number) that assess their perceptions on a 5 point Likert scale (i.e., strongly agree = 5, agree= 4, undecided=3, disagree=

2, to strongly disagree= 1) were distributed. Both questionnaires included 19 statements to be reacted by showing agreement or disagreement, and two open-ended items. Categorically, they were divided into four groups of items as follows:

Table 2**: Categories of Items**

S.N	Question Categories	Question numbers
1	Items that emphasize on creating interest and developing positive attitude toward a profession (CIDPAP)	Q_1 , Q_2, Q_9, &Q_{18}
2	Items that center on linking course contents, examples, project works, and assessment with the world of work(LTP)	Q_3, Q_6, Q_7, Q_{11},Q_{12}, & Q_{13}
3	Items that focus on employability skills (REMS)	Q_4, Q_5, Q_{10}, & Q_{19}
4	Items on knowledge and experience about the world of work/ labor market (KEWW)	Q_8,Q_{14}, Q_{15}, Q_{16},&Q_{17}

As observed in Table 2, 4 questions focused on creating interest and developing positive attitude toward a profession (CIDPAP), 6 questions deal with assessing the link between theory and practice (LTP), 4 questions emphasize on employability skills (REMS), and the remaining 5 questions center on knowledge and experience about the world of work (KEWW)

3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out based on the descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies and percentages, means, and standard deviations) computed from the views of teachers and students on the main variables as well as data collected from deans and department heads through the interview guide:

1. Independent T-test was employed to determine whether there exists or not significant mean difference between teachers' and students' position/view about teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the world of work;

1. One-way ANOVA was employed to find the statistical mean difference across departments regarding teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the labor market; and
2. Multiple comparison (Scheffe) was employed to determine mean differences across departments with respect to teachers', and students' view.

In general, the statistical analysis (i.e., descriptive and inferential statistics) was computed using the SPSS software package, version 21 of the statistical program.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

In this section of the research, the major research findings are presented with tables in line with the research questions mentioned in the introduction part of the study.

4.1 Results of the study

4.1.1 Demographic Data

The respondents' characteristics as sex, age, education level, and academic year are presented below:

Table 3: **Students' Characteristics by sex * age * group Cross tabulation**

Sex of students		**Age**				**Total**
		"18-20"	**21-23**	**24-25**	**> 25**	
female	Count	47	148	15	1	211
	% within sex	22.3%	70.1%	7.1%	0.5%	100.0%
	% within age	44.8%	54.6%	46.9%	20.0%	51.1%
	% of Total	**11.4%**	**35.8%**	**3.6%**	**0.2%**	**51.1%**
male	Count	58	123	16	4	201
	% within sex	28.9%	61.2%	8.0%	2.0%	100.0%
	% within age	55.2%	45.4%	50.0%	80.0%	48.7%
	% of Total	**14.0%**	**29.8%**	**3.9%**	**1.0%**	**48.7%**
Total	Count	105	271	32	5	413
	% within sex	25.4%	65.6%	7.7%	1.2%	100.0%
	% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	**25.4%**	**65.6%**	**7.7%**	**1.2%**	**100.0%**

Table 3, shows that 51.1% female and 48.7% male students from five departments have participated in the study. Regarding their age, 11.4% of females and 14.0% of males are between the ages of 18 and 20; 35.8% of females and 29.8% of males belong to the age range of 21 to 23; and a few of them from both sexes (3.6% & 3.9%) are between the ages of 24 and 25. Generally, those who are in the age of 18 and 20, are 105 (25.4%), while a greater number of both sexes, 271(65.6%) are of age between 21 and 23. This designates that most of the sample students included in the study belong to the appropriate youth age to make appropriate judgment or decisions regarding what is taking place in their classroom teaching learning processes.

Table 4: **Teachers' Characteristics by Sex * Age * group Cross tabulation**

Teachers			Age						Total
			21-25	26-30	36-40	36-40	41-45	46 and Above	
sex	female	Count	7	0	5	1	0	0	13
		% within Sex	53.8%	0.0%	38.5%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Age	63.6%	0.0%	20.8%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	19.1%
		% of Total	**10.3%**	**0.0%**	**7.4%**	**1.5%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**19.1%**
	Male	Count	4	16	19	8	2	6	55
		% within Sex	7.3%	29.1%	34.5%	14.5%	3.6%	10.9%	100.0%
		% within Age	36.4%	100.0%	79.2%	88.9%	100.0%	100.0%	80.9%
		% of Total	**5.9%**	**23.5%**	**27.9%**	**11.8%**	**2.9%**	**8.8%**	**80.9%**
	Total	Count	11	16	24	9	2	6	68
		% within Sex	16.2%	23.5%	35.3%	13.2%	2.9%	8.8%	100.0%
		% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	**16.2%**	**23.5%**	**35.3%**	**13.2%**	**2.9%**	**8.8%**	**100.0%**

As observed in Table 4, 19.1 % of female and 80.9% of male teachers were samples of the study. Concerning their age, 10.3% of female and 5.9% of male teachers belong to the age range of 21 -25, whereas, 23.5% of males are of age within 26 -30. Those belonging to the age range of 36 to 40 are 7.4% females and 27.9% males. On the other hand, between 8.8% and 11.8% of male teachers are either of age between 36 and 40 or 46 or above. More specifically, those sample teachers (60.2%) engaged in the study are largely thought to be experienced teachers who could give adequate and genuine information on the issues raised regarding their perception and role in preparing their students for the labor market

Table 5: **Students and Teachers who completed the questionnaires by Department**

S.N	Departments	Students		Teachers	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**
1	Accounting & Finance	133	32.2	22	32.4
2	Marketing Management	102	24.7	13	19.1
3	Management	46	11.1	19	27.9
4	Computer Science	110	26.6	10	14.7
5	Tourism and Hospitality Management	22	5.3	4	5.9
Total		**413**	**100.0**	**68**	**100.0**

As indicated in Table 5, 133 (32.2%) from Accounting and Finance, 110 (26.6%) from Computer Science,102(24.7%) from Marketing Management, 46 (11.1%) from Management and 22(5.3%) from THM departments were found properly filling out the student's questionnaire administered. Concerning teachers, 22(32.4%) from Accounting and Finance, 19(27.9%) from Management, 13 (19.1%) from Marketing management, 10 (14.7%) from Computer science and 4(5.3%) from THM departments have been identified in filling out the teacher's questionnaire neatly.

4.1.2 Analysis of Quantitative Data

Table 6: **Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations on Teachers' View regarding making ready students for the labor market**

No	Variables	Teachers' Position/View						
		A/SA	UND		D/SD		$\bar{X}$	SD
		N	N	%	N	%		
1	I usually create awareness opportunities for my students on the importance of the course I am instruction to their professional development	65	2	2.8	5	7	4.4	.983
2	I regularly inspire my students' interest in the profession they will face in the future	57	11	15.3	4	5.6	4.1	.933
3	I regularly relate the contents of the courses I teach with the concepts of the labor market in the instruction-learning process	56	7	9.8	7	9.8	4.0	1.06
4	I usually explain to students the relevance of employability/soft skills for appropriate communication and work spirit in the workplace	51	11	15.3	10	13.9	3.9	1.06
5	I have been always energizing students to take care of their duty and responsibility in the interest of employers they will work with in the future	50	69.4	9	12.5	13	18.1	3.8	1.25
6	I regularly encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities on career choices to improve their considerable amount of career-related skills		47	65.3	17	23.6	8	11.1	3.6	1.09
7	I regularly tell students about the skills gaps and experience needed in the labor market while instruction courses		52	72.2	10	13.9	10	13.9	3.7	.990
8	I have been introducing and relating the different companies where students could be employed and join in the future about the course I teach.		56	77.7	10	13.9	6	8.3	3.9	1.10
9	I feel that I have played the necessary role in introducing students to what is required in the labor market		59	84.3	7	10	4	5.7	3.7	1.01
10	I feel that I have contributed to students' focus on meeting their future needs, in developing generic capabilities such as critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills.		52	72.2	13	18.1	7	9.8	4.0	.940
11	I am explaining regularly concepts using real-life examples taken from locally available companies and industries	58		80.5	10	13.9	4	5.6	4.3	.922
12	I ensure that I usually provide assignments and project works related and relevant to the world of work/labor market	58		80.5	10	13.9	14	19.5	4.0	1.08

13	I use assessment to be consistent with the course learning outcomes and supported with authentic tasks for the discipline or profession	52	72.2	15	20.8	5	7	4.1	.891
14	I feel I have created students' consciousness of the current and future occupational demands in their fields of study	37	51.4	30	41.7	5	7	4.1	.828
15	I made my students well aware of the requirements and challenges that prevail in the world of work	44	61.1	23	31.9	5	7	3.9	1.02
16	I feel that I made my students internalize the definition of labor or job to the markets demand and supply	37	72.2	13	18.1	7	9.7	3.5	.871
17	I feel that I have been conversant, and knowledgeable in preparing students for the labor market beyond the regular classroom instruction	44	61.1	23	31.9	5	7	3.7	.901
18	I believe I have played decisive roles in changing students' attitudes and reflection toward the current labor market	52	72.2	13	18.1	7	9.7	3.9	.949
19	I ensure that I have given students adequate experience and skills in job hunting, networking, preparation of resume writing, and application letter to optimize their career development to be competitive in the labor market in the future	42	58.3	14	19.4	16	22.3	3.5	1.19

Agreement level: 1.00 - 1.50= poor, 1.51 - 2.50= satisfactory, 2.50 -3.50=good, 3.50-4.50=V. Good 4.5-5.00= Excellent

As observed in Table 7, most of the instructors (72% and 90%) responded by agreeing or strongly agreeing on the statements referred to items 1, 9,11,2,12,3, 8, 7,10,13,16, and 18.

This indicates that the majority of the instructors have been creating students' awareness on the importance of the courses they teach to their professional development; introducing to students what is required in the labor market; explaining concepts using real-life examples taken from industries; providing assignments and project works related to the world of work; inspire their students' interest in their future profession; relating course contents they teach with the labor market; linking the course offering with different companies; telling about the skills gaps and experience needed in the labor market; contributing to develop students' critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills; making student assessment related to learning outcomes and being supported with authentic tasks; and helping students to internalize the definition of labor and played decisive role in changing students' attitudes toward the current labor market.

From the statements above, it could be understood that most of the instructors think and believe that they have been preparing students for the world of work.

However, between 13.9 % and 22.3% of the sample teachers, responded by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing on some of the statements. More specifically, 22.3 % of them couldn't guarantee of giving adequate skills of job hunting, resume and application letter writing to students; 19.5% stated that they are not sure of providing assignments and project works

relevant to the labor market; 18.1% confirmed that they have never energized students to take care of their duty and responsibility in the interest of employers with whom they will work with in the future. Moreover, a similar number of sample teachers (13.9 %) still disagreed to the statements that state "I usually explain to students about the relevance of employability /soft skills for appropriate communication and work spirit" and "I regularly tell students about the skills gaps and experience needed in the labor market". These entail that some instructors were reserved to verify about teacher' perception and role in preparing students for the labor market.

Considering the descriptive statistics determined, the mean value of each item was between 3.5 and 4.4, and the variability of each item was between .828 and .990 from its corresponding mean. For instance, item numbers 14, 16, 13, 17, 11, 2, 10, 18, 1, and 7 have small standard deviations (.828-.990) respectively, and are, therefore, highly clustered around their means. This denotes that most of the sample teachers have almost alike views on the items identified earlier. On the contrary, items 9, 15, 3, 4, 12, and 6, relatively have high standard deviations (1.01 -1.09) indicating more spread out from their means. Still items 5 and 19 have very high standard deviations (1.19-1.25), which show that more dispersions are observed from their respective means. This suggests minor variations are observed between teachers' opinions on the six statements numerically designated by 9, 15, 3, 4, 12, 6, 5, and 19. Taking into account the aggregate mean, which is equal to 3.9, it could be interpreted that teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the labor market was marked "very good"

Table 7: **Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations of Students' View about teachers' role in making them ready for the labor market**

No	Students' View Items	A/SA		UND		DA/SDA		$\bar{X}$	SD
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
1	Teachers are creating my awareness of the importance of courses they teach to my future career/profession always	211	51	118	28.6	84	20.4	3.4	1.10
2	Teachers' usually stimulate my interest in the profession I join in the future	134	32.4	146	35.4	133	32.2	3.0	1.09
3	Teachers usually relate the contents of the major courses to the world of work/ labor market while instruction.	194	47	132	32	86	20.8	3.4	1.77
4	Teachers' tell us about the relevance of employability/soft skills for appropriate communication and teamwork in the workplace.	161	39	126	30.5	126	30.5	3.1	1.11
5	Teachers' stimulate me to take care of my duty and responsibility for the interest of employers that I will work in the future.	147	35.6	128	31.1	137	33.2	3.0	1.09
6	Teachers have been inspiring me to participate in extracurricular activities for my career choice a considerable amount of career-related skills.	115	27.9	135	32.7	163	39.5	2.9	1.09
7	Teachers talk about the major skills gaps to be resolved in the labor market/while instruction their courses regularly	155	37.6	137	33.2	121	29.3	3.1	1.10
8	I feel that I have adequate information about companies where I could be employed in the future	102	24.7	118	28.6	193	46.8	2.6	1.22
9	I feel that my teachers have played the necessary role in introducing me to what is required in the labor market	135	32.7	125	30.3	153	37.0	2.9	1.17

10	Teachers are making me focused on meeting my future needs, in developing generic capabilities such as critical thinking, problem solving skills, teamwork, and communication skills, as a whole on the relevance of employability skills/soft skills	134	32.4	137	33.2	142	34.4	3.0	1.09
11	Teachers are using assessment to be coherent with the desired learning outcomes and therefore, be authentic tasks for the discipline or profession.	170	41.2	143	34.6	100	24.2	3.2	1.07
12	I assure that teachers are explaining regularly concepts using real-life examples taken from locally available companies/ industries	197	47.7	103	24.9	113	27.3	3.3	1.23
13	I ensure that teachers usually are providing us assignments and project works relevant to the world of work/labor market	186	45	122	29.5	105	5.4	3.3	1.12
14	I believe that I am conscious of the current and future occupations demand in my field of study	154	37.3	135	32.7	124	30	3.1	1.11
15	I believe that I am well aware of the requirements and challenges that prevail in the world of work.	145	35	133	32.2	134	32.5	3.5	1.76
16	I feel that I have internalized the definition of labor or job concerning the market demand and supply	139	33.7	141	34.1	133	32.2	3.0	1.07
17	I feel that my teachers were conversant and knowledgeable in preparing me for the labor market beyond the regular classroom instruction	124	30	134	32.4	155	37.6	2.9	1.14
18	I believe teachers have played a decisive role in changing my attitude and reflection toward the current labor market	140	33.9	134	32.4	139	33.7	3.0	1.10
19	I confirm that my teachers have given me adequate experience and skills in job hunting, networking, preparation of resume writing, and application letter to optimize my career development to be competitive in the labor market in the future	107	25.9	126	30.5	180	43.6	2.7	1.19

The finding in Table 7, indicate that between 41% and 51% of students have confirmed that their teachers are creating their awareness of the importance of courses they teach to their future career; using assessment to be coherent with the desired learning outcomes and authentic tasks; and explaining concepts using real-life examples taken from locally available industries. Contrary to, a relatively higher percentage of students (33% - 47%) disagreed or strongly disagreed as to having adequate information about companies; getting ample experience and skills in job hunting, networking, resume and application letter writing;

inspiring them to participate in extracurricular activities; playing the desired role in familiarizing them to what is required in the labor market; developing generic capabilities such as critical thinking, problem solving skills, teamwork, and communication skills, all together on the relevance of employability skills; and being knowledgeable in preparing them for the labor market beyond the regular classroom instruction.

In addition, more than one–third of the sample students (30.3%- 35.1%) have opted for the "undecided/unknown" choice for most of the statements which implies that they were unable to favor or authenticate what has been stated or written about the pedagogical approach employed by teachers in the classroom either by agreeing or disagreeing. So, it could be inferred that instructors' perceptions and role on the topics elevated were not substantiated by the beneficiaries of the classroom learning.

The mean value of each item is between 2.6 and 3.5 and the dispersion of each item varies between 1.07 and 1.77 from its corresponding mean. For example, items 1, 2, 4,5,6,7,10,11,13, 14, 16, & 18 have relatively small standard deviations (1.07- 1.12), and are, therefore, gathered around their means which designate that they have similar views on the issues raised whereas, items 17, 9, 19, 8, 12, 15, and 3 have relatively high standard deviations (1.14 -1.77) ¸ showing more spread out from their means indicating minor differences in their understanding of the issues. On the whole, it could be interpreted that the aggregate mean of 3.07 denotes that students' overall rating was "moderate", which is one range below the teachers' aggregate mean of 3.9 (Very Good).

Table 8 **: Means and Standard deviation of Teachers' and Students' view in line with CIDPAP, LTP, REMPS & KEWW**

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CIDPAP	student	413	3.0696	.83089	.04089
	teachers	72	4.0012	.74555	.08786
LTP	student	413	3.1691	.82102	.04040
	teachers	72	3.9306	.75476	.08895
REMPS	student	413	2.9479	.83790	.04123
	teachers	72	3.8009	.77059	.09081
KEWW	student	413	3.0232	2.08192	.10244
	teachers	72	3.8097	.72114	.08499

The means and standard deviations of 413 students and 72 teachers concerning their position on teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the world of work were summarized in Table 8. Accordingly, the means and standard deviations regarding creating interest and developing positive attitude toward profession (CIDPAP) was $\bar{x}$ =3.070/ 4.001, and SD=.8309/.7456; integrating course contents, examples, project works and assessment with the world of work (Linking theory with practice)/LTP/ was $\bar{x}$ =3.169/3.931, and SD=.8210/.7548); orienting students on the relevance of employability skills /REMPS/ was $\bar{x}$ =2.948/3.800, and SD= .8380/.7706); and of knowledge and experience about the world of work /KEWW/ was $\bar{x}$ =3.023/3.8100, and SD=2.0819/.7211) of students and teachers, respectively. If we look into the range of means determined by students' responses for the categories ($\bar{x}$ = 2.95-3.17) compared to teachers' responses ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81- 4.00) are numerically less, which indicates that most of the sample students have responded by disagreeing and

selecting the undecided on the statements raised while the majority of the sample teachers have rated most of the statements by agreeing or strongly agreeing. This suggests that the sample students were not ready to validate the views of the teachers that they have been preparing students for the labor market.

Table 9: **Independent Samples T – Test to determine mean difference between teachers' and students' views**

Variables		**Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**		**t-test for Equality of Means**					
variances not assumed					3	.000	-.93154	.09691	-1.1237	-.73937
LTP	Equal variances assumed	.374	.541	-7.346	483	.000	-.76147	.10365	-.96513	-.55780
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.794	102.56	.000	-.76147	.09769	-.95523	-.56770
REMPS	Equal variances assumed	1.88	.171	-8.063	483	.000	-.85298	.10579	-1.0608	-.64512
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.552	102.53	.000	-.85298	.09974	-1.0508	-.65517
KEWW	Equal variances assumed	.858	.355	-3.170	483	.002	-.78648	.24809	-1.2739	-.29900

The independent samples T-test can be computed if there is homogeneity of variance between the two samples. This assumption can be tested using Leven's test for homogeneity of variances.

As indicated in Table 9, the P-value of Leven's test for CIDPAP (F=2.706, P>.05), LTP (F=.374, P>.05), REMPS (F= 1.883, P>.05) and KEWW (F=.858, P>.05) are not statistically significant, therefore, we accept the null of the Leven's test that states there is "equality of variances" between the teachers' and students' views with respect to each sub group. With such an assumption, it is possible to determine the independent sample t test.

Referring to Table 10, on the basis of "Equal variance assumed", each t-test observed showed that there is statistically significant mean difference between teachers' and students' position with respect to CIDPAP (t483= -8.907 P<.001), LTP (t483= -7.346, P<.001), REMPS (t483= -8.063, P<.001) and KEWW(t483= -3170, P<.001).

To determine the mean difference between students' view regarding teachers' perception and role in preparing student' for the labor market across departments, a one-way ANOVA is determined as follows.

Table 10**: One-way ANOVA on CIDPAP, LTP, REMPS, and KEWW across Department (Students view)**

Variables		Sum of Squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CIDPA	Between Groups	14.231	4	3.558	5.372*	.000
	Within Groups	270.205	408	.662		
	Total	284.436	412			
LTP	Between Groups	9.601	4	2.400	3.652*	.006
	Within Groups	268.119	408	.657		
	Total	277.720	412			
REMPS	Between Groups	17.136	4	4.284	6.423*	.000
	Within Groups	272.120	408	.667		
	Total	289.256	412			
KEWW	Between Groups	15.399	4	3.850	.887	.471
	Within Groups	1770.378	408	4.339		
	Total	1785.777	412			

*Significant mean difference at .05 level

As indicated in Table 10, there is statistically significant mean difference among the different departments regarding creating interest and developing positive attitude to a profession (F (4, 408) =5.372, P<.05), linking theory with practice (F (4, 408) =3.652, P<.05), and orienting on the relevance of employability skills (F (4, 408) =6.423, P<.05), these indicate that the position and views of students from the different departments on the three issues raised earlier are different. However, concerning students' knowledge and experience about the world of work, there is no significant mean difference across departments, meaning the sample students have similar view regarding their knowledge and experience about the world of work across departments. ANOVA alone does not tell us specifically which means were different from one another. To determine that, we have to determine the multiple comparisons (or post-hoc) tests as follows.

Table 11: **Multiple Comparisons on Students' Stand/Position regarding teachers' perception and role (i.e., CIDPAP, LTP, and RES) in preparing students across Departments**

Scheffe

Dependent Variable	(I) Dep't	(J) Dep't	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval
CIDPAP	Acct & Fin	MMgt.	-.26861	.10711	.181	-.6000 .0628
		Mgt.	-.03641	.13920	.999	-.4671 .3943
		Comp Sc.	.22466	.10488	.334	-.0999 .5492
		THM	-.26171	.18730	.745	-.8413 .3179
	MMgt.	Acct & Fin	.26861	.10711	.181	-.0628 .6000
		Mgt.	.23220	.14453	.631	-.2150 .6794
		Comp Sc.	**.49327***	.11186	.001	.1471 .8394
		THM	.00691	.19130	1.000	-.5851 .5989
	Mgt.	Acct & Fin	.03641	.13920	.999	-.3943 .4671
		MMgt.	-.23220	.14453	.631	-.6794 .2150
		Comp Sc.	.26107	.14289	.504	-.1811 .7032
		THM	-.22530	.21095	.888	-.8781 .4275
	Comp Sc.	Acct & Fin	-.22466	.10488	.334	-.5492 .0999
		MMgt.	**-.49327***	.11186	.001	-.8394 -.1471
		Mgt.	-.26107	.14289	.504	-.7032 .1811
		THM	-.48636	.19006	.164	-1.0745 .1018
	THM	Acct & Fin	.26171	.18730	.745	-.3179 .8413
		MMgt.	-.00691	.19130	1.000	-.5989 .5851
		Mgt.	.22530	.21095	.888	-.4275 .8781
		Comp Sc.	.48636	.19006	.164	-.1018 1.0745
LTP	Acct & Fin	MMgt.	-.25464	.10669	.225	-.5848 .0755
		Mgt.	.02136	.13866	1.000	-.4077 .4504
		Comp Sc.	.11826	.10448	.864	-.2050 .4415
		THM	-.32416	.18658	.555	-.9015 .2532
	MMgt.	Acct & Fin	.25464	.10669	.225	-.0755 .5848
		Mgt.	.27600	.14397	.453	-.1695 .7215
		Comp Sc.	**.37291***	.11143	.026	.0281 .7177
		THM	-.06952	.19056	.998	-.6592 .5201
	Mgt.	Acct & Fin	-.02136	.13866	1.000	-.4504 .4077
		MMgt	-.27600	.14397	.453	-.7215 .1695
		Comp Sc.	.09690	.14234	.977	-.3435 .5374
		THM	-.34552	.21013	.609	-.9958 .3047

	Comp Sc.	Acct & Fin	-.11826	.10448	.864	-.4415	.2050
	MMgt.		**-.37291***	.11143	.026	-.7177	-.0281
	Mgt.		-.09690	.14234	.977	-.5374	.3435
	THM		-.44242	.18933	.245	-1.0283	.1434
THM	Acct & Fin		.32416	.18658	.555	-.2532	.9015
	MMgt.		.06952	.19056	.998	-.5201	.6592
	Mgt.		.34552	.21013	.609	-.3047	.9958
		Comp Sc.	.44242	.18933	.245	-.1434	1.0283
REMPS	Acct & Fin	MMgt	**-.33549***	.10749	.047	-.6681	-.0029
		Mgt.	-.16296	.13969	.851	-.5952	.2693
		Comp Sc.	.21816	.10525	.369	-.1075	.5439
		THM	-.05229	.18797	.999	-.6339	.5293
	MMgt.	Acct & Fin	**.33549***	.10749	.047	.0029	.6681
		Mgt.	.17253	.14504	.841	-.2763	.6214
		Comp Sc.	**.55365***	.11226	.000	.2063	.9010
		THM	.28320	.19198	.703	-.3109	.8773
	Mgt.	Acct & Fin	.16296	.13969	.851	-.2693	.5952
		MMgt.	-.17253	.14504	.841	-.6214	.2763
		Comp Sc.	.38113	.14340	.135	-.0626	.8248
		THM	.11067	.21170	.991	-.5444	.7657
	Comp Sc.	Acct & Fin	-.21816	.10525	.369	-.5439	.1075
		MMgt	**-.55365***	.11226	.000	-.9010	-.2063
		Mgt.	-.38113	.14340	.135	-.8248	.0626
		THM	-.27045	.19073	.734	-.8607	.3198
	THM	Acct & Fin	.05229	.18797	.999	-.5293	.6339
		MMgt.	-.28320	.19198	.703	-.8773	.3109
		Mgt.	-.11067	.21170	.991	-.7657	.5444
		Comp Sc.	.27045	.19073	.734	-.3198	.8607

*significant mean difference at .05alpha level.

The finding in Table 11 below, shows that there is statistically significant mean difference between Marketing Management students and Computer Science students as to creating interest and developing positive attitude to their profession (F= .49327*, P<.05), linking theory with practice (F= .37291*, P<.05), and relevance of employability skills (F= .55365*, P<.05). These denote that Marketing Management students claim that their teachers have been creating interest and developing positive attitude towards their profession, linking theory with practice in the courses they have been teaching them and have been talking about the relevance of employability skills more than computer science teachers as stipulated by computer science students.

Similarly, there is a significant mean difference between Marketing Management students' view, and Accounting and Finance students' pertaining to the relevance of employability skills. The implication is that Marketing Management students favor their teachers' role

concerning the relevance of employability skills more compared to Accounting and Finance students do to their teachers.

On the other hand, there is no statistically significant mean difference among the views of students' regarding teachers' perception and role in preparing them for the world of work across departments. For instance, Accounting & Finance with the others (F= -.26861-.22466, P>.05), MMgt. and with Mgt. and THM (F= .0069- .2686, P>.05), Mgt. and others (F= -.2253 - .2611, P>.05), Computer Science with others than MMgt. (F= -.4864 - - 2247, P>.05), THM and others (F= - .0069 - .4864, P>.05) as to creating interest and developing positive attitude towards a profession.

With regard to linking theory with practice, there is no significant mean difference between Accounting & Finance with the others except MMgt. (F= -.3242 - .1183, P>.05), MMgt. with others than computer Science (F= -.0695-.2760, P>.05), Mgt. and others (F= - .3455 - .0969, P>.05), Comp. Science with others than MMgt. (F= -.4424 - -.0969, P>.05), THM and others (F= .0695 - .4424, P>.05), respectively.

As to the relevance of employability skills, no significant mean difference was observed between Accounting and Finance with the others except MMgt. (F= - .1629 - 2182, P>.05), MMgt. with others (F= .1725 - .2832, P>.05), Computer Science and others (F= - .3811 - - .2182, P>.05), Management with the others (F= .1107 -
.3811, P >.05) and THM with the others (F= - -. 2832 - -.2705, P> .05). These designate that students' position and views about teachers' perception and role in preparing them for the world of work (i.e., creating interest and developing positive attitude to a profession, relating theory with practice, and talking about the relevance of employability skills to the labor market), are almost similar even though they belong to different departments. This is to mean that even if they belong to different departments their understanding and position regarding their teachers' perception and role in preparing them appear to be the same.

Table 12: **One-way ANOVA on CIDPAP, LTP, REMPS, and KEWW across Department (Teachers' view)**

Dependent variables		Sum of Squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CIDPA	Between Groups	1.497	4	.374	.660	.622
	Within Groups	37.968	67	.567		
	Total	39.465	71			
LTP	Between Groups	2.449	4	.612	1.080	.374
	Within Groups	37.997	67	.567		
	Total	40.446	71			
RES	Between Groups	1.124	4	.281	.459	.766
	Within Groups	41.036	67	.612		
	Total	42.160	71			
KEWW	Between Groups	1.414	4	.353	.667	.617
	Within Groups	35.509	67	.530		
	Total	36.923	71			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings in Table 12 signify that there is no statistically significant mean difference among the views of teachers across departments regarding CIDPA ($F_{(4,67)}$= .660 P>.05), LTP ($F_{(4,67)}$= 1.080, P> .05), RES ($F_{(4,67)}$ = .459, P>.05) KEWW($F_{(4,67)}$ = .667, P>.05) . These suggest that teachers in the Department of Accounting and Finance, Marketing Management, Management, and Tourism and

Hospitality Management seem to have similar perception. As a result, there is no need to determine multiple comparison to check the significant mean differences on teachers' perception and role across departments, since the one-way ANOVA computed didn't show any statistical significant mean difference amid the departments.

4.1.3 Analysis of Qualitative Data

An interview guide was developed and twelve officials (i.e., deans, department heads, and officers) were selected as key informants. In this regard, six open-ended questions that help to investigate as to how teachers offer their courses practically in class.

1. Regarding using appropriate pedagogical approaches to integrate course offering with the labor market, the deans and department heads stated that the majority of instructors are not using the required pedagogical

approach of integration because most of them have no background or adequate knowledge of pedagogy. Moreover, teachers are not updating themselves to the changing pedagogies while the demand for the labor market is changing rapidly. Besides, there is the tendency to use teaching materials for many years without an update.

2. Concerning encouraging and stimulating students' interest in their future profession and the labor market, the following points have been stated:

   - Encouragement given by instructors to stimulate students' interest in their future profession and the labor market is less. Most of them focus mainly on covering contents of the courses they teach. Some senior and experienced staff in the Accounting and finance Department tell their students that they are demanded by financial sectors, public and private sectors, consulting and auditing firms, international companies to initiate students' interest for their profession;

   - Not all but a few instructors may motivate their students towards their future profession. Apractical example is the salesmanship event that is organized every year by the Marketing Department which may develop interest in their profession. Besides, some panel discussions have been organized by the THM Department by inviting panelist from outside.

   - As to the use of real-life examples, activities, and project works relevant to facilitate understanding of the labor market, it was stated that instructors are using them at moderate level. Furthermore, the culture of inviting practitioners to the University to share their knowledge is poor.

   - Provision of orientation about the importance of employability skills, job search skills, networking, etc., are not undertaken by teachers. Also, the effort to augment graduates' employability (e.g., by giving 21st-century soft skills) is poor. Similarly, the teachers' and departments' effort to increase job searching skills and creating networks with potential employers is weak.

   - It is understood that the world of work requires integrating academic/theoretical knowledge with practical work experience. The way we deliver theoretical courses is relatively good and our teachers are well experienced in this respect. Yet, integrating industry experience with the course contents is rarely observed. That is why most employers provide exhaustive training for newly recruited staff to compensate for

what they missed in their university education;

3. With reference to challenges observed, it was stated that instructors lack pedagogical skills, give little attention to relating courses to the labor market, do not update themselves to the changing pedagogy and trends in their area of expertise, and rarely give local examples and illustrations to help students blend theory with practice. Employers have not clearly identified and communicated about the specific skills required by their companies; and there is poor university-industry linkage.

4.2 Document Analysis

4.2.1 Delivery Modes Suggested in the Curricula

The undergraduate curricula for Business area and Computer Science specify certain instructional methods to teach major area courses:

1. *The teaching methods suggested to Management, Marketing management, Computer Science, THM , and Accounting and Finance courses include:*

interactive lectures and seminars, group work sessions, individual tutorials; researching and writing of assignments and subsequent oral and written feedback, In-depth, self-directed research and tutorial guidance and discussion; "real-world" settings and scenarios experienced via case studies, guest speaker inputs, and work placement; classroom discussion of key issues and application of key concepts; involvement in real life cases of organizations; developing skills in power point, internet research, e-mailing, excel; independent study; group projects where students engage in cooperative working; developing intellectual skills through case studies, tutorial,; practical site visit, film shows, role play, case-study, workshops, and panel discussions; small group discussion, individual presentations, group assignments, field visits, video shows, advising, individual and group projects and researches, practical lab; laboratories, project demonstrations, and industrial visit (Curricular for Management, Marketing management, THM, Computer science, and Accounting and Finance, 2021)

4.2.2 Inclusion of Transferable Skills in the Curricula

To enhance graduate employability, the curricula in the undergraduate degree program have considered learning outcomes in graduate transferable skills (Curricula for Mgt. 2021: M Management, 2021; &. Computer Science 2021)

The Graduate Transferable Skills include goals such as acquire effective oral and written communication skills; develop numeric and quantitative skills; develop effective self-management skills (time management, planning, motivation, initiative and enterprise); acquire interpersonal and team working skills; office etiquette; develop appropriate work /professional ethics, and initiation for learning; information and communication technology skill; interpersonal and teamwork skill; project management skill and professional development skills; acquire research and analytical skills, interpret data, and formulate conclusions; and propose recommendations and suggestions for further research; collective decision making and group reasoning, etc.

However**,** the transferable skills are missing from the curricula of THM, and Accounting and Finance.

4.3 Discussion

This survey aimed at examining the degree of teachers' and students' perception and role in preparing students. Moreover, it focused on assessing the nature of pedagogical approaches teachers have been using in their classrooms or outside to impart knowledge and skills, and above all, to create opportunities for students' practical engagement with the world of work.

The research revealed that most of the sample teachers have been doing to their best to prepare students for the labor market using appropriate pedagogical approaches, regarding initiating students' interest to develop positive attitude towards their profession; relating course contents, examples, project works, and assessment with the world of work; creating awareness on the relevance of employability skills to students' future employment; and helping students to acquire the necessary knowledge and experience about the world of work.

However, analysis of the data reported by students on the same issues raised to instructors showed that they didn't uphold teachers' views regarding statements related to "inspiring to participate in extracurricular activities for one's career choice and career related-skills development''; "having adequate information about companies";" in introducing them to what is required in the labor market"; " developing employability skills"; " being conversant and knowledgeable in preparing them for the labor market beyond the classroom instruction"; and "giving them adequate experience and skills in job hunting, networking, resume and application letter writing"

optimizing their career development in the labor market'. Additionally, between 24.9 and 35.4 percent of the students have opted for the choice of "unknown/undecided", which indicated that they are not confident enough to endorse whether their teachers have contributed or not to their knowledge and experience about what is taking place in the labor market during their classroom teaching – learning processes.

Generally, these views of students as opposed to teachers go along with previous research findings that asserted that gaps have been identified on graduates' professional skills in the labor market (Fernandez, 2014; Jackson, 2012; and ANECA, 2007). Taking into account the analysis of variance computed using the independent samples-

T test, it was found that a statistically significant mean difference was observed between teachers' and students' positions regarding CIDPAP, LTP, and provision of orientation on the REMS. These conditions suggest that teachers and students have clear difference on the three categories regarding teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the labor market. This statistical variation supports what has been discussed earlier. The point is, even if most of the sample teachers reflect that they have been using appropriate pedagogics to integrate classroom teaching with the world of work, their perception was not endorsed or substantiated by the sample students.

Moreover, to see if there exist significant mean differences among students' positions across departments, a multiple comparisons test was employed vis-à-vis teachers' perception and role in preparing them for the world of work. From the multiple comparison, it was found that a significant mean difference was observed between Marketing Management and Computer Science students as to CIDPAP and as well LTP. These indicate that MMgt. students seem to favor more their teachers in CIDPAP and in relating course content to the labor market than what Computer Science students' think of their teachers. Still MMgt students think that their teachers have been orienting them on employability skills in a better way compared to

what Accounting and Finance and Computer Science students think of their teachers' role in the stated issue. However, students' perceptions across departments are the same for all the variables except for those mentioned earlier.

In the same way, the deans and department heads couldn't corroborate teachers' perceptions as to their role in preparing students for the world of work. They rather stated that instructors lack the necessary pedagogics and have no adequate training on pedagogical skills; they don't know what skills are required in the labor market; they don't update themselves as well as their lesson notes and curriculum material; and they do not innovate themselves in line with changes that take place in the labor market. Consequently, it is less likely that teachers are stimulating students' interest to their profession and the labor market; they rather focus on content coverage using the lecture method.

With regard to the nature of courses, cases and project works have been given to students very rarely. Actually, most of the courses are offered theoretically; especially the novice teachers have little or no real-life experience of companies/ industries. Besides, the experience of inviting professionals from the labor market to offer business area courses is very minimal, even though they are rarely tried. The sample teachers are mostly using lecture method that does not inspire students to engage and explore companies and search for information to get innovative experience for constructing knowledge. This condition, in one way or another, reduces teachers' role in using real-life examples, provision of work-related activities and project works that initiate students' engagement in the labor market. This result coincides with the study findings that indicated the execution of traditional approach and giving little emphasis to students' engagement within the existing framework of instruction in business area courses (Garner, 2016; Jelena, et al, 2016; Fleisher, et al., 2015; Gar, et al., 2015; Sukdiene, 2012; Datar, et al. 2011; and Tomlinson,2008). According to the undergraduate curricula for Management, Marketing Management, and Computer Science designed to achieve the four components of the learning goals (i.e., Knowledge & Understanding, Intellectual skills, Practical skills and Transferable skills), a variety of instructional methods other than the lecture method are suggested to be used (i.e., interactive seminars, group work sessions, in-depth self-directed research, real-world setting and using scenarios, tutorials, group projects, case studies, conducting workshops, class discussions, independent study, group oral presentations, conducting panel discussions,/guest speaker inputs, research works, assignments, quizzes, tutorials, laboratories, project demonstrations, lectures and filed trip/ industrial visit etc.,).

As a whole the views of students, deans and department heads affirm that teachers have pedagogical skills limitation that need to be improved in the future to produce graduates with adequate knowledge and skills and, above all, labor market experience. Such finding confirms the research findings carried out earlier (Deloitte, 2015; Coll, et.al, 2011; Peach and Gamble, 2011; Billet, 2011; and Patrick, et al., 2008) that universities should produce graduates with work-related skills and better prepared for the world of work.

In addition, the provision of training on the relevance of soft skills, job search skills, networking, resume and cover letter writing etc. that contribute a lot to prospective graduates' employment readiness, is a forgotten aspect in the instruction process, although they are

specified in the curricula. Instructors' and departments' efforts in this respect were very little or not at all. Most importantly, they do not consider them as their responsibility, even though they are stated as one of the four categories of curriculum goals to be achieved by students in the previously mentioned departments, although not specified in THM and Accounting and Finance for unknown reasons.

This finding is consistent with earlier studies that discuss the challenges that higher education are encountering in offering soft-skills, even if they are relevant to graduates and employers interest in the labor market (Clarke, 2017; Messum, et al., 2017; Low et al., 2016; OECD, 2105; AQU, 2015; Jackson, 2012; and Coll and Zegwaard,
2006;).

According to the deans and department heads, taking into accounts the defiance and difficulties revealed so far, verifying what has been reported by teachers about their performance and achievement in preparing students for the labor market is hard to accept. Hence, it is difficult to defend and rationalize positively their perception and role in preparing students for the labor market.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This section of the study attempts to make conclusions based on the major findings of the study and suggest some feasible recommendations.

5.1 Conclusions

From the literature, findings and discussions, the subsequent conclusions are drawn:

1. Teachers do not seem to be: motivating students to improve their interest and develop positive attitude towards their profession; linking course contents, examples, project works and assessment with the world of work as it should be; imparting the relevance of employability skills to students to improve their employment readiness; and creating possibilities to help students acquire sufficient knowledge and experience about the labor market.

2. Concerning the nature of pedagogics to be practiced in higher education, according to deans and department heads, most of the time instructors are highly engaged in lecturing, and very rarely use cases and project works. These provide no opportunities to students to relate course works with real-life industrial requirements. In addition, instructors in the Business Education and Accounting and Finance are not teachers by profession.

   Therefore, it appears logical that they need adequate orientation and training on pedagogical skills that contribute much to integrate course works with the labor market experience.

3. Offering orientation on the importance of employability skills, job search skills, networking, etc., to students is highly decisive to improve graduates' employability, where the job opportunity is very limited. They are the ignored aspects that need to be treated because they are highly required by employers in the labor market.

5.2 Recommendations

Nowadays, higher education institutes are expected to work on career–related curricular activities that prepare students for the labor market. In line with this, the following suggestions are made:

The university

- ✓ Pedagogical skills are prerequisite to become a good instructor. St. Mary's University, therefore, needs to improve the training plan, content, strategy and training time for induction to upgrade the professional and pedagogical skills of instructors, and most importantly, of the novice ones to enhance the quality of teaching through using better mode of deliveries that fulfill students and labor market demands.
- ✓ CEIQA has been trying to organize pedagogical training for beginners and interested teachers every year, but the number of attendees is insignificant. It appears relevant to set abiding rules regarding what instructors have to do to fulfill the University's training requirements.
- ✓ The university–industry linkage should be improved with respect to employers' expectations of graduates by engaging them in curricular revision; by inviting them as instructors to share their work area experience; by integrating the theoretical and practical aspects of curricular; and by creating opportunities to facilitate platforms for discussion with business enterprises.

Faculties, Departments and Teachers

- ✓ Faculties and Departments should collaboratively organize certain training sessions to familiarize instructors with suggested methods in the curricular of Management, Marketing Management and Computer Science that truly instigate students' interest for better learning experiences about the labor market;
- ✓ Accounting and Finance, and THM departments need to review and assess their curricula and suggest appropriate pedagogical skills relevant to the learning outcomes and corresponding topics and sub topics in each chapter that initiate active engagement of students in the labor market.
- ✓ Departments need to periodically evaluate and reflect how instructors practice the suggested modes of deliveries in each curriculum. It is difficult to exhaust everything outlined in a curriculum in classroom setting. Thus departments, in collaboration with SSS office, need to establish different clubs that contribute to better perception and insight of the labor market.

In general:

1. Assessing and identifying what is required by the market and incorporating them into the curriculum is critical;
2. Inviting guest-lecturers from the labor market is essential;
3. Undertaking research about stakeholders' demands and expectations from graduate students is imperative;
4. In addition, it may also be vital to apply project based and work integrated learning approaches on selected course objectives and corresponding contents to capitalize the integration of theory and practice in the instruction process.

Departments, Instructors, Career and Internship Unit and Student Support Service Office. These groups should work cooperatively to meet the following needs of the University:

5. Currently, employers in the labor market desperately expect graduates with adequate experience on employability skills. Bearing this in mind, these skills are included in different curricula to be considered along with the discipline-specific courses. It appears logical that instructors, departments, CIU and SSSO play an important role in developing and augmenting students' generic capabilities;
6. CIU, in, collaboration with different partners and stakeholders that are working on graduate employment readiness, need to organize orientation and training to improve students' career development, employability skills, and entrepreneurial skills; and
7. Generally, improving teachers' perception and role in preparing students for the labor market must be given due attention.

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Steam Education in Ghana: An Interdisciplinary Project-Based Approach to Biomimicry and Cad Using a Cycle Car as a Case Benjamin Ansah Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Abstract

With regard to educational reform, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary learning in schools has gained popularity on a global scale. This spark talks about STEAM, which is changing educational paradigms toward art inclusion in STEM courses. STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. The article presents a concept using Bio-mimicry and Computer Aided Design to test the process of virtual prototyping of a four wheeled cycle car with an aim to demonstrate STEAM-related competences of students in a way that will inspire other students to go beyond their comfort zones, be open to innovation, and work together to solve real-world societal challenges. The article was divided into three phases. The first phase, employs the use of Bio-mimicry aspect of copying the form and shape of a king fisher and an eagle (psychology of the process) to generate the concept. A digital model of the concept was created using computer Aided Design software like CorelDraw and Rhinoceros. The third phase is to conduct a simulation of the model behavior Analysis and a vehicle dynamics model with Usability and Ergonomics in focus using SolidWorks software and MATLAB. This strategy would make developing new products more effective, shorten the time needed for the product to go into production, and improve the effectiveness of evaluating different product versions.

Keywords: STEAM, STEM, Art integration, Project Based Learning, Transferrable skills, CAD, Bio- mimicry, Rhinoceros, CorelDraw, SolidWorks, Simulation, Interdisciplinary

Introduction

Art by Walling, (2020), has been identified to be more than a creative expression, which has been the dominant theme of art education for much of the twentieth century. He further iterates the importance of the expression in art but also agrees that some researchers are also finding connections between learning in the visual arts and the acquisition of knowledge and skills in other areas. The integration of STEAM education in higher education has become increasingly important in preparing students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce. The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) subjects provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy. The STEAM subjects have been seen to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovation, as well as their ability to collaborate effectively with others. The intersection of science and art's worth comes from enriching the opposite side's perspective. Although art exists primarily for its own sake, it is not necessarily self-referential. And it is unmistakably not motivated by aesthetics, though aesthetics might be a result. Its value rests in the self- expression, human response to the world, an endeavor to capture something about it, to put a lens on something, a creature, or a characteristic of reality, or to flip a mirror back on ourselves. The distinctions between artists, scientists, and engineers get blurred at a high degree of abstraction and output.

They are all based on a single desire, yearning, or obsessiveness, as well as the ability to appreciate the creative process for its own purpose. This article identifies the practical Knowledge Gap from Jacobs, (2011) which relates with the kind of problems that the Ghanaian higher education learners faced in terms of collaboration and problem solving. The system creates Individualistic Learners through the mode of

teaching (perspective). The skills of students are undefined-(Unable to transfer knowledge into other technologies, because material knowledge, techniques and the application of these knowledge are skewed towards a particular ideology (concepts). The students then become less productive. Their abilities are then focused on repairing than producing technologies (Methods) which tends to create a gap in school/ student work and student carrier. The introduction of an interdisciplinary project-based learning approach to Bio-mimicry and CAD through a cycle car technology will highlight how art, engineering and science form a crucial role in solving real societal problems and foster collaborations among students as well. Bio-mimicry provides a compassionate, linked view of how life works and, ultimately, where humans fit in. It is a method that learns from and imitates the tactics of living animals.

The aim of this article is to design a virtual prototype of a cycle car developed from a king fisher bird and an eagle through concepts of bio-mimicry using two CAD software- which are CorelDraw and Rhinoceros 3D model- and conduct a simulation of the model behavior Analysis and a vehicle dynamics model with Usability and Ergonomics in focus using SolidWorks software and MATLAB Kolb and Kolb's (2005) guiding principles of experiential learning theory as a framework to analyze the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary student learning in the STEAM project. The basic cycle was followed to achieve the morphic drawing from the two animals and how the vehicle responds to the mimicked parts of the concept

The concept generation through Bio-mimicry (Stage one)

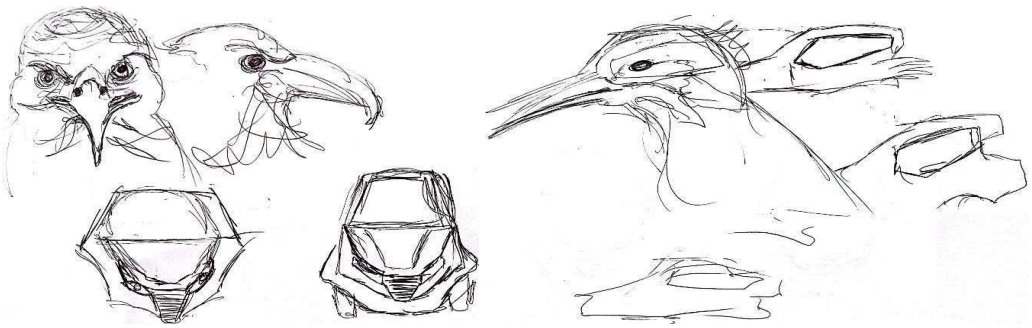


Fig 1. The view of the car mimicking the eagle's Head

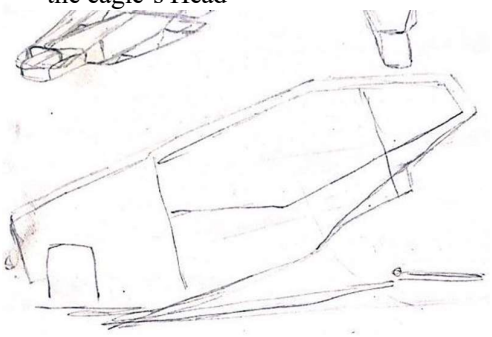


Fig 2. The side view of the car with the king fisher

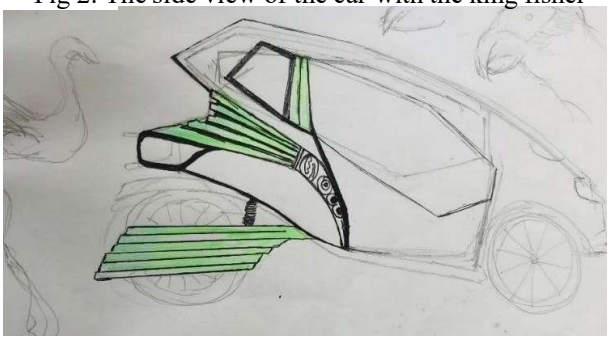
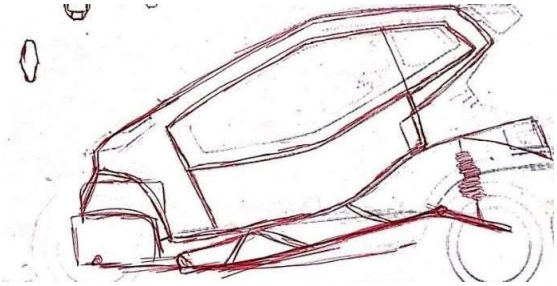


Fig 3 and 4. The side view of the car



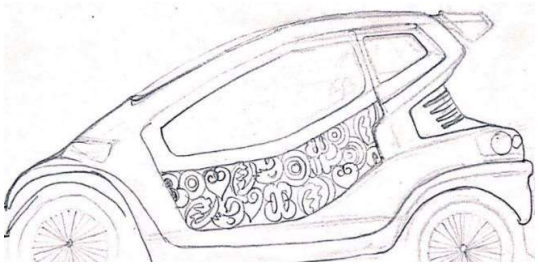


Fig 5 and 6. The side view of the final development

The designing of the mimicked vehicle using CorelDraw and Rhinoceros (Stage 2)

The CorelDraw and Rhinoceros 3D program was used to construct geometric models of the vehicle parts. In the group context, the component pieces of the four-wheeled vehicle were connected together using suitable joints. This process highlighted on the competence of critical thinking in other to put to live the size and actual but virtual form of the design. The Artistic design and principles play a crucial

role in this stage as that will be the basis on which the simulation can be achieved. The geometric shape used simple shapes in CorelDraw like square, ovals, rectangles, freehand lines and fill tools. The back shaft system shows the gear and bearings to aid in the tire rotation Fig 13. The front suspension system comprises of shock absorbers with an improvised motorbike stand as the arms of the suspension. This helps in the torque effect the car goes through whether on a smooth or rough road Fig 14. The 3D model was built to highlight on the all-round details like the size and thickness of the front suspension Fig 17. Each wheel of the vehicle has independent suspension and also the size of the building pipes for the chassis. The bends in the pipes and the welds at the various joints were brought to light with the 3D software.

Fig 7 and 8. The views of a king fisher bird

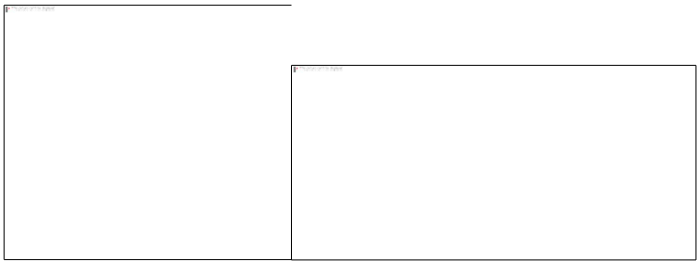


Fig 9 and 10. The views of an Eagle

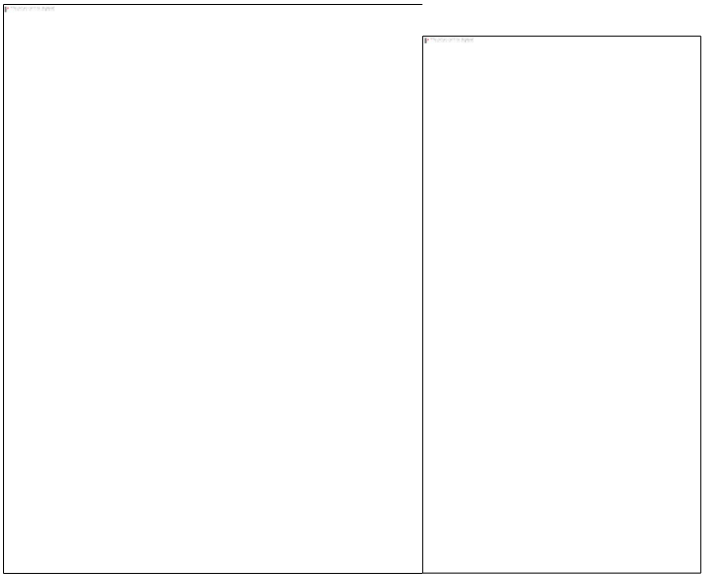


Fig11. The 2D mimic of the front view

Fig12. The 2D mimic of the side

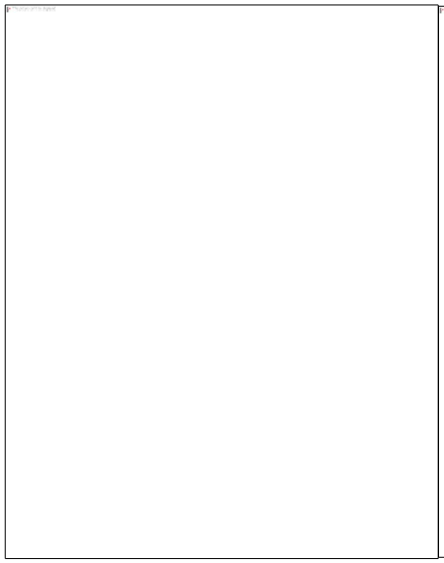


Fig13. The 2D views of the back mechanism

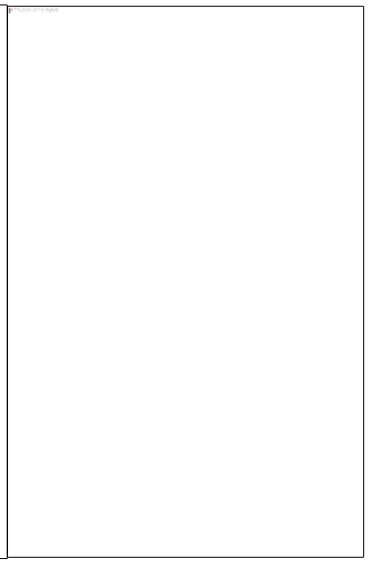


Fig14. The 2D views of the front mechanism

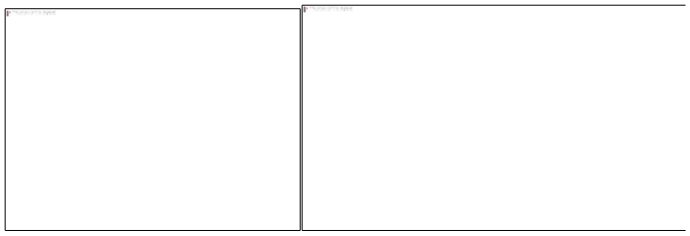


Fig15 and 16. A 3D view of the Whishbone suspension

Fig17. A 3D view of the chassis

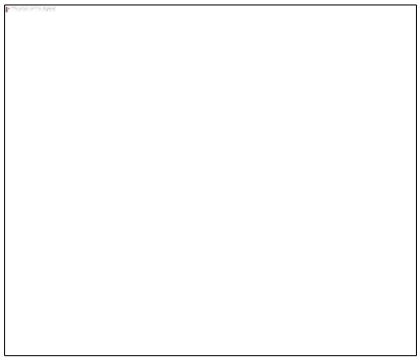


Fig18. A 3D view of the frame work

The concept generation of the features from the Eagle as seen with the sketch drawing in Fig 1 was represented with a picture of an Eagle and the modeled car front. The eyes, beak and head of the eagle were considered. The chain-driven backward and forward gears, together with the shaft and chain-driven wheels, provide the power for the cycle vehicles' propulsion. Independent suspension is used for each wheel of the car. The mounting point for both the steering bar and the front wheel, which are both supported by the double wishbone suspension, is located here. The shock absorber at the back of the vehicle is a cylindrical coil spring device.

Simulation of the model behavior Analysis and a vehicle dynamic with Usability and Ergonomics (Stage 3)

SolidWorks provides a good number of tools of movable connections, which were utilized to build even the most complicated parts like the gear and engine as well as the chains. There is a set amount of movement flexibility for each link. As a result, restrictions were placed on distinct parts even when they were moving. The use of MATLAB for the vehicle dynamics also allowed to specify a forced mobility at each joint using speed, displacement, or acceleration as well as to load each element with force values and torque. The model calculates the speed of the vehicle over time based on aerodynamic drag force which has got to do with the shape and form of the car. The rolling resistance force which relied on the weight, gravity and inertia, the amount of friction between the tires and road and the drag. The net force applied by the engine which was determine by the overall weight according to the situation around the simulated environment. Basic physics equations were used to update the velocity and position of the vehicle at each time step, which took to account the Mass, Aerodynamics coefficient, Frontal area, Rolling resistance coefficient, Engine torque, Gear ration, Final drive ration and Tire radius. This model does neglects other factors such as tire slip, suspension characteristics and road gradient for simplicity. However, these indicators are equally important for real world testing.

Simulation of the Model Behavior Analysis

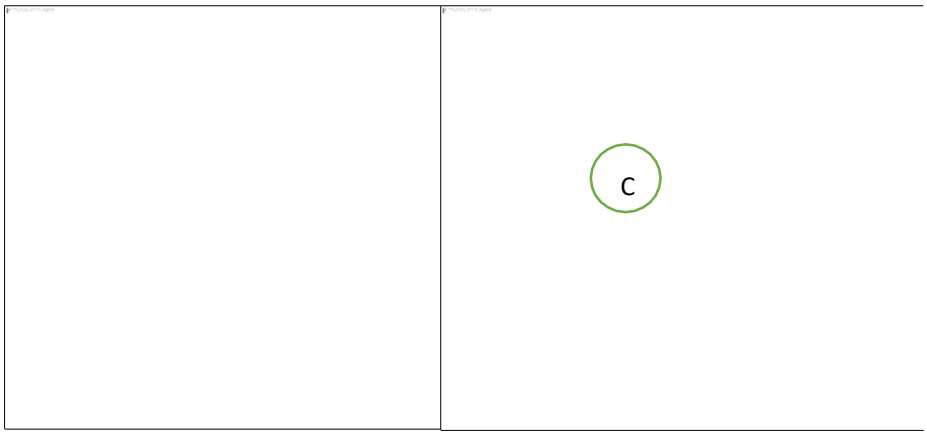


Fig19 and 20. A 3D simulated view of the frame work and the butterfly flip door

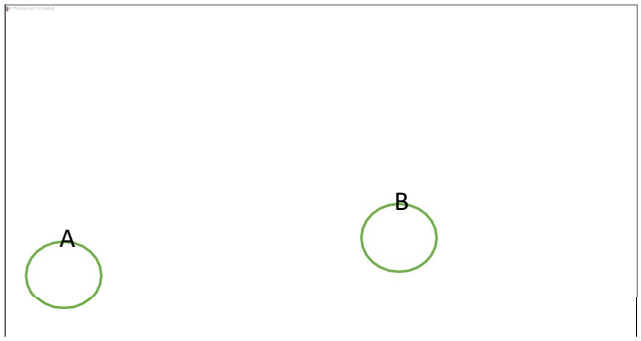


Fig19 and 20. A 3D simulated view of the frame work and the butterfly flip door

Fig 21 and 22. A 3D simulated view of the suspension system

A – the wishbone suspension

B – Shock absorber

C –butterfly door mechanism

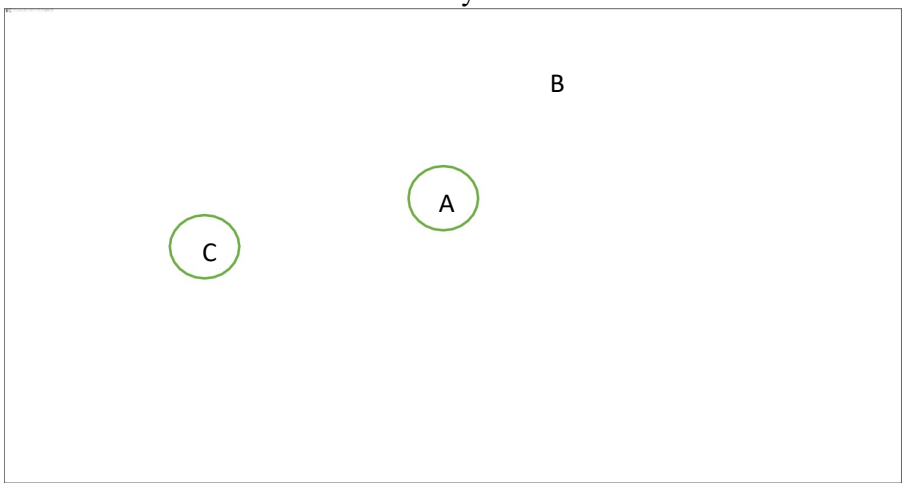


Fig 23. A 3D simulated view of the Engine, Gear and Transmission

A – chain transmission

B – Forward and Reverse

Gear C- 110cc Engine

Vehicle Dynamics Model in MATLAB

Input parameters

Mass = 240; % mass of the vehicle (kg)

Aero Coeff = 0.7; % aerodynamic coefficient (dimensionless) Frontal area =

2.92; % frontal area of the vehicle (m^2)

Rolling_resistance_coeff = 0.015; % rolling resistance coefficient

(dimensionless) Gravity = 9.81; % acceleration due to gravity (m/s^2)

Engine_torque = 12; % engine torque (N*m) Gear ratio =

0.4762; % gear ratio Final_drive_ratio = 2.1; % final drive

ratio Tire radius = 0.267; % tireradius (m)

% Time step and simulation duration dt = 0.01; % time step (s) t_sim = 500; % simulation duration
(s) **% Initial conditions** v0 = 0; % initial velocity (m/s) x0 = 0; % initial position (m) **% Arrays to**
store results time = 0:dt:t_sim; speed = zeros(size(time)); position = zeros(size(time)); **% Simulation loop** for i = 1:length(time) **% Aerodynamic drag force** drag force = 0.5 * aero_coeff * frontal area * v0^2; **% Rolling resistance force** rolling_resistance_force = rolling_resistance_coeff * mass * gravity;
% Net force on the vehicle net force = engine torque * gear ratio * final_drive_ratio / tire radius - drag force - rolling_resistance_force; **% Acceleration of the vehicle** acceleration = net force / mass; **% Update velocity and position** v1 = v0 + acceleration * dt; x1 = x0 + v0 * dt + 0.5 * acceleration * dt^2;
% Store results speed(i) = v1; position(i) = x1; **% Update initial conditions** v0 = v1; x0 = x1;end **% Plot results** figure; plot(time, speed); xlabel ('Time (s)'); ylabel ('Speed (m/s)'); title('Vehicle Speed vs. Time');

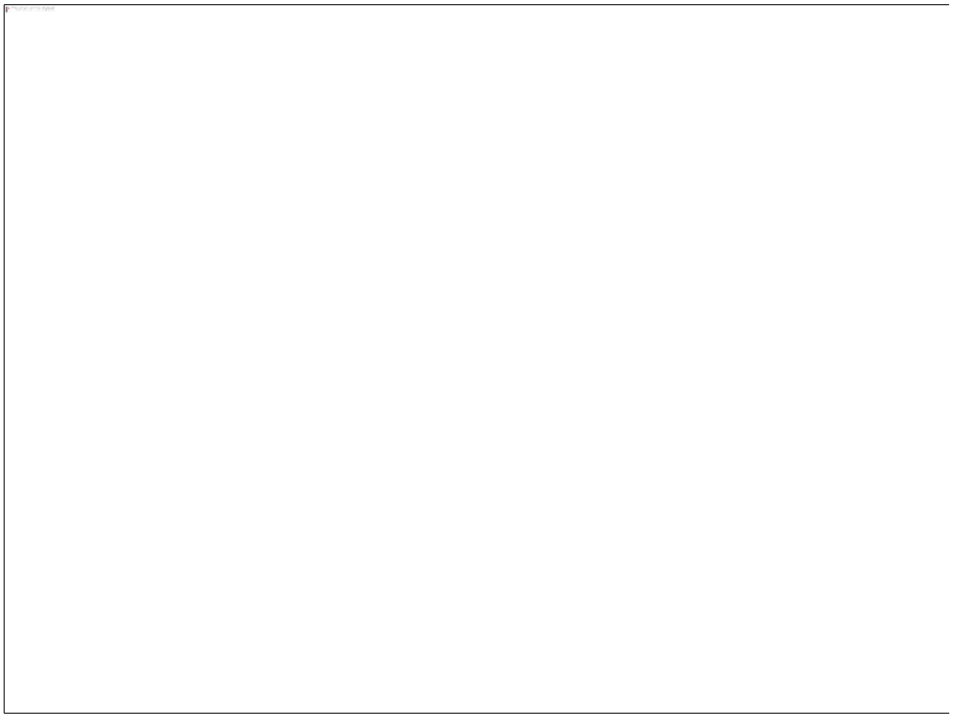


Fig 24. A speed Graph showing the speed and seconds of movement

Three key indicators were closely looked at: the Final drive ratio, Gear ratio and Engine torque. The final drive ratio was calculated by dividing the number of teeth on the ring gear, also called the crown wheel, by the number of teeth on the pinion gear in a vehicle's differential. The Gear ratio played a critical role in the speed and torque of both the tires and engine. The ratio calculated the relationship between the number of teeth on the driving gear and the driven gear. The gear ratio for the second gear was calculated by imputing the number of driving gear which was 1 and the number of driven gears which was 2.10.

The resulting 2nd Gear ratio was 0.4762. To be able to validate the effectiveness of the Gear ratio the Engine torque must be in a sound condition to support the others. The engine torque does not work alone but also functions with aerodynamic, tire grip etc. The engine torque or strength was at

12 Newton meters which proved it could pull the vehicle provided the other factors played their parts well as per the manufacturer's specification.

The Result of the simulation showed that the car steadily increases in velocity from 0 to 3m/s in 250secs and then afterwards the velocity remains constant.

Conclusion

This work presents an example of an approach to modern technology through nature and the collaborative and problem-solving aspect of S.T.E.A.M education seen in the stages of development of the concept. This method also allows to reduce cost generated during the design stages of projects as such and brings about efficiency as well. Bio-mimicry actually requires the link of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. By combining art with science and math, a deeper understanding of the connections between these fields and how they can work together to put this cycle car together has been realized. This is proof of a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to learning that can help students to develop the skills and competencies needed for success in STEAM fields.

A graphic conclusion of the modeled cycle car at the frame stage

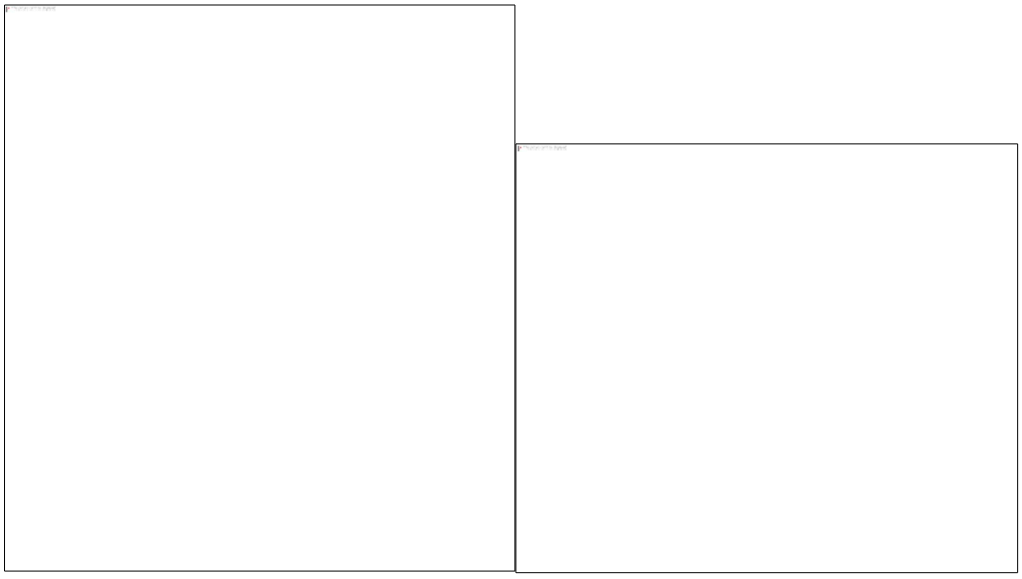


Fig 25 and 26. Different views of the actualized cycle car

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Do National Qualifications Frameworks Enhance Regional and Global Integration? Amarech Kebede, Addis Ababa University, Ph.D.

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Abstract

The need for formal structuring of qualifications has increased nationally, regionally, and internationally. The key underlying driver for this increased interest has improved people's employability in the emerging knowledge economy. Qualifications Frameworks have become a global and regional phenomenon ascribed to several reasons: setting quality standards and enhancing individual employability; enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training; comparing qualifications; transfer of learning and progression in learning, and promoting learners and workers' mobility. This paper outlines the role of the qualifications framework in enhancing regional and international integrations through facilitating inter-regional and international skills mobility that can help to alleviate skill shortages and reduce graduate unemployment. It then explores national, regional, and international practices on the how of qualifications framework. More importantly, at a generic level, the qualifications framework is seen as an instrument for facilitating regional and international integration by setting quality standards for the levels of learning achieved.

Keywords: National qualification framework, qualification, regional and global integration, quality standards

1. Introduction

The need for formal structuring of qualifications increased nationally, regionally, and internationally and has become a priority agenda of countries (Alias,2010). The key underlying driver for this increased interest has improved people's employability in the emerging knowledge economy. The idea behind the development of an NQF includes a focus on empowering the workforce and encouraging lifelong learning (Alias, 2011). However, the method of implementation between countries tends to vary according to the extent to which the state is anticipated to intervene in the education market.

The value of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) lies in its potential to contribute policy goals of countries by making qualifications easier to understand and compare based on learning outcomes (Tuck, 2007). The learning outcome approach helps to ensure that education and training sub-systems are open to one another and it allows people to move more easily between education and training institutions and sectors that encourage countries to reform national policy and practice on education (CEDPOP, 2010).

Education aims to enhance beliefs, customs, values, and knowledge that best meet the needs of society. Thus, learning systems should be designed to provide avenues for learners to critically examine issues beyond their immediate environment and job settings, as well as offer solutions. In this regard, the adoption of Qualifications Framework has multiple advantages for countries: providing wider access to

education, creating an additional pathway for acquiring qualifications, allowing certification of informal and non-formal learning, and helping to integrate non-formal, informal, and formal learning modes (Tuck, 2007).

Existing researches reviewed show that qualifications framework is a recent phenomenon on the global education and training agenda introduced in the United Kingdom in the mid-1980s as a means for economic crises of its balance of payments that was precipitated by a fall in commodity export prices. In response, governments initiated a series of economic reforms that were designed to reduce structural barriers to industry productivity. The initiation was laid on the productivity levels of UK industries and the skill levels of their workers with other developed countries led to policy attention being given to the issue of workers' training and skill levels. Within this context, qualifications reform was concentrated upon the VET sector connected to the principles of competency and standards-based training (Coles, Keevy, and Bateman, 2014).

The developments of NQFs were initially confined to the English-speaking countries of the Commonwealth. However, since the late 1990s, the interest has more recently extended to a much wider range of countries in the world (Tuck, 2007; Keevy, Chakroun, and Deij, 2010). The growing importance of qualifications framework lies in the validation and redefinition of curricula and programs from inputs to outcomes. The efforts to reform education and training systems from supply- to demand-driven involve the specifications of sets of skills and competencies, and the building of these into competency and qualifications frameworks.

Recently, more and more countries have developed their frameworks as mechanisms through which qualifications are ordered and interrelated and have featured regionally and internationally. Thus, more

than 150 countries in the world (Ramdass, Rahman, and Nellikunnel,2015), 43 in Europe (European Union, 2018), and 41 African countries (African Union, 2020) are developing and implementing NQFs to enhance national, regional and international credibility of their graduates by creating space for regional and global mobility of workforce across countries (CEDEFOP, 2010) and a means for regional and international integration that this paper has been prepared.

In this article, I examined the rationale for developing and implementing NQFs and their role in enhancing regional and international integrations.

2. National Qualifications Frameworks as a global phenomenon

The origin of the NQFs lies in the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s in the UK (Young, 2003) with the intention of the government to introduce a regulated marketplace for skills and encourage new private providers through the development of national competency-based qualifications designed and owned by industry (Allais, 2010). At a basic level, a qualifications framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved (Coles *et al* 2014). The qualifications framework aims to integrate and coordinate qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression, comparability, and quality of qualifications about the labor market and societal needs (South African Qualifications Authority, 2008).

The emergence of the NQF had implications for the traditional divide between education and training and the formal recognition of workplace and life experience (Agyeman,2017) and it can be seen as a political tool that promotes the assessment of learning outcomes as well as an educational intervention which seeks to address inequality in qualifications by recognizing the experience and skills of individuals.

The guiding philosophy of a qualifications framework is the underlying thinking that implicitly, often covertly, underlies the competence approach to vocational education which was popular in the UK in the early 1990s and which led to the idea that all qualifications could and should be expressed in terms of outcomes (Young, 2005). This idea emerged from the neo-liberal economic policies of the UK and New Zealand, which emphasized the primary role of the private sector in economic development. It was assumed that employers would be in the best position to identify training needs and, therefore, to say what kind of qualifications were needed, by basing them on workplace performance outcomes. Under this philosophy, an emphasis on education for human capital and human resource development may partly account for the rise of outcomes-based frameworks that are linked to employment, economic improvement, and international competitiveness (Allais, 2007). In recent years, a shift from traditional task analysis to competency modeling argued that competencies are critical to organizational survival, productivity, and continual improvement. Therefore, it is important to analyze and describe these competencies (Ramdass, Rahman, and Nellikunnel, 2015).

Today there is increasing activity from international agencies in the area of qualifications frameworks, including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labor Office (ILO), the World Bank, and the European Union in promoting NQFs, across continents. In addition, countries referred to as first-generation qualifications frameworks such as England, Ireland,

Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are regularly engaged with supporting other countries towards the development of qualifications frameworks. The key underlying drivers for this increased interest and activity have been the need to improve people's employability in the emerging knowledge economy, together with increased internationalization and globalization of learning and the development of wider regional and transnational labor markets (ILO, 2007).

Despite countries defining their NQFs depending on their context and interest a comprehensive definition by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is presented as follows:

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The scope of frameworks may take in all learning achievements and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector. All qualifications frameworks, however, establish a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages, and public or labor market recognition of qualifications within a country or internationally. (OECD 2007: 179).

The NQFs include a range of generic tools such as learning outcome approaches, quality assurance systems, credit accumulation and transfer systems, credit reference systems, and lifelong learning and recognition and validation processes. In this case, the interrelated concepts that help to make a qualifications framework are described as follows: Qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process, which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Learning outcomes or level descriptors are statements of what a learner knows, understands, and can do on completion of a learning process, defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and competence. Skills are abilities to apply knowledge to complete tasks and solve problems while competence is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills, and personal, social, and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and professional and/or personal development while the level is a stage in a hierarchical system used for grouping qualifications. Levels are defining features of a NQF. The qualifications included in a framework, how they are categorized, and how their contents are described can vary a great deal between countries. Tuck(2007) described level as a stage in a hierarchical system used for grouping qualifications that are deemed to be broadly equivalent. It is also sometimes called a 'reference level'

In their most basic sense, NQFs can be understood as classifiers specifying the relationship– horizontally and vertically - between different qualifications and considered instruments for the modernization of education and training systems and their potential for facilitating lifelong learning (Tuck, 2007). The explanation by OECD (2007) on the common reasons for the introduction of qualifications frameworks by countries include:

1. To create a better match of qualifications with knowledge, skills, and competencies and a better linking of qualifications to occupational (and broader labor market) needs present and future;
2. To bring coherence to subsystems of qualifications, e.g. higher education, adult learning, school awards, and in particular vocational education and training qualifications, by creating an overarching framework for them;
3. To support lifelong learning (by opening up access, targeting investments, and recognizing non- formal and informal learning);
4. To facilitate the involvement of political actors and stakeholders, especially in vocational education and training; and
5. One of the purposes of all qualifications frameworks is to communicate, in the sense that they provide a map of qualifications and give some indication of progression routes between levels and between sectors, frameworks

In addition, a study by Alias (2010) on the implementation and impact of National Qualifications Frameworks in sixteen countries across the world and Steenekamp and Singh (2012) in six African countries on the rationale for their NQFs and the extent to which their NQF could be an enabler informed that the labor market drivers and socio-economic sustainable development agendas of the countries revealed the following:

1. The need for transparent referencing of national qualifications levels to international NQFs, and

other regional NQFs;

2. Learning outcomes-based levels are seen as a neutral referencing point for diverse qualifications and providers;

3. NQFs are important instruments for increasing the transparency of national qualifications systems;

4. NQFs make national qualifications systems more user-friendly;

5. NQFs strengthen the coherence of qualifications systems;

6. They support lifelong learning through visible pathways, thereby facilitating access, participation, and progression;

7. NQFs strengthen links and improve communication between education and training and the labor market;

8. They create a platform for cooperation and dialogue; and

9. NQFs provide a reference point for quality assurance.

The scope of a qualifications framework is the measure of the integration of levels, sectors, and types of qualifications as well as the relationships between each on the NQF. It may take in all learning achievement and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector, for example, schooling education, adult education, and training or an occupational area

Raffe (2009) classifies NQF as communicative, reforming, and transformational. He describes communicative frameworks as effective tools for improving the description of existing qualifications systems and thereby clarifying available options for stakeholders. He also points out that reforming frameworks focus on improving the existing system through certain changes such as by strengthening its coherence, relevance, and quality. Part of this reform may imply the development of new pathways and programs or to change the division of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Transformational frameworks are considered as radically breaking away from previously existing institutional arrangements and practices. All qualifications frameworks, however, provide a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages, and public or labor market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally.

All NQFs have a communication role, in the sense that they provide a map of qualifications; they give some indication of progression routes between levels and, at least in principle, across sectors. In communication, the potential of an NQF means that at a minimum it can assist both learners and those involved in career and training guidance in making choices.

The transactional environments are determined by legislation and these relationships, the communities with whom NQFs work, the learners, the general public, and the suppliers of services to the organizations

responsible for NQFs. The contextual environment is where the issues of the impacts of NQFs within the bigger education and training systems, have the most opportunity to positively impact sustainable development in terms of people and skills development. This environment deals with the economic, political, social, ecological, and technological forces (CEDEFOP,2007). NQFs are located in three contexts that are common to any system, namely, the operational environment, the transactional environment, and the contextual environment. An NQF is a mechanism that relies on multiple parties, organizations, and stakeholders to ensure delivery and implementation and requires a system of collaboration and communication to support smooth and credible development and implementation.

Thus, communicating the positive outputs of a working NQF will benefit both the NQF development community and the learning public. The clear benefits of NQFs need to be communicated to ensure ongoing support; further development and large-scale implementation of the NQF across all stakeholders and groups. Lessons that have been learned from experiences show that stakeholder involvement and consultation about policies, procedures, and conceptual issues related to NQF implementation result in understanding, and it is suggested, are crucial to the implementation of an NQF.

Although the purposes of qualifications frameworks may range from enabling and communicative to regulatory and transformational, several common purposes also exist, such as to establish national standards, promote quality, and provide a system of coordination for comparing qualifications The goals or purposes of introducing NQFs normally include some or all of the following, grouped under two broad headings:

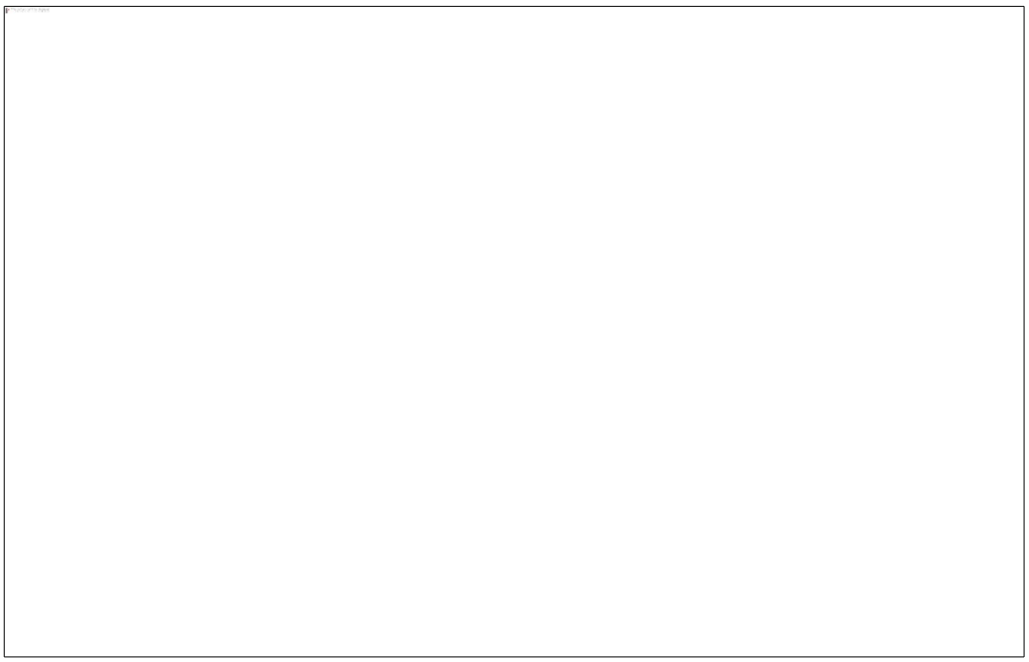
Promoting Lifelong Learning

1. improving understanding of learning routes and qualifications and how they relate to each other;
2. improving access to education and training opportunities;
3. creating incentives for participation in education and training;
4. making progression routes easier and clearer/ improving learner and career mobility;
5. increasing and improving credit transfer between qualifications; and
6. increasing the scope for recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Quality Assurance and Recognition

1. ensuring that qualifications are relevant to perceived social and economic needs;
2. ensuring that education and training standards are defined by agreed learning outcomes and applied consistently;
3. ensuring that education and training providers meet certain quality standards; and
4. securing international recognition for national qualifications.

Eight most common level descriptors of Qualifications Frameworks



source: An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks(Tuck,2007):

3. Regional qualifications Framework

A move towards the creation of a regional common labor market also created an impetus for concerned countries to create or modify their national qualification systems by taking into account regional comparability and compatibility (Tuck, 2007). Regional Qualifications Frameworks are emerging as a tool for supporting the cross-border mobility of learners and workers and acting as a means for fair and transparent recognition of qualifications and as instruments that provide a platform enabling harmonization of education and training systems, and for facilitating recognition of qualifications within countries and across borders.

A regional framework is usually a tool for harmonization and communication; it is more likely to have developmental and supportive functions and voluntary participation. A regional framework is usually reliant on information and assurance provided by national frameworks. Regional qualifications frameworks are by no means a replacement for the national qualifications framework. It is meant to be an instrument to guide the Partner States' qualifications framework for alignment with the regional framework so that the regional education and training systems and the qualifications attained are appropriately harmonized thereby promoting the free movement of learners and labor for the eventual attainment of the Community's socio-economic development and regional integration (East African Community,2015).

Regional Qualification Frameworks is a translation device by which countries can compare their qualifications, seek commonalities, and build trust across countries. It is to reference that results in the establishment of a relationship between the national qualifications framework and that of the regional qualifications framework. The objectives of the regional qualifications framework can be defined in three areas: mobility of workers and learners; quality/quality assurance, and harmonization towards comparability and transparency.

The consistency of referencing process is critically important for the integrity of the regional qualifications framework. The transparency of the process in each country is also critically important for the way people in other countries understand and trust the outcomes of the referencing process. To help optimize consistency and to make the process of referencing transparent, a set of criteria need to be established and agreed upon by member countries. The criteria cover areas that are important for consistency and trust. To promote quality assurance of education and training across the region underpinned by a set of agreed quality assurance principles and broad standards related to (1) The functions of the registering and accrediting agencies, (2) Systems for the assessment of learning and the issuing of qualifications, and (3) Regulation of the issuance of certificates.

According to the explanation by Coles, et al (2014), the networks of common reference frameworks and NQFs are indicators of broader internationalization of provision, greater migration (the need to recognize foreign qualifications), and leading-edge skills development (to boost trade and attract inward investment). These three areas have pushed qualifications systems into the international arena and, to make these rather complex systems more understandable, it has been necessary to create NQFs that

show levels, qualifications, and qualifications types, progression pathways in relatively simple constructions.

The interest in regional qualifications frameworks is increasing from time to time. The common regional qualifications are presented in this article. The framework of ASEAN countries named as Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Southern African Development Community Regional Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE), East African Qualifications Framework for TVET (EAQFT), and IGAD Regional Education Policy Framework are included in the article.

3.1. The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a political and economic organization of ten South-East Asian countries, which was formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Since then, membership has expanded to include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Its aims include accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, protecting regional peace and stability, and opportunities for member countries to discuss differences peacefully. All education and economic ministers have endorsed the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) as a regional tool.

The framework has eight levels and functions as a translation device to enable comparisons of qualifications across participating ASEAN countries. The framework will be underpinned by a set of

agreed quality assurance Table 2: Level descriptors for the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) "Developing a Harmonized TVET Qualification Framework and at least TEN (10) Regional Harmonized Occupational Standards in the Priority Areas of EASTRIP for the three countries" Research report on Regional Qualifications Framework 15 principles and broad standards, to build confidence and trust in national qualifications and the value of the region's qualifications. These include quality assurance principles and broad standards related to (i) the functions of the registering and accrediting agencies; (ii) systems for the assessment of learning and the issuing of qualifications; and (iii) regulation of the issuance of certificates. Furthermore, the AQRF requires countries to refer to one or more established quality assurance frameworks as the basis for the agreed quality assurance principles and broad standards (ASEAN, 2014).

3.2. The European qualifications framework ((EQF)

According to the explanation of Tuck (2007), in Europe, the importance of mutual recognition of qualifications had been recognized since the early 1990s. Many member countries have long-established qualification systems (not necessarily frameworks), while others are engaged in a process of reform of education and training following the collapse of the communist league. There is, therefore, a need to find a solution that respects well-established national traditions while simultaneously providing a clear basis for mutual recognition and mobility of labor across the enlarged EU.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more transparent across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning. The EQF is adopted by the European Parliament in 2008 to relate different countries' national qualifications systems and levels to a common European reference framework. A total of 38 European countries are now committed to working towards the implementation of the EQF.

The EQF has eight levels and functions as a reference framework and enables comparison between national qualifications levels and thus between qualifications (on the same levels) from the different participating countries. Each level of qualification should, in principle, be attainable by way of a variety of educational and career paths. This learning outcomes-based approach shifts the focus away from the traditional emphasis on 'learning inputs', such as the length of a learning experience or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The EQF is seen essentially as a means of making comparisons, not an agent for harmonization, although it seems almost inevitable that it will highlight the need for some forms of commonality. It has been implemented voluntarily.

1. East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)

The East African qualifications framework for higher education (EAQFHE) was endorsed by the Arusha, convention on 30th April 2015. The framework is designed to address the needs of member states to establish systems to support mutual recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other academic qualifications in higher education in Africa. The Partner States made an explicit agreement to undertake concerted measures to foster cooperation in education and training in the Community, in particular harmonization of education and training systems for comparability and compatibility purposes of qualifications among the Partner States (EAC, 2015). Particularly, the Partner States agreed to coordinate their human resources development policies and programs and also to harmonize curricula, examination, certification, and accreditation of education and training institutions through the joint action of their relevant national bodies.

The East African qualifications framework for higher education (EAQFHE) is designed to serve as a useful instrument for guiding higher education institutions in curriculum development, delivery, assessment, and certification, in line with the needs of the labor market. It serves as a guiding instrument for mutual recognition of qualifications among the Partner States. It will also serve as a convergence platform for harmonization of qualifications levels and types, entry requirements, progression, and articulation, thus contributing towards transforming East Africa into a common higher education area.

The EAQFHE will only guide the alignment of the national qualifications frameworks to the regional setup. This will facilitate comparability of the education and training systems and the qualifications attained in the Partner States. It will also facilitate a more systematic approach to human resource development in the Community

3.4. East African Qualifications Framework for TVET (EAQFT)

The East African Qualification Framework for TVET (EAQFT) is built on the vision that, in the region of the East African countries, all qualifications in TVET issued by competent authorities will be described with the relevant descriptors. The background for the development of a regional qualifications framework for TVET in the East African Community (EAC) lies in the growing cooperation between the member states of the East African Community.

The purposes of the framework include: enabling easier movement of learners and workers across the East African countries and internationally through the regional recognition of diplomas and certificates in TVET comparing levels and qualifications across member countries, promoting trust between member countries regarding the quality of their education systems, and the qualifications of the graduates apply common criteria for referencing and quality assurance systems (CADENA, 2021)

The EAQFT is a regional reference framework for TVET of eight levels. For each of the levels, the descriptors are ordered into four categories: Knowledge and Understanding; Cognitive and intellectual skills; Key/Transferable skills, and Practical Skills.

The framework is developed through the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) funded by the World Bank with the objectives to increase access and improve the quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs in selected Regional Flagship TVET Institutes (RFTIs) and to support regional integration in Eastern Africa and endorsed by the ministers of TVET for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania on 23rd of May 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Referencing of qualifications of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania with EAQFT

Source: Policy Paper on the East African Qualifications Framework for TVET (2021)

EAQFT: East African Qualifications Framework for TVET; KNQF: Kenyan National Qualifications Framework; TQF: Tanzanian Qualifications Framework; ENQF: Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework

3.5. Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

Human capital development is one of the SADC's broad strategic objectives for regional integration to foster sustainable development in the region. The SADC Integrated Council of Ministers approved the development of the SADC Qualifications Framework in June 2005 (Tuck, 2007) as an important mechanism to implement the Protocol on Education and Training and to address the agenda for regional integration and the harmonization and standardization of the education and training systems in Southern African Development Community (Branco and Mavimbela, 2022).

The framework has ten levels and it was developed to simplify, structure, classify, and value the many existing qualifications within Member States and across the sub-region. It is expected that the work of the SADCQF will facilitate the mobility of learners and skilled workers in the region.

4. Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)

Qualifications frameworks that are developed across borders are commonly referred to as transnational qualifications frameworks (Keevy et al 2011). A Transnational Qualifications Framework is established for the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth. The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) is a collaborative network building on the support of Education Ministers across the small states of the Commonwealth in 2003. At present, 29 Commonwealth small states are actively participating in the Transnational Qualifications Framework initiative located in the

Caribbean and the Pacific and Indian Oceans and they are under six regional groupings (SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA, EU, Asia-Pacific, and CARICOM. The TQF is aimed at supporting the transfer of credits achieved in different countries.

It is primarily a "translation instrument" which does not replace any existing sectoral, national, or regional qualifications frameworks or quality assurance systems, but it rather provides a means by which different frameworks can be compared and related and improve credit transfer and facilitate articulation arrangements between member countries; promote common quality assurance mechanisms agreed to amongst participating countries; increased stakeholder confidence; improved networking between quality assurance and qualifications agencies; and the establishment of appropriate benchmark standards for the recognition of overseas distance-education programs.

The TQF promotes credit transfer and common accreditation mechanisms between participating commonwealth countries through the development of transnational qualifications and quality assurance criteria.

Most small states are presently involved in initiatives to improve coordination and international comparability, mainly through the development of national and/or sectoral qualifications frameworks, in many cases within the broader context of a regional qualifications framework. The development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems, including TVET qualifications frameworks, has been prioritized in most small states, accompanied by a move towards competency- based standards and the establishment of training authorities.

Although qualifications nomenclature is not uniform across small states, there exists a sufficient common understanding of most terms including accreditation, certification, providers, quality assurance, registration, recognition of prior learning, and comparability.

To enter the ASEAN Economic Community, the development of NQF and AQRF in the region are important devices and a strategic approach to improve and assure the quality of human capital to face the global market. At the current stage, several ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, have established comprehensive NQF, while others have a well-established sectorial framework, and others are yet to develop or implement QF. The AQRF aims to accommodate different types of NQFs that are at different stages of development. Within this context, countries have opportunities for referencing their NQF toward AQRF. This process should be transparent and consistent.

Levels of qualifications frameworks

Features	Sectorial	National	Regional	Transnational
Scope	covering specific levels, sectors, or types of qualification	National, but not necessarily all levels, sectors, and types of qualifications	Regional, but not necessarily all levels, sectors, and types of qualifications	Across countries and regions, usually only very specific qualifications and/or sectors
Purpose	Coherence Promote quality	Develop links between sub-systems National standards Promote quality	Mapping Translation	Mapping Translation
Prescriptiveness	Usually tighter	Varying from loose to tight	Usually looser (also referred to as metaframeworks)	Extremely loose (i.e. no regulatory intention at all)
Examples	Tertiary (Jamaica), TVET (Ethiopia)	Australia, South Africa	Namibia, SADC, EU, EAQFT	VUSSC

Source: Transnational Qualifications Framework for commonwealth countries (2008)

5. Challenges of designing and implementing NQFs

Designing qualification levels is a task that requires experts to appreciate the spectrum of understandings of levels within a country from the labor market view through the most theoretical and scholarly of perspectives.

The experiences of countries around the world show that the implementation of NQFs is more difficult than designing its structure. It involves major reforms of existing qualifications systems along with the education and training systems and depends heavily on the country's socioeconomic needs, and the adaptability and resilience of existing institutions (Ramdass, Rahman, and Nellikunnel, 2015). Some features and dimensions of qualifications frameworks have proved in practice to be unpopular, costly, time-consuming, difficult to manage, and even unworkable. The learning to be gained from such issues

needs to be understood within the context of a highly complex web of situational factors unique to each framework development.

All countries implementing an NQF have faced problems. Most of them relate, in one way or another, to the fact that governments invariably fail to recognize the fundamental implications of the changes that they seek to introduce. This failure may be expressed in a lack of political support or adequate resources for the agency or authority with specific responsibility for the NQF (Allais, 2010). Young identified several factors that lead to such problems amongst others as follows:

1.Failure of governments to realize the impact of such a reform;

2.Very high initial expectations of what will be achieved and the rapidity at which the benefits of introducing NQF would be felt;

3.Political difficulties as NQF in most countries may fall under the aegis of two or more ministries. Conflicts among ministries about how NQF is to be developed hinder its proper implementation;

4.Too much power is allotted to the authority in charge of NQF in the respective department of education;

5.Quality assurance poses administrative difficulties; and

6.Language of standards, units, and descriptors tend to be perceived as jargon and people fail to relate to it.

6.Successful implementation of NQFs

It is not enough just to design the framework and demand that it be implemented. It is necessary also to

ensure that the laws and regulations applying to education and training are consistent with NQF goals; create and maintain policy coherence across different Ministries, especially Education and Labor. an NQF is not a quick solution to the many skills challenges faced by a country. Without clear objectives and an understanding of how an NQF can best be developed, implementation can be a lengthy and costly endeavor.

The success of an NQF is, therefore, very much dependent on its ability to bring together relevant stakeholders and create a platform for cooperation and for addressing common or conflicting challenges.

A NQF will be more successful if it generates a sense of ownership among the social partners and education and training providers. For an NQF to be effective, hearts and minds genuine and active support have to be won. Otherwise, there is a danger that education and training institutions and social partners will simply pay lip service to the framework. It is increasingly accepted that successful implementation depends on communities of trust (Young, 2003).

This refers to the trust established over time within professional and occupational communities as well as between educational institutions and employers. In traditional systems, which usually rely on

communities of trust, qualifications are seen as an organic part of the whole education and training system. Trust in qualifications derives in large measure from trust in institutions and shared practice, traditions, and experience

The conditions for successful NQF implementation as identified by a range of commentators include policy coherence across different ministries; an enabling funding regime; support to education and training institutions including the provision of resources and professional development; genuine support and trust for the NQF among stakeholders; paying careful attention to the institutional context; development of communities of trust; differentiation of implementation strategies in higher education, school, and TVET sectors; collaboration between education and industry in the setting of standards; adopting a flexible approach to learning outcomes and avoiding overly complex systems of assessment and quality assurance.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I need to return to the question posed in the introduction to this paper: Do NQFS enhance regional and international integrations? In a global knowledge economy, where the mobility of labor is encouraged, countries need to empower their workforce while encouraging lifelong learning. It directly has an impact on job creation and creates a link between the labor force and the workplace. From this point of view, the answer is definitely yes. As education and training are increasingly influenced by international opportunities and challenges, it has become more outward-looking considering qualifications frameworks as a tool to make national systems more understandable within and in other countries. NQFs are drivers of change that have profound effects on education and training systems by influencing the way education institutions are organized and how they operate. NQFs shape the traditional boundaries between sectors and types of institutions and can effectively shift the balance of power between stakeholders.

Evidence suggests that developing national, regional, and transnational levels qualifications frameworks can provide solutions to the challenges of articulation, credit transfer, and mobility of learners and workers across borders and facilitate regional integrations and mobility of graduates. However, great care needs to go into the development of such a powerful instrument, with its huge implications for social and economic development.

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Exploring Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education Institutions in Ghana: A Decolonial Approach Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA)

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Abstract

Although GCE is a highly contested concept, there is almost a consensus that higher education has a key role to play in broadening students' global perspectives. It seeks to equip students to acquire relevant global skills and understanding to contribute to a more peaceful, an environmentally secure, and a just world. Subsequently, there is an increasing spectrum of policies and strategies to enhance GCE in these institutions. Contrary to expectations, many of these initiatives tend to accentuate prevalent binaries and hierarchy of powers seeped in colonial legacies. Utilizing the qualitative methodology and the decolonial framework, this paper explored how GCE is conceptualized and perceived in higher educational institutions in Ghana. The findings indicated that the concept of GCE is less topical in higher educational institutions. Its brief mentioning is associated with neoliberal ideologies of equipping students to acquire the critical skills to work abroad or in multinational companies. It also tends to put less emphasis on African values and knowledge systems. We recommend higher educational institutions to prioritize GCE in a non-neoliberal framework. Conversations, debates and discourses on GCE in higher education should be initiated. The curriculum and research on citizenship education should also be encouraged particularly at a time when the universities have intensified their strategies to internationally position themselves. We argue that GCE will provide immense opportunities to also enhance decolonization in the universities.

Keywords: Internationalization; Global Citizenship; higher education; Decolonial theory; neoliberalism

Introduction

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has become an integral part of the internationalization processes of higher educational institutions worldwide. It is a recognition of our increasing global interconnectedness and also of the need for grassroots activism to address societal and global injustices (Mansouri, et. al. 2017). It is widely concerned with the relevance of knowledge, skills and values for the participation of citizens in, and their contribution to, dimensions of societal development which are linked at local and global levels (Mansouri, et. al. 2017; UNESCO, 2014).

It seeks to equip individuals with relevant global skills and understanding to contribute to a more peaceful, environmentally secure, and just world (Jorgenson and Shultz, 2012, P. 1). Although GCE is a highly contested concept, there is almost a consensus that higher education has a key role to play in broadening students' global perspectives. Successively, there is an increasing spectrum and range of policies and strategies to enhance GCE in these institutions. Contrary to expectations, many of these initiatives tend to accentuate prevalent binaries and hierarchy of powers seeped in colonial legacies (Andreotti and Souza, 2012). GCE also results in educational policies and practices that 'unintentionally reproduce ethnocentric, ahistorical, depoliticized, paternalistic, Salvationist and triumphant approaches that tend to theorize, anthologize or trivialize differences (Andreotti and Souza, 2012). Moreover, most of the literature on GCE is centered on the West, while little is known about its conceptualization, rationalizations, approaches and challenges particularly in the African context (Angyagre and Quaynor, 2019).

This paper explores how GCE is conceptualized and perceived in higher educational institutions in Ghana and the extent to which it is prioritized in these institutions. It also looks at the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which are perceived as relevant to GCE, as well as the challenges, strategies and approaches to enhance GCE in these institutions.

The concept of global citizenship

Global citizenship is a concept that attracts varied definitions and interpretations based on its complexity and multi-fecetness. It is 'having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment' (Hunter, White and Godbey 2006: 277). It 'aims to equip individuals with critical knowledge and reflexive competencies in order to operate, work and participate in daily affairs as global citizens and not only as national citizens' (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. P. 7). It also prepares and equips the individual with the relevant knowledge, skills and values to participate competently and contribute to various dimensions of society both locally and globally.

Global citizenship can be conceptualized and grouped into two forms: cosmopolitan and advocacy set of models (Oxley and Morris, 2013). Cosmopolitan can further be compressed into two main principles: obligations and responsibility to others, and particular interest in their practices and beliefs (Appiah, 2007, xxi). The cosmopolitan theory encourages recognition, respect and appreciation of other cultures (Oxley and Morris, 2013) and particularly upholds the rights of individuals. The advocacy emphasizes social, critical, environmental and spiritual aspects of GC (UNESCO, 2014, Hunter, et.al. Andreotti, 2006). Although there are some few contrasts, the conceptualizations of these two models overlap

each other (Oxley and Morris, 2013).

A significant aspect of GCE is the need to emphasize the local (Chapman et. al., 2021). Emphasizing the local ensures a strong integration between the local and the global (Boni and Calabuig , 2017).

Importance of global citizenship education

The importance of GCE is unexhausted. It empowers students to engage and assume more active and responsible roles, both locally and globally. They are encouraged to confront and address global challenges and to be key contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world (UNESCO, 2014, 15).

Through the process, learners and educators are able to examine the causes of events and developments at the local level and their connections with the global level. They are able to proffer potential solutions. Most importantly, it enables 'learners to fulfill their potential in a fast-changing and interdependent world' (UNESCO, 2014, 15).

Fundamentally, it encourages students to appreciate the other and espouse human rights and social justice. When students are trained to appreciate diversity, emphasize social justice and be democratic citizens, there will be changes to enhance global peace (Basio and Torres, 2019, p. 8). Ultimately, it aims to create more inclusive policies and pedagogical practices to be well utilized; it will serves as a key conduit to decolonize students' mind which is the basis for developing global citizenship in students.

As an individual is exposed to global issues and concern, he derives the opportunities to develop the competence to think critically through the maze of values, beliefs, practices, knowledge systems and expectations.

Strategies of global citizenship

The processes of acquiring and experiencing global citizenship varies across different contexts and individuals. However, the dominant strategy to enhance global citizenship has been conceptualized as travelling around the globe (Bosio and Torres, 2019). It is also perceived as acquired through transnational experiences. Gaventa (quoted in Bourn, 2010: 20), for instance, argues that 'as citizens do engage in transnational forms of action, new identities as global citizens begin to emerge'. This strategy has attracted varied criticisms. For instance, 'people without access to requisite capital for air travel or communication technologies are often more confined to local spaces' (Jorgensen, 2018). Again, 'if GCE is narrowed to travelling and living or volunteering abroad, majority of people would be hindered from ever becoming a global citizen' (Jorgensen, 2013, p. 32).

Other strategies involve developing programs to ensure active engagement and interaction for students to be able to learn deeply about the 'other'. Multiculturalism should be manifested at different levels including programs that will encourage appreciation for diversity. There should also be 'proactive involvement in local community practice designed to generate and support universal values'. University community engagement encourages recognition and appreciation for the diversity of ideas, values, beliefs and practices in the world (Gyamera, 2018).

Challenges

There are various challenges associated with GCE. There is a challenge of whether 'global citizenship' should be perceived in the economic, political or cultural framework (Noddings, 2005). There is equally a challenge of whether nationalism should be prioritized over globalism and also whether particular cultures to be adopted. Two major concepts which should be discussed in connection with these challenges are neoliberalism and colonialism.

Neoliberalism is 'a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights' (Thorsen and Lie, 2006, p. 14). Neoliberalism encourages supremacy of the market, freedom and individualism (Mirowski, 201 5). Neoliberal influences have become endemic in the universities including how global citizenship is conceptualized, defined and the process of attaining it. These include the ability of graduates to be enterprising, pursue further studies and work in any part of the world (Basio and Torres, 2019; Chapman, et. al. 2018). Noddings also explains that 'a global citizen is one who can live and work effectively anywhere in the world' (2005: 2-3). As a result, 'global citizens' turn out to be in practice "privileged individuals who have the opportunity to learn ab4 7+-out the world, often through travel" (Roddick, 2008, 55,

Again, under the neoliberal ideologies whereby an individual's achievement in life is, "the rhetoric of global citizenship, it contributes to the illusion that global inequities and poverty are issues that can be addressed through simplistic methods, such as fundraising" (DeCaro, 2014, 3 quoted in DeCaro, 2014, 8). The monies accrued are believed to help individuals to be relieved of poverty.

In some cases, they could be perceived as '…simply having fun, enhanced, of course, by the moral supremacy and vanguardist feeling of being responsible for changing or saving the world 'out there' (Andreotti, 2006 p. 40). Neoliberal ideologies are pushed even more in universities as students are trained to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and be competitive.

To enhance GCE, many universities have adopted programs such as International Service Learning (ISL) and travelling abroad programs. However, there is limited empirical evidence of the transformational impact on students in developing global citizenship through these popular programs (Tonkin, 2011). As Chapman and Ruiz-Chapman indicate (2018), mostly, there is little 'global' about global citizenship in the context of IS. Many institutions rather use it as an ideological marketing tool to promote student recruitment and derive funding (Chapman and Ruiz-Chapman, 2018, p. 149). While the universities could develop global citizenship in the student, it is the student who will decide whether to be a global citizen, Sheppard (2004).

Again there is also the issue of ethical responsibility. Mostly, ideas underlying these programs are not to engage with other cultures, but to be exposed to other cultures and help them. These ideas, as argued by many scholars, could be ethically wrong (Andreotti, 2006).

The tendency of GCE to perpetuate colonialism and imperialism has been highlighted by many scholars (Androitti, 2006; Gyamera, 2021).The emphasis here is on the implications of the projection of Northern/Western values and interests as global and universal which naturalizes the myth of Western supremacy in the rest of the world (Andreotti, 2006, p. 44).

At best, it is to explore the experiences of people in the global South. There is the idea 'that different cultures only have 'traditions, beliefs and values' while the West has (universal) knowledge (and even constructs knowledge *about* these cultures) (Andreotti, 2006, p.41).

In many African contexts, the idea of acquiring global citizenship education has mostly been conceptualized as travelling abroad, experiencing and acquiring various skills, knowledge and values which could be replicated or utilized in the African contexts. Whilst many universities in the Global North equally prioritize travelling as the key process of developing the global citizens, a real motive is to impact their knowledge and values. Many of the ISL is to propagate Western superiority by emphasizing Western ideology. Participants of service learning programs assume the role to change the world (Andreotti, 2006) and tend to reproduce power imbalance and Euro-centrism. These challenges reinforce the concerns of the propensity of GCE to perpetuate colonialism.

As Andreotti has argued this idea of global citizenship education:

…may end up promoting a new 'civilizing mission' as the slogan for a generation who take up the 'burden' of saving/educating/civilizing the world. This generation, encouraged and motivated to 'make a difference', will then project their beliefs and myths as universal and reproduce power relations and violence similar to those in colonial times (Andreotti, 2006 p. 41).

This is particularly with students from the North going to the South. It should be understood that different cultures exist in different societies and these differences should be recognized and appreciated.

University and global citizenship

Education 'remains the most critical domain in which critical global citizenship can and should be pursued' (Andreotti, 2006) and the convincing roles of universities in enhancing global citizenship cannot be overemphasized. It provides sustainable transformative positive change in the way people think, behave and act vis-à-vis others. Undoubtedly, universities have the space and resources to influence students' global awareness, identification with global citizenship and development of pro- social values (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2012).

As we mentioned earlier in the paper, discourses on global citizenship in higher education, are often characterized by economic rationality and the individual being enterprising. GCE programs often appeal to students' "sense of entitlement, consumerism and individualism" (Zemach-Bersin, 2009, p. 303). Such programs are 'perceived as…a non-academic adventure, and an experience primarily for personal advancement'(*ibid*, p. 313). Universities should integrate GCE in the formal curriculum. The curriculum should be enriched with many discussions, activities, or materials related to global citizenship (Basio and Torres 2019, p. 13).

It could also be promoted through extracurricular programs and activities and alternative learning approaches. The physical structure and institutional organization should be preoccupied with discouraging social, economic and cultural exclusions (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. p. 7).

Methodology

The study adopted the qualitative methodology and it was a case of one university in Ghana. The methodology provided opportunities to hear from participants concerning their understandings, feelings and experiences of GCE in the University (Rahman, 2017). We chose the University based on feasibility. With the unusual rise of the Covid-19 cases in Ghana, it was difficult to undertake research in many institutions of higher learning. Presently, we could mainly gain access to one university, where we are also practitioners.

Interview, as the method of data collection, allowed us to interact directly with participants and to derive detailed information (Rahman, 2017). Most of the interviews were conducted online. There was also documentary analyses of vision and mission statements and strategic reports of the selected University.

The research adopted a trans-disciplinary approach. Subsequently, the population involved faculty members from different disciplinary areas. We utilized lengthy excerpts from participants to provide a clear and authentic picture of the concept of GCE in the Ghanaian context. Key authors we drew on included Andreotti, (2006); Basio and Torres (2019); Bhabha, (1994); Boni and Calabuig (2017); Hunter, et.al. (2006); and Ndlovu- Gatsheni, S. J. (2013).

Postcolonial and de-colonial theories were the framework for analyses. Predominantly, as Andreotti and Souza have powerfully argued, in the GCE process, there is the need to reflect on such questions including whose experiences, knowledge and values are prioritized in GCE pedagogy; who are the subjects of the study; and who are the objects of attraction (Andreotti and Souza, 2012)? Utilizing Postcolonial and de-colonial theories in this study illuminated the extent to which the conceptions, motivations and approaches to GCE in the Ghanaian context reflect and perpetuate colonial legacies, and ways in which these colonial influences could be subdued.

Ethically, we paid close attention to power relations which could have played between ourselves, as practitioners at the place of study and less powerful individuals, especially students. Participants had the right to privacy and anonymity (BERA, 2018).

Perception of global citizenship

The majority of participants indicated that they have only heard about the concept fleetingly and have not paid much attention to it. In some cases it was associated with nationalism:

I have heard about the concept but I have not read about it into details… I have not paid so much attention to it. (Richard)

Sincerely I have not heard anything about it. Even though I have seen some of the things I am mentioning I have not heard it directly. There is no phrase or maxim to that effect. When you mentioned it my mind went straight to nationalism. (Appiah).

I think it definitely has to do with the integration of individuals irrespective of background, how society accepts individuals irrespective of gender, income, color, race, among others. (Kojo).

The lack of awareness of attention given to the concept of GCE is unsurprising since the concept is not topical in the Ghanaian context. It is not an explicit focus of any policy agenda, either institutionally or nationally. Predictably, the University does not have any policy agenda and direction on global citizenship. We did not find any document which specifically focus on GCE, though in some forums senior management reiterate the positive stance of the University on internationalization. The majority of participants confirmed that the concept has not been emphasized in the University:

Authorities don't attach much importance to the global or international issue. (Appiah)…but at…[mentions institution], unfortunately, you can't tell me a single thing that talks about that kind of global citizens. It is just that we try to do like, okay, we are trying to do something. (Kojo)

Although we are trying, I think we are still far behind. The issue is that we haven't even discussed about this so much and the majority of faculty and even administrators don't have a clue what this GCE is about. (Mawusi)

With their brief knowledge about GCE, most respondents perceived global citizenship as an important concept with clear positive impacts including heightening knowledge sharing, and encouraging harmonious and peaceful co-existence.

Obviously the whole world is coming together, becoming a village which means that whatever happens in one environment is likely to affect other communities as well. (Kojo)

It helps individuals to move across, work across, and experience whatever is happening in order to exhibit the skills, the ideas, the right attitudes and beliefs, and to be able to live harmoniously without hurting anybody. That is really important. (Richard)

As we know, no country can be independent on its own; we depend on each other so there should be knowledge sharing. This is irrespective of where I come from, so far as I can deal with the issue and can solve challenges confronting humanity... (Fredrick)

Goals and strategies of global citizenship

Participants considered the goal of global citizenship in various ways. Some conceptualized the goals as to be able to recognize and appreciate the other, and to recognize the abilities and capabilities in the individual irrespective of his or her background. The most dominant goal among participants was the ability to travel abroad and also engage in international programs.

Whilst the University has not initiated programs explicitly focusing on promoting global citizenship education, participants explained that there are some international programs and activities at the University which in a way promote GCE. One popular strategy was the recruitment of international students from neighboring African countries:

They have tried to enhance diversity by internationalizing their programs where a lot of people from other West African countries are coming here. (Kojo)

Yes, even to the extent of allowing students from other Francophone countries to come to school. When you look at our School, not only do we have Ghanaians but we have other neighboring countries whose students are here now…But the MBA level is what I haven't seen so much, but the undergraduate I can confirm that they have. (Appiah).

Interestingly, other participants explained that the University has not been very successful in recruiting international students:

For student, I think I have not seen a lot happening. The only time we see a bit of it happening is when we have exchange programs ….we had students moving to the US for a week or two. Others going to France, others going to other places. Even within Africa, but now seriously, I don't see that happening. (Appiah)

For me, I have not heard anybody championing that course, even among students. (Zacharia)

Another strategy is the sponsoring of faculty members for international conferences, seminars, etc. to widen their international exposure. In particular, in one of the schools, foreign lecturers were brought from abroad to teach on programs:

Faculty level, there have been some policies to send faculty outside to different, different locations for seminars, exchange, conferences but I don't see that much happening nowadays. (Appiah)

In the Business school, we used to bring foreign lecturers irrespective of their race, color or citizenship. As far as they qualify, and we can confirm their capability to teach the course we are offering, we engaged them. We did not look at only Ghanaians. (Kojo)

Again, the majority of participants from particularly, the Business School, expressed concern that the program has been scrapped for some years now. Presently, the University utilizes mainly local lecturers:

On the student front, if we really want our students to be part of the global village, we have to send them outside periodically to see programs…We should give our students, particularly the MBA students a better platform to travel outside to expose them to modern practices and also understand the business environment across countries. (Appiah)

Application for international funding and collaborations were also highlighted as a means for global citizenship:

We also apply for funds with our international collaborators so that we can internationalize our university. (Appiah)

Considering programs, participants emphasized international programs:

I cannot speak for other areas but in our department you cannot finish undergraduate or MBA Finance without taking international courses like International Finance, what that course seeks to do is to expose you to all the finances that you have done in Africa and comparing it to how they are done outside there and how the international communities relate through the finance

platform. Yes, so this is how we can inculcate global citizenship by looking at how these courses are done internationally. Other courses like business environment allows students to know how things happen elsewhere and in Ghana. (Kojo)

Impact of global citizenship education

The majority of participants explained that there have been minimal impacts of these strategies in enhancing GCE in students. The only program which was perceived as having some impact is the importation of foreign lecturers to teach on programs. It boosted the institutional image and the ability to recruit students:

We should look at the kind of expertise and premium they were bringing to the program. And the image that the institution was having through that. (Rockson)

These people come with new ideas…you know these people they have the expertise, they have the exposure with the international world…And I recall, some of them could even bring some global giants in those areas to come and give talks, which we are lacking now. (Peprah)

Many people enrolled in our programs because they thought they were going to get into contact with these experts. Sometimes they looked at the profile of these people, the kind of work they have done with these multinational companies like the IMF and they were happy to be taught by these lecturers…(Mawusi)

Roles of the universities

Almost all participants agreed that the university has many roles to play to enhance global citizenship education. Significant among the roles is to create awareness about the program and highlight it in the curriculum. The awareness should not focus only on faculty but also include administrative staff and senior management:

The university should embark on sensitization programs. It should make sure we do sensitization programs. We have to let people know about what goes into this global citizenship education (Eli)

We should offer workshops, even among faculty and administrators. Sometimes we should not focus on only the faculty but the middle staff. (Akwesi)

We should also look at the global direction in those areas by looking at the big multi nationals in the likes of the IMF, what their programs are, the World Bank, what their programs are, the UN, etc. so that we are aware of what is going on. We try to find out what the global leaders are doing so that we can position ourselves very well to address some of these challenges we are looking at. (Appiah)

Challenges

Expectedly, participants explained numerous challenges that confront the universities to enhance global citizenship education. The obvious challenge is monetary. Participants explained that the Institution obviously finds it difficult to fund many activities and programs which will enhance GCE. There is also lack of institutional interest and will on the part of senior management to promote global citizenship:

If management doesn't spearhead, if they do not understand the whole concept, it will not go anywhere, and that is the problem we are experiencing here. Most of our leaders are not

interested. MBA students for instance, can go to Europe and go and take a semester course. (Akwsi).

At the institutional level, management has to take it very serious. We need to ensure that the GIMPA community is aware of issues relating to global citizenship (Richard).

There is also the challenge of limited international students:

I think recently the number of students has dwindled and there is the need to stem that effort up so that we can develop other programmes. (Kwame)

We also do not have international students in our classes, like South Africans, Kenyans etc. We don't have them. And we don't have any strategic plans to get these people. Very few, very, very few.

May be there should be a deliberate attempt to create space for these students, for instance, east African, South Africans, central Africans and even the northern Africans. (Akwasi)

Another issue is the challenge of having experts who will impart the needed knowledge, values and skills to enhance global citizenship education. Then there is the challenge of imposed barriers:

And may be in terms of work, we do not have people from other countries working here. There should be other workers to have global diversity, global ownership of the University. (Eli)

The first challenge is the barriers, like travelling outside. I remember….[mentions an institution] as taking some students to the US and they were all bounced. It took the intervention of the Rector before they were able to go (Akwasi).

A particular concern was the effect of enhancing colonial legacies. There was also the uneasiness that rich countries would use this as a pretext to exploit poorer countries:

It will enhance colonization to the extent that the poor countries will be depending on the rich countries (Kwame).

People will use it as a pretext to solicit for funding from other organizations to get work from poorer countries because as the countries continue to be poor, then they (richer countries) dominate and write proposals and it becomes a job for them. (Appiah)

Discussions of findings

The findings reveal that GCE, as a concept is less topical in the Institution and the majority of participants are unaware of what the concept entails. Additionally, none of the key documents and strategic reports mention GCE, though the University continues to declare its efforts to internationally

position itself in the global domain. These findings are not unexpected since GCE is less discussed in the Ghanaian context. Discourses, curriculum and research on citizenship education have focused on pre-tertiary institutions (Eten 2015; Angyagre and Quaynor, 2019). They have also been national in focus (Ibid).

This limited awareness and attention to global citizenship should be a concern to the University. Although the world has increasingly been interconnected, it has equally been globally characterized by sustained human rights abuses, inequality, conflicts and poverty. These provide undeniable threat to peace and sustainability (United Nations). It has then become critical for individuals to be imbued with a sense of global responsibilities to safeguard peace and social justice. The need for GCE has been a key focus of the United Nations (UNESCO, 2014). The roles of universities in in enhancing GCE have been much highlighted.

Universities must impart knowledge, competencies and skills which will enable their graduates to function effectively in our rapidly changing society and world. This means sensitizing and sharpening the capacity of students to comprehend the world in the full complexity of its interconnectedness, fostering greater familiarity with critical trans sovereign issues and empowering them to make strategic career and professional decisions in global terms (UN, n.d).

It is also about:

Encouraging modalities of thinking that promote innovation and curiosity, dialogue and debate, critical discourse and cultural tolerance, a sharp focus on ethical matters and a sense of personal and social responsibility as well as public engagement (UN, n.d.).

Most significantly, we maintain that GCE is a key tool, particularly in African universities, to ensure continual decolonization in the institutions and the larger society. As universities focus on GCE, they will be positioned to penetrate the world with perspectives and values based on African knowing, knowledge production and experiences. Mignolo (2009) has rightly asserted that:

The “geo-politics of knowledge and the geo-politics of knowing” (p. 3) are currently issues of great significance as we encounter the legacies of colonialism playing out in intensely globalized social, political and economic relations.

GCE provides opportunities for universities to enact policies that will imbibe confidence and acceptance of African values and knowledge systems.

Another dominant way of exposing students to global citizenship locally is for them to be exposed to experts who have had exposures and experiences abroad. Such an individual is perceived to be more knowledgeable, more current and the teachings are argued to be more impactful. They also linked the strategies to faculty and student exchange programs. The majority considered global citizenship synonymous to travelling abroad. At best development of global citizenship is mostly perceived as a by- product of internationalization. Institutions hardly pay direct attention to it (Gyamera, 2018).

Whilst we cannot underestimate the impact of exposing students to global happenings, the colonial implications cannot be ignored. Colonial legacies continue to obnoxiously influence universities in most

ex colonial countries. These have major impact on beliefs, practices and idiosyncrasies of students and academics (Andreotti, 2006). It is interesting that global citizenship could just be deduced as provided by foreign lecturers. They are argued to possess more relevant and useful knowledge and ideas. As argued by Jorgensen

Uncritical conceptions of global citizenship…or global competency which understands global citizenship to be the acquisition of certain international and intercultural skills and competencies to be acquired through international travel, negates the complexity and contestation of what it means to be a citizen in different parts of the world and fails to address issues of exclusion and the diversity and complexity of indigenous and non-Western ontology and epistemologies.

Such beliefs propagate Western superiority. The majority of participants really espoused the global experiences more than the local ones (Andreotti, 2006). Unsurprisingly experts who were recruited from Western countries were paid huge sums of money compared to those in Ghana. At a point in time, the University realized, it could not sustain the payment of these monies.

This assumption that experts from abroad possess greater expertise and are more exposed to global issues confirm the existence and concern for epistemic hegemony, which relevant knowledge is believed to be centered in Western countries. As emphasized by

Globalized knowledge still has an identifiable centre from which it cascades and circulates…Europe and North America constitute the 'international' and the rest of the world is 'local

The signature of epistemic hegemony is the idea of 'knowledge' rather than 'knowledges' (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, 8).

Africans continue to be eager and faithful consumers of thoughts ideas generated in the West (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013). These knowledges are 'tested on the African soil and on African minds' (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, 15).

The sustained focus on internationalization, globalization and knowledge sharing will reassert legacies of colonialism and its influences on policies, particularly as they encourage global neoliberal

capitalism. Again, the emphasis on student and staff exchange and the need for students and staff to attend programs abroad emphasize the extent of 'institutional nomadism' in African higher educational institutions. This is 'a restless going to and fro' European and North American universities Scientific dependence' (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, 15). Without travelling abroad, it appears impossible to become a global citizen. As Gyamera (2021), has argued powerfully the essence of GC which involves social justice and appreciation of diversity could easily be gained in the local context through varied ways including the Universities engaging with their local communities.

Also, GCE, similar to dominant global trend is conceptualized with neoliberal underpinnings. The overriding idea is to expose students to international programs to broaden their international understanding. It is also perceived as attracting and recruiting international students. These conceptualizations and strategies of GCE have clear limitations.

There is limited empirical evidence of the transformation of students into global citizens through some of these popular experiences including International Service Learning (ISL) and studying abroad (Tonkin, 2011). Hardly does the prevalent education abroad programs produces intercultural competence sufficient for the deeper understanding, reflection and the ability to resist entrenched discriminatory practices.

As Jansen (2019) has emphasized, one of the critical duties of scholars 'especially in times of high change, is the scrutiny of important concepts as they emerge from time to time'. Though Lee linked it to happenings in the public arena, we look at it both from the public and academic terrain. There is the need for universities to situate such concepts in a historical context and scrutinize its possible effects.

Re-echoing Andreotti, a key question is how the educational content and processes will be designed to move learners away from these neoliberal and colonial tendencies (Andreotti, 2006. P. 41). With the prioritization of market logics, citizenship in higher education continues to give much emphasis to neoliberal ideologies. The overwhelming idea of acquiring global citizenship education was mostly conceptualized as travelling abroad, experiencing and acquiring various skills, knowledge and values which could be replicated or utilized in the African contexts. Global citizenship educational programs should allow students to develop their own critical understandings of complex global issues and their relationship to these issues. They should be able to examine the factors that might hinder or facilitate the achievement of global citizenship, analyze the impact of their actions, as well as their individual and collective responsibilities, as global citizens, within their local, national and international communities (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. P. 7).

In fact, GCE will provide a convincing justification for perpetuating colonial and capitalist ideologies (Basio and Torres, 2019). As Basio and Torres, (2019) emphasize, the idea of 'Global citizenship' could 'become a dangerous but powerful tool utilized simplistically but deliberately to justify the endless expansion of unregulated capitalist relations in whatever part of life and in every corner of the globe'.

We cannot end this discussion without mentioning the complex and ubiquitous funding challenge which confront particularly, African universities. This limitation makes it difficult for most of these institutions to undertake projects and activities to achieve desired goals. The lack of resources also

makes the universities 'permanent supplicants for foreign development assistance' (Lulat, 2005: 379). All these will make it difficult for them to undertake effective GCE independent of neoliberal and colonial influences.

Recommendations

It is needful for the University to attach greater importance and appreciation to the concept GCE, particularly, in the institutions. The neoliberal conceptualization of global citizenship should be eschewed. The University should embrace the perception of GCE as more of creating a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity, promoting a 'global gaze' that links the local to the global and the national to the international. It should be conceptualized as a way of understanding, acting and relating oneself to others and the environment in space and in time, based on universal values,

through respect for diversity and pluralism (UNESCO, 2014, P. 14).

There should be much emphasis on both the curriculum as a medium to promote GCE. As underlined by Basio and Torres, the curriculum should aim 'at fostering an individual who may admire others more for their differences than for their similarities' (2019, p. 13). It should not be assumed that as the universities embarked on internationalization agenda, students will inevitably adopt global citizenship values, knowledge and beliefs. There should be a deliberate and clear efforts towards this end.

The fundamental goal should be to ensure attitudinal and behavioral transformation in the individual and to promote intercultural understandings and/or increasing one's capacities to work within an equitable and social justice-based framework (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. p. 7).

Such perspectives call for a critically transformative community programs and values which do not conform to Westernized and neoliberal forms of citizenship. As we mentioned earlier in the paper, discourses on global citizenship in higher education are often characterized by economic rationality and the individual being enterprising. GCE programs often appeal to students' "sense of entitlement, consumerism and individualism" (Zemach-Bersin (2009, p. 303). These engagements could also be appropriated to address the neoliberal and colonial influences that pervade GCE

Students should be encouraged individuals to develop a sense of belonging and social justice which will not be limited to their particular local community and nationality, but to extend it even to territories abroad 'and to think critically and ethically' about their attitude towards those who are different (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. P. 7).

In African universities, there is the need for broader decolonization processes, which is 'about justice and which addresses the epistemic violence of colonial knowledge and colonial thought' (Pillay 2015). A particular focus should be on de-colonial education curriculum (e.g. Nyoni, 2019; Le Grange, 2016). There is the need to highlight how they could develop global citizenship without undermining their own values and identities and those of the communities.

To avoid the hegemony of colonial discourses and knowledge generation demands critical Global Citizenship Education and pedagogy (CGC) (Delanti, 2006; Mansouri, et. al. 2017). Critical thinking 'requires developing the capability to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment (Nussbaum 2006, p. 388).

A more critical perspective would promote a personal commitment to act and engage in social, civic and political action aimed at overcoming prejudice and injustice (Mansouri, et. al. 2017). Global citizenship education in this context aims to equip individuals with critical knowledge and reflexive competencies in order to operate, work and participate in daily affairs as global citizens and not only as national citizens.

Most significantly, emphasizing the moral, cultural, social and critical citizenship could, to a larger extent, mitigate the effects of neoliberalism which is centered on profitability, self-centeredness and aggression. In the neoliberal state, 'solidarity becomes an expensive luxury and makes way for temporary

alliances; the main preoccupation always being to extract more profit from the situation than your competition. Social ties with colleagues weaken, as does emotional commitment to the enterprise or organization (Verhaeghe, 2014).

Whilst it is important to bring foreign experts, they should be encouraged not only to espouse western knowledge, values and practices but project the local. Often, such experts, for example, assume the role to change the less developed world and tend to reproduce power imbalance and Euro-centrism. As has been established in the paper, Global North determines what global citizenship entails and its best policies and practices to enhance desired global change.

To eliminate such tendencies, there should be core policies to promulgate "unlearning" and "learning to learn from below" (Spivak, 2004). Core policies guiding the program should discourage participants from imposing on the communities their views of modernity and relevance which are rooted in colonialism. This demands critical discussions and debates about the concept, particularly at a time when the universities have intensified their strategies to internationally position themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter explored and provided contextual analyses and interpretations of global citizenship education in higher educational institutions in Ghana. It has been established that the concept of GCE is less prominent both institutionally and nationally. The brief mentioning of GCE in the higher education context is associated with neoliberal ideologies of internationally exposing students and also equipping them with the critical skills and knowledge to work abroad or locally (Gyamera, 2018).

There is the need for the universities to develop a determined interest to play valued role in enhancing GCE nationally and internationally. Universities should engage in a critical debate on how global citizenship could address what appears to be thriving conditions of injustice and how it could assuage colonial injustice and inequity in the world. As the concept is emphasized in the universities, it should espouse democratic and ethical relationships aimed at achieving social peace and sustainable justice for all (Mansouri, et. al. 2017. P. 7). It should aim at achieving a more just and equitable world (Mansouri, et. al. 2017, 7). It should encourage a way of acting in society that is 'community-centric, ecologically balanced, and culturally sensitive, in the ongoing construction of a more just and peaceful world' (Basio and Torres, 2019:3). GCE in the universities should emphasize empathy, diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, intergroup helping, and a sense of responsibility and the need to act for a better world. (Botsio and Torres, 2019; Reysen, et. al. 2012). Most significantly, it should be a great weapon to enhance the decolonization process in the institutions. This demands Critical Global Citizenship and there is a need to rethink the type of knowledge, skills and competencies to emphasize global competencies of individuals (Basio and Torres, 2019, 8; Marginson, 2011; UNESCO 2014).

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E-Learning Practices, Challenges and Prospects in Selected Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions: The View with Learning Styles

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Abstract

The proliferation of technology in the contemporary higher education is making learners, instructors, and instructional media augment virtual reality and gadgets. This has brought interactions through digital devices and electronics in an online and/or off-line way. The main purpose of this study was to assess practices, challenges, and prospects of e-learning and its alignment with learning style. The population of the study represents higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Two private and two public institutions were selected by using purposive sampling. But simple random sampling was employed for recruiting 280 participants (270 papers were returned) who have e-learning experiences. Questionnaires, in open and close ended forms were used for gathering data from students, and a semi-structured interview was conducted with instructors. Descriptive statistical analyses (mean, standard deviation, etc) and correlations were computed in the methods of analysis. Thematic data analysis was used for analyzing qualitative data. The findings revealed that there is a promising beginning in e- learning practices. Access, convenience, time favorability, and flexibility are raised as merits. On the other hand, slow internet network speed, cost (internet and gadgets), illiteracy in using technology and gadgets, assessment/evaluation related problems, and impacts of gadgets on health condition are the challenges. Mismatch with learning style is also another challenge for bringing about desirable change. In the prospects, video productions and increment of connectivity are paving way for a promising effort in actuating e-learning. As ways forward, higher education institutions shall augment electronic student engagements with the conventional learning. This can help stepping up the shift towards e-learning. Giving trainings, resource mobilization, and resolution of connection problems should be accomplished to help maximize e-learning practices and engagements for better learning outcomes.

Keywords: E-learning, Conventional Learning, Blended Learning, Learning Style, Higher Education

1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions are envisaged towards the dynamics in to virtual learning through using different technological outputs which can create ease of the process for bringing about desirable behavioral outcomes. Teaching-learning, research, and community engagements are expected to use ICT infrastructures that can simplify activities through attaining efficiency and effectiveness in the education sector.

Despite the increment in the number of universities in the country, the use of ICT for education in most universities is very low (Tadesse, 2015). Predominantly, there are arguments that implementations of e- Learning and providing digital library are insignificantly used in the educational processes and practices. Students learning styles are also denied.

As a result of rapid technological progress, change, and globalization drift in higher education, new approaches/methods and perspectives have emerged to educational practice such as e-Learning. These changes are means of removal of boundaries among students for interacting and learning regardless of physical distance. Nowadays, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is presently used in education to support students in the learning experiences more efficiently (Ja'ashan, 2020).

Technology facilitates the learning process. The propagation and rise of technology in the current higher education scene is making learners, instructors, and instructional media augment virtual reality and gadgets in to the academic track through which they move to bring desirable change. This has brought interactions through digital devices and electronics in online and/or off-line modes with massive usage of devices and connectivity that eventually realize eLearning.

The swift progresses of ICT, especially the internet, has paved way to the possibility of a new teaching and learning paradigm. The e-Learning approach has worldwide been deemed necessary to enable 21st learners to adapt to universal changes. There is intense interest of learners in the use of digital media for academic purpose (Manaye, 2022). Students in conventional classrooms use their mobile and tablet for recoding lectures. They also take pictures from white board. In short, they are using electronic devices instead of paper and pen. This is an indicator that students have acquainted themselves with those e- Learning infrastructures.

Contemporary education domain has taken pronounced increase in capitalizing on emerging technology and the utilization of modern gadgets and devices for learning purpose (Katsaris, & Vidakis, 2021). This is inviting students to use digital devices for note-taking and note-making purposes vis-à-vis learning styles which have become central issues for adapting in to the dynamics.

2. Statement of the Problem

The teaching-learning process is greatly influenced by swift expansion of ICT and advanced digital media (Manaye, 2022; Anii*et al*. 2017). Learning using such virtual platforms, electronic devices, and digital media is often referred to as e-Learning (Anii et al. 2017).

Tadesse (2015) indicated that there is an endeavor to use ICT in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

The practices are in the effort of synergetic and orchestrated effort of experts, and investing on e- Learning infrastructure. In addition, the efforts of using ICT (which is one part in e-Learning) for education, principally centered on the area of course management system (such as Moodle, and Learning Management Systems - LMS), student management information systems, digital library, and library automation (library management systems for making electronic books accessible to students and instructors). But the study of Tadesse (2015) did not show the learning styles of learners.

E-learning is referred as learning experiences by means of a variety of electronic devices (e.g.computers, laptops, smart phones, etc.) with internet accessibility in synchronous or asynchronous learning environmental settings. It could be a platform that makes the education process more student- centered, creative, and flexible. Such deliverance of courses is highly preferred and more appropriate, cost- effective and easily accessible especially in conditions where the instructor and students could notbe obliged to have face to face contact. In the implementation, there is the use of various software/appssuch as Google Classroom, Zoom, and others to take online courses (Zalat, Hamed, & Bolbol, 2021; Alshammari, & Qtaishn, 2019).

E-learning is instruction conveyed through digital technologies such as the internet, intranet networks (Hedge & Hayward, 2014), and digital media (Manaye, 2022). Hedge and Hayward (2014), presaged eLearning as innovative method for imparting instruction that is electronically mediated, learner- centered, in a properly designed way, and interactive learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime via employing the internet and digital gadgets. This views learning by using computers and electronic devices.

For eLearning to increase the educational engagement and experience, technological skills of instructors and students have crucial role. These also help for meaningfully conveying contents both in synchronous and asynchronous ways. Different literatures viewed online learning environments into a triad of synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid learning settings. Synchronous learning settings offer real time interaction that is collaborative and cooperative in nature integrating e-activities (Salmon, 2013) such as questioning and answering interaction. Nevertheless, such session requires simultaneous student- instructor presence. The second environment refers to asynchronous environments which are not time bound and learners can work on e-activities on their own pace. The third is a hybrid online environment that amalgams synchronous period with asynchronous set of activities combining simultaneity with non- simultaneity as instructional design (Swan, 2001; Salmon, 2013). Providing such alternatives can help the education meet learners' needs, styles and paces. However, the implementation is very demanding of digital, technological, and internet skills of instructors, students, and other assistants.

In their empirical study, Zalat, Hamed, and Bolbol (2021) indicated that the technological skills of giving the online courses amplify the educational value of the experience. The usefulness, perceived ease of use, and acceptance of eLearning were affirmatively viewed. According to their findings, the highest barriers to eLearning were insufficient/unstable internet connectivity, inadequate computer labs, lack of computers/laptops, and technical problems.

In the past, eLearning was underutilized particularly in developing countries (Zalat, Hamed, & Bolbol, 2021). E-learning systems aim to provide acceptability and interactivity between students, instructors,

and learning content anytime and anywhere (Alshammari, &Qtaishn (2019).

These days, eLearning is practiced where there is use of computer as an online way of acquiring knowledge through the internet or through the offline mechanisms. The online comprises the use of Internet Explorer/Navigator. In short, the applications and process of e-learning include computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classroom and digital collaboration where contents are delivered via the internet, intranet/extranet, audio and/or video tapes, and satellite TV (Plasma). The form of expression and reception could be Audio, Visual, and/or Audio/Visual. This kind of learning is triggering the focus to investigate how these forms best fit or match with learning styles of students. With the swift proceed in E-learning systems, individual adjustment and adaptability have now become imperative attributes in the education technology (Aeiad, &Meziane, 2019).

Effective eLearning practices are expected to integrate student characteristic and quality such as learning style, health condition, and developmental appropriateness in order to provide a more personalized and adaptive learning experience (Alshammari, & Qtaish, 2019).

Students' learning style is a very decisive factor for learning experiences or practices. One of the prominent learning styles is Fleming's VARK model. In this model, Fleming developed a way to help students learn more about their preferences. According to the VARK model, there are four types of learning styles—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing.

Learners with visual learning style learn best with diagrams, illustrated books, videos, and handouts. For retaining information, learner with this style take detailed notes. They prefer learning through outlines, flashcards, highlight, circle, or underline important information. Aural/Auditory learning style is manifested as learners with this preference learn best with verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to others. They attend, listen, repeat things out aloud while studying, and use study groups to discuss materials. The third part, read/write style is characterized by the need to see information displayed in words, more verbal preference. They learn best with definitions, handouts, and verbatim note-taking. Read/write style learners rewrite information and notes; read notes silently; and write down trends for graphs/charts. The fourth style in the acronym is kinesthetic style. Learners with kinesthetic preference need to do, move, or touch. They learn best with hands-on approach, build models, and go on fieldtrips. These learners use mobile study materials such as flashcards.

The main purpose of this study was to assess practices, challenges, and prospects of e-learning and the alignment with learning style. The focus of this study is mainly on eLearning

practices (the process) and learning style; not on technical aspects.

Research Questions

The main research questions of this study include the following:

1. How are the practices of eLearning in the selected Higher Education Institutions?
2. What are the challenges of eLearning in the selected Higher Education Institutions?
3. What are the prospects of eLearning in the selected Higher Education Institutions?
4. What is the relationship of eLearning with learning styles?

Scope of the Study

This study mainly focuses on internet based learning through LMS (asynchronous aspect) and online sessions (synchronous) practices in four selected higher education institutions in Addis Ababa. The gadgets could be computers, smart phones, tablets, laptops, or any electronic device which can allow connectivity.

5. Methods

Study Design

Concurrent mixed triangulation design was used in this study. Quantitative and qualitative data gathering processes and analyses were done parallel.

Population, Sample, and Sampling

The population of the study represents higher education institutions in Ethiopia. The locale in focus is Addis Ababa as it is the capital city and a place where huge number of higher education institutions and students are located.

Two private and two public institutions were selected by using purposive sampling in determining the practices. But simple random sampling was employed for recruiting 280 participants (60 from each institution) who are with e-learning experiences. 270 questionnaires were legible for analysis. This means the response rate is 96.4%.

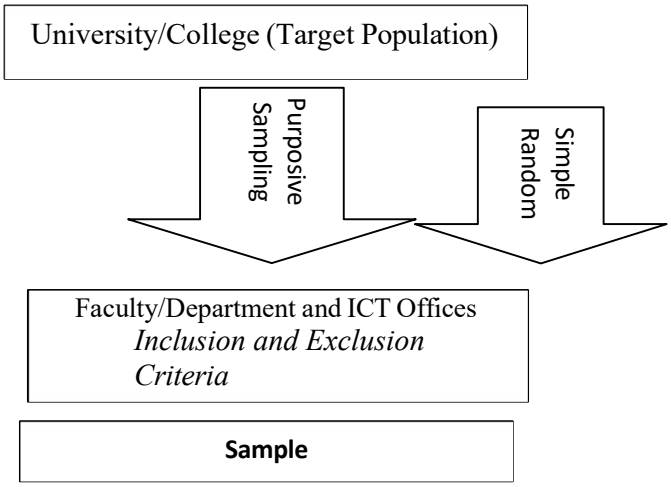


Figure 1: Sampling procedure

Inclusion

1. ICT office workers, lab assistants, and instructors (five)

2. Students with eLearning usage exposure Exclusion
1. Students who do not have exposure in the usage of virtual platforms; and

2. Top level management bodies.

Data Sources and Data Gathering Instruments

Questionnaires (open and close ended form) were used for gathering data from students, and a semi- structured interview was conducted with instructors. Single observation in each institution was done for looking as eLearning infrastructures such as internet server facilities, computer labs and the like. In addition to the aforementioned primary sources, secondary sources of data were used from ICT offices.

Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analyses (mean, standard deviation, etc.) and correlations were computed in the methods of analysis. Thematic data analysis was used for analyzing qualitative data.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was secured. In order for guaranteeing confidentiality, anonymity is implemented.

3. Data Analysis and Findings

1. Participants Background

Student participants were recruited from two private and two public universities. College based snowballing access was done for the ease of data gathering process. All the participants were students of second year and above. The exclusion criteria is that first year students are on the freshman experience as they are not yet adapted to the university experiences.

2. E-Learning Practices

The eLearning practices are being executed through teaching virtually, assignment submission, and test and exam administration.

79% of the participants indicated that eLearning helps to address numerous students at a time. In the conventional/traditional classroom, the class size is limited to a few meter squares.

Various applications (software) are available in Google/Play Store, to be installed and used for eLearning among students and instructors.

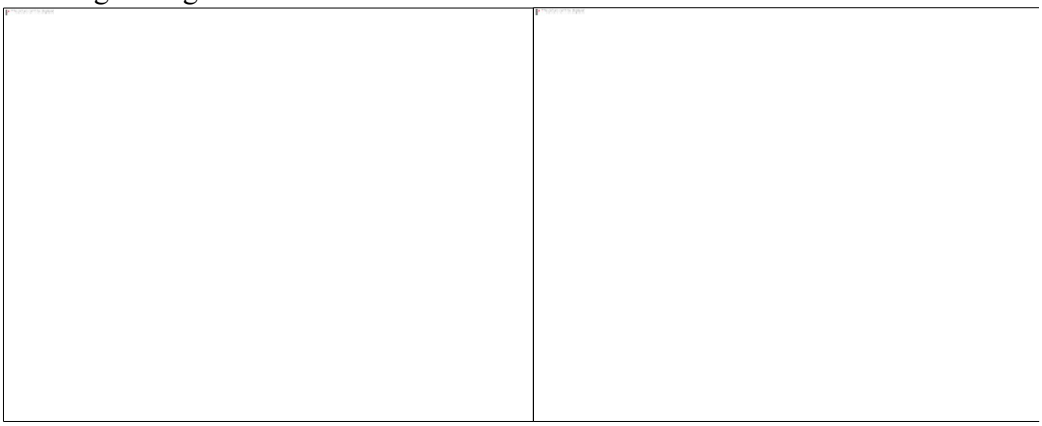


Figure 2: Screenshot of Applications of eLearning

The participants of the study indicated that eLearning practices are becoming part of the day to day practices, especially for tutorial and LMS related materials, and idea sharing platforms. Of course, the practices are incorporated parallel with conventional classroom teaching learning processes. E-Learners and the instructor communicate through the information on “Dashboards” and other help protocols.

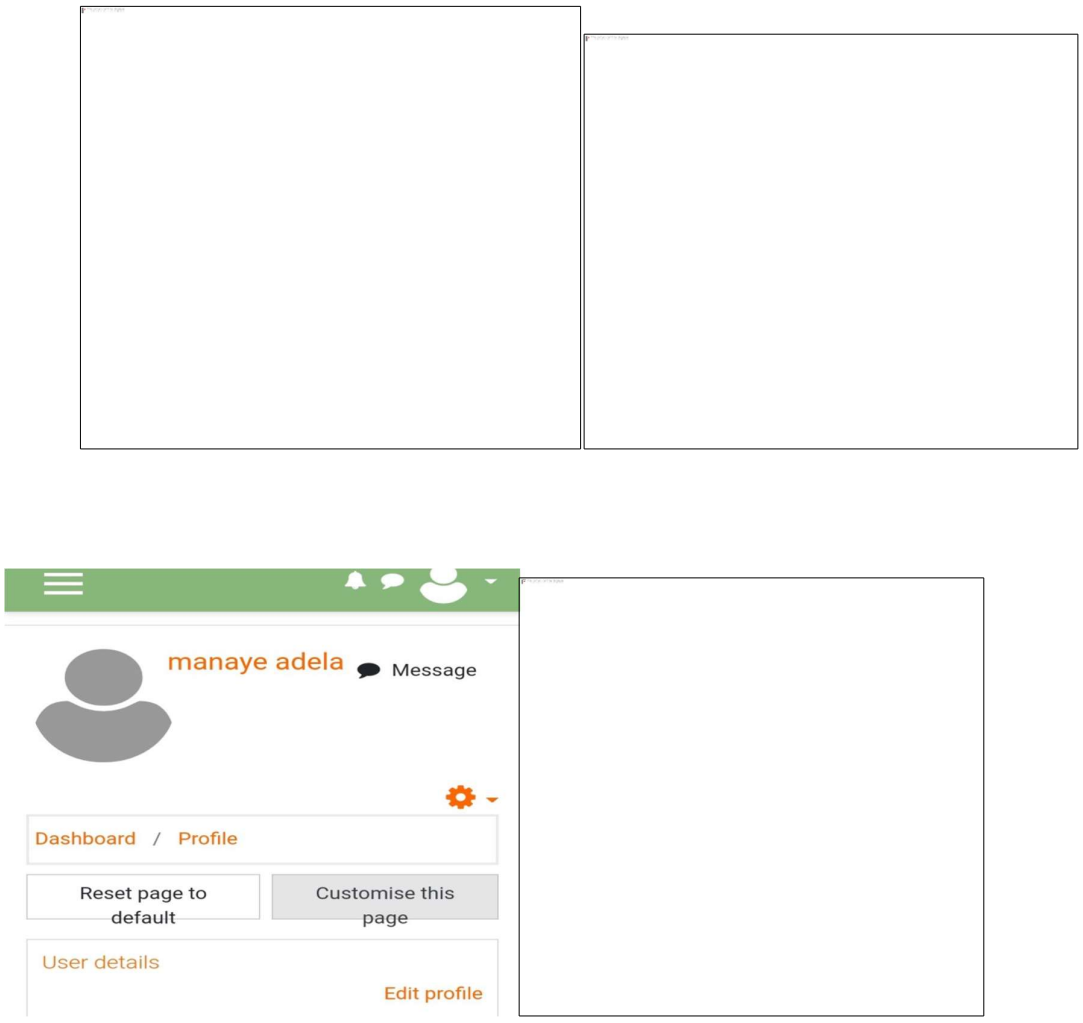


Figure 3: Screenshots of Dashboard

Trainings are also part of the practices in the eLearning implementation. These and other more efforts in exercising eLearning are becoming common practices in sensitizing broad use of such virtual outlays.

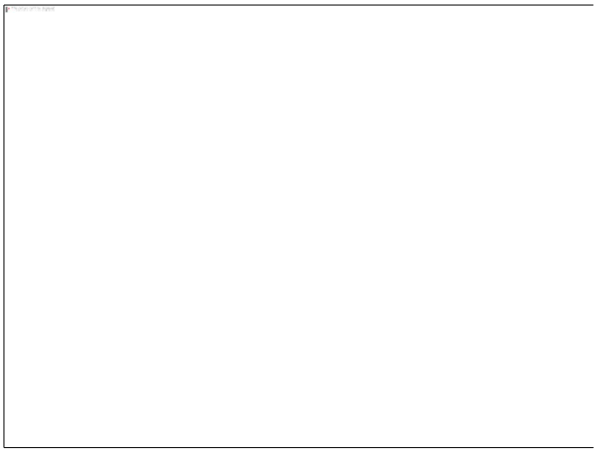
Most of the eLearning practices in the selected higher education institutions are more of blended or mixed. The practices are being done as assistive to the conventional teaching-learning process. This course limits the benefits or advantages that learners could get from eLearning, especially in adjusting pace and minimizing distance factors.

Participants of this study verbalized that eLearning is important for effective communication at a distant, and fosters much information flow between/among students and lecturers. It also permits learners to learn in their own pace and conveniences as lecture materials are readily available and the content delivery of the instructor is quite accessible to them.

Learning styles

In the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) adapted to this study, it was provided as key that the highest score indicates learner's preference, and the lowest score shows weakness modality.

When there are two or above very close highest scores, both modalities are preferences of the learner. From LSI, when the scores are ten or greater, the modality is highly used; however, when the scores are lower than ten, then it means the modality is not frequently used. 33% of the participants of this study use visual learning style; 23.7% aural/auditory; 11.1% read/write style; 13% Kinesthetic; and 19.3% use two or more modalities frequently.



Pie Chart 1: Learning style preferences

The above pie chart portrays learning style preferences of participants of this study. Most of the participants prefer visual style.

Correlations

		Visual Learning Style	***Aural/Auditory Learning Style***	***Read/Write Learning Style***	***Kinesthetic Learning Style***
Practices of eLearning	Pearson Correlation	***0.739****	*0.604**	*0.314**	***0.712****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	270	270	270	270

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Relationship among variable

The above tabular illustration indicates that eLearning practice has statistically significant relationship with learning styles in the VARK model. There is the strongest relationship with visual learning style, which is followed by kinesthetic learning style. The findings from the interview support that the read/write learning style is rarely used. As it is illustrated, the correlation is relatively weak though there is statistically significant relationship with eLearning practices.

3. Challenges in E-Learning

Costly internet tariff is a serious challenge to private internet users. In this finding, it was found that high cost of internet data service is a challenge in eLearning. In addition to internet cost, the cost of smart phones, personal computers (PC), and laptops which are input for e-learning are so high that every student in a developing country like Ethiopia cannot afford.

The uppermost barriers to e-learning are unstable and inadequate internet connectivity (71%), inadequate computer labs (83%), deficiency of computers/laptops (52%), and technical glitches (64%). Gadget or device obsolesce is another problem. When the devices are malfunctioning, then tasks and e- activities are interrupted and engagements are destructed. The electronics devices may glitch due to technical and/or mechanical failure.

Repetitive missing of user name and password is also a challenge. Sometimes, learners forget passwords and user names. This may become time consuming when seeking change and admin response.

E-learning is dependent on electric power. When power supply is interrupted, eLearning activities are also disturbed. So power is another challenge in the eLearning processes.

Poor internet connectivity is a potential challenge to eLearning. Though they have prudence through encrypting their files, very many participants feel insecure in information exchange. Poor time management is another challenge that makes the learner to vacillate in to other irrelevant tasks, especially in the asynchronous mode.

During electronic devices usage, a few learners incline to gaming and other entertainment channels. This is a challenge of attention diversion of learners. Such engagements and missing the purposes are demanding of self-monitoring of a student through knowing his/her learning style.

Above all these, eLearning is reduced to simply as alternative channel for traditional/conventional learning for the distribution of educational communication and information. This is considered as challenge since it belittles the contribution and the emphasis will be minimal with this kind of perception of eLearning as instructional or teaching aids.

4. Prospects of E-Learning

The mainstays of eLearning are access to electronic devices, gadgets, digital media, internet, intranet, and virtual teachings. The expansion of these and the promising dynamics in ICT will make the eLearning to be boosted.

The familiarity of students in the virtual ways of eLearning is believed to familiarize learners to be ready and get experiences for online and offline Computer Based Testing. This can sensitize students to be ready for taking exams including exit exams through digital instruments and connectivity which can allow synchronous administration of tests or exams.

The findings unveiled that the instructional methods or approaches that instructors use in the conventional and traditional classroom instruction no longer fits in to the eLearning platform. This is a warning for being considerate of students' learning styles (VARK system).

It is crucial to restructure instructional methods or approaches which were or are used for conventional or traditional education delivery and learning platforms. This is because the virtual platform has brought dynamics and changed learners' engagement in the digital ecology upon which eLearning is being practiced. This can, in turn, bring proper stimulation and activation to guide learning processes. Assessment and Blended Learning may make learners carry on learning and exam taking process to be done anywhere anytime as per the pace and convenience.

2. Discussion

There a is similar finding with Tadesse (2015) which indicates that the practices of e-learning in Ethiopian higher education are at infancy stage. Inadequate and inaccessible e-learning policy and ignorance about e-learning by academic and administrative staffs, and learners' related problems are the foremost challenges in the practices. Similar to Tadesse's finding, the implementation of eLearning and use of ICT for teaching-learning processes are challenged due to the lack of technology, literacy among staff, connection and infrastructure related problems, being costly and high price of gadgets.

Similar with what was forwarded by Alshammari and Qtaishn (2019), those efficacious eLearning systems are considerate of student preferences in time and space including the individual-paced asynchronous engagement.

Though the findings in this study revealed that eLearning is costly in internet and devices/gadgets, contrary to this finding, Obododike and Okekeokosisi (2020) indicated that it economizes expenditure through reducing transportation expenses.

Similar to the findings of Simamora , Fretes, Purba, and Pasaribu (2020), this study unveiled that instructors also use online learning by providing applications or "third parties" such as Youtube, Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom and other online applications.

Simamora and others (2020) stated that online learning has extraordinary prospects and potential to be practical due to enormous relation to technological developments and innovation dynamics in ICT. The findings match with the results of this study.

According to Eze, et al (2018) another challenge posed by eLearning education is the incompetence of few lecturers to help students develop the skills and acquire the required knowledge to be benefited from the e-learning platform. E-learning gives way for absence of physical personal interactions between

students and instructors, and or among their peers. There is a need for arrangement of methods of teaching that can best fit to the learning styles of students. The findings of this study indicated that the eLearning practices are being exercised with models of chalk-talk similar with the conventional classroom condition. The pedagogy of conventional or traditional face to face education should be modified in manner that it helps virtual engagement of students and content imparting of instructors.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Conclusion

The findings revealed that there is promising beginnings in eLearning practices, especially in postgraduate and distance divisions. Access, convenience, time favorability, and flexibility are raised as merits. On the other hand, slow internet network speed, cost (internet and gadgets), illiteracy in technology and gadgets use, assessment/evaluation related problems, and impacts of gadgets on health are the challenges.

Learning styles are still misused in eLearning the same way as the conventional or traditional teaching- learning process. Mismatch with learning style is also another challenge to bring about desirable changes. In the prospects, video productions and upgrading connectivity are paving way for a promising effort in actuating eLearning.

Generally, the challenges are grouped as academic, connectivity, technical, communication, and economic related problems.

2. Recommendation

This part of the article contains recommendations or ways forward as per the findings.

As a way forward, higher education institutions shall augment electronic student engagements with the conventional learning. This can help stepping up the shift towards e-learning. Giving trainings, resource mobilization, and resolution of connection problems should be done for helping learning to maximize e-learning practices and engagements for better learning outcomes.

1. Institutions should give rigorous and periodical training to their staff and students on the use and positive practices of eLearning.

2. In order to seize the advantages of eLearning, HEIs should be proactive in preventing the challenges identified in this study such as internet speed, cost, and other infrastructure related problems. There should be free and fast internet for the eLearning practices. HEIs should work towards doing away with electric power interruption either through dealings with Ethiopian Electric Utility or setting standby generators as substitutes.

3. Pedagogical concepts should be integrated in to the technology use for making eLearning more effective and efficient.

4. Higher education institutions should adapt appropriate model of conveying education and evaluation processes in eLearning. The teaching methods or approaches and learning styles should have best fit. Curriculum designers and pedagogy professionals should be well trained in eLearning in order to attain the desirable learning outcomes

5. Creating psychologically safe learning environment in the internet is quite important. So day- by-day, learners should be induced in to eLearning platforms Blended Learning.

6. Learner-centered need assessment should be done to design curriculum and program of eLearning. In addition, computer-based exam administration should be embedded with eLearning processes for a better acquaintance with graduating exit exams which are intended to be given virtually.

Further study can be conducted to expand eLearning in the Open and Distance Education division.

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Revisiting Indigenization in Ethiopia's Higher Education: Eguale Gebreyohannes and The Conceptual Tenets of '□□□□□ □□□' Biruk Shewadeg5

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to revisit the pressing issue of indigenization via the philosophical canon of Eguale's 'በተዋህዶ ከበረ' – roughly translated as "praised through synthesis." More often than not, the academic discourse of indigenization in Ethiopia has been dominated in a categorical denunciation of modern education that led to the ruthless dismantlement of the indigenous knowledge from the school curriculum. It is further accused for the suppression of subjectivity that loosens the Ethiopian 'self ' and alienation of themselves from their culture, history, politics and perhaps intellectual rigors, as well. Accordingly, the panacea against these odds posed by modern education unambiguously becomes a due consideration of indigenous knowledge and 'Ethiopianize' the curriculum. Contrary to the established discourse of indigenization that centered on a purely Manichean approach, Eguale came up with 'በተዋህዶ ከበረ' as paradigmatic conception that may presumably accommodate Ethiopian cultural values and Western science and technology. This paper, by intensively analyzing relevant literature and employing a discursive reasoning approach, ultimately seeks to enrich the discussion on the two antagonistic schools of thought in the field of the philosophy of higher education, i.e. the disinterested pursuit of truth vs. instrumental value. It brings Eguale's idea into a critical investigation to explore the diverse forms of knowledge to form a creative synthesis as a way of attaining development in sustained and holistic manner.

Keywords: 'በተዋህዶ ከበረ', Eguale, Indigenization, Ethiopia

Introduction

Indigenous formal education has existed in Ethiopia since the time of its ancient civilization. This traditional education which was intricately intermingled with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church existed for millennia. It also remained as the principal actor in the elite production of the country for so long. Primarily, it aimed at preparing the youth as deacons and priests to provide church services. It also served the government as the main source in providing judges, governors, treasures and general administrators. Apart from its supply of religious elite and local functionaries, it transmitted the value, history, culture, virtue, etc. of society from generation to generation. It was only in 1950 with the establishment of the then University College of Addis Ababa that modern and secular higher education was introduced (Teshome 1979; Wondimu, 2003; Tebeje 2018).

Educational policy is usually designed creatively to achieve rapid modernization. The way modernization is perceived conditions the educational policy. Modernization has been normatively conceived in terms of those binary oppositions of 'traditional' vs. 'modern'; 'barbaric' vs. 'civilized'; 'people with history' vs. 'people without history'; etc. Relying on such structuralist identification, modernization has been theorized in terms of a fundamental departure with the former attributes and their replacement with the latter one. This inaccurate conception brought an educational policy that advocated an absolute Westernization through the avoidance of the traditional legacy of lagging societies. As traditional values were considered particularly unfit for modernization, Ethiopia, like the rest of colonial nations, was convinced that it can catch up with economic and social progress of the West *via* the unwavering sidelining of traditional schools and the rapid spread of modern education (Messay, 2008; Paulos, 2006).

Ethiopia's historical trajectory of education is distinct and non-colonized, yet the system of its higher education now predominantly reflects Eurocentric epistemological tradition. Such a tradition has marginalized, silenced, and de-centered indigenous knowledge systems. The most pressing challenge of having an epistemological dialogue between the indigenous Ethiopian and the 'modern' western models of education lies on the prevalence of binary thinking – Western as 'modern' and indigenous as 'traditional'. Modernity thus becomes a total dismantlement of the traditional and its replacement with the modern one. This is what the modern higher education did in Ethiopia.

It made an absolute detachment with the millennia old indigenous epistemologies and superseded the Western epistemological paradigm that uprooted and alienated the educated elite from its source.

Rethinking such a model of a university can play an important role in contributing to overcoming the problems associated with up rootedness. Both in terms of cultivating the spirit and knowledge necessary for the development of subjectivity and practical knowledge necessary for development, the university needs to play an important role in Ethiopia. In lieu of attaining such a mission, the university has been challenged to undo the Western epistemological paradigm and duly consider the local one through indigenization.

The academic discourse of indigenization in Ethiopia highly reflects an explicit and direct condemnation of modern education which brought an absolute reversal of the indigenous knowledge systems from the school curriculum. The normative cure against these odds that

modern education poses becomes an urgent call for 'Ethiopianizing" the curriculum particularly at the university level (Wuhibegezer & Gezae, 2015; Teshome, 2020). Contrary to the established discourse of indigenization that centered on a purely Manichean6 approach, Eguale came up with 'በተዋህዶ ከበረ' as paradigmatic conception that may presumably accommodate Ethiopian cultural values and Western science and technology. Advancing the ideals of universalists i.e. utilitarians and Kantians, he attempted to maintain that development goals and principles are valid for all societies and the essentials of a subtle syncretic of the local with the western in the Ethiopian values. The syncretism, however, is expected to not, in a wholesale, ignore local realities.

Manichaeism a concept used to describe a dichotomous approach in dealing with issues of various sort. It represents an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. Commonly, as the word used in the philosophical arena is a way in which reality is bifurcated in to two mutually exclusive categories of good vs. evil, right vs. wrong, virtue vs. vice, etc.

Indeed, discourse of indigenization in higher education systems, at the first glance, seems strange as the country obtains fundamental idiosyncrasies from the rest of the African states. This idiosyncrasy, at least from the education standpoint, has been centered on its written tradition that is really not the case in the rest of sub-Saharan African countries and its non-colonial history. These together form the Ethiopian exceptionalism thesis that need to be debunked to make sense of the indigenization concept in the country.

Challenging Ethiopia's "Exceptionalism Thesis"

The exceptionalism thesis among others draws attention on the country's long standing history of written tradition and the absence of colonial experience that it could have used it to advance an education philosophy of its own. The historical trajectory of the Ethiopian education system, however, provides a visual representation of the complexity and juxtaposition of the mental colonization in a non-colonized context. Certain characteristics indeed make the genesis and development of the Ethiopian education system peculiar in Africa. Despite a brief Italian military occupation from 1936 to 1941, Ethiopia has never been colonized. Thus, the West had never been central to the socioeconomic and political formation of modern Ethiopia. The country has more than a thousand years of recorded history and tradition of elite education, perhaps, with its own scripts and alphabet (Girma, 2011; Emnet 2020). The fact that the country has effectively defeated the colonial aspiration and established a written tradition of its own, however, could not liberate itself from the disparaging consequences of colonial modernity which the rest of postcolonial world continues to struggle with. Arguably, the tragic consequences of colonialism resulted less from economic and social distractions than from mental colonization.

Accordingly, the inattentive opening of Ethiopia to modern education became the sole factor behind the dismissal of its exceptionalism.

Although the Western education model in Ethiopia was introduced at the turn of the twentieth century, higher education was launched only in the 1950s. Even by then, it was the Canadian Jesuit missionaries that were entrusted with the task of establishing and molding an Ethiopian institution of higher learning embracing Western epistemology as a sole, objective basis for knowledge. The king established the first university in the capital with mobilizing resources and experiences from the West. The influences of the indigenous knowledge system have

been diminished, and "western knowledge gradually became hegemonic in Ethiopian higher education" (Emnet, 2020:8). Such Eurocentric underpinning has been deprived of any significant connections with local culture and traditions. It is poorly related to, and incompetently intertwined with, the indigenous knowledge systems which existed for time immemorial. It rather remained a passive mimicry of the epistemological tradition of the West, which is fundamentally detached from the local context. This dissociation makes the youth feel alienated from one's own culture, leading to a disoriented sense of identity.

The introduction and development of modern education, thus, faced the paramount issue of Ethiopianization. Balsvik (1979) wrote:

> *"The most important characteristic of the entire set-up of modern education in Ethiopia was that it was imposed from the UK, the USA, and influenced by various other European countries and thus essentially constructed to serve a different society than the Ethiopian one Curricula as well as textbooks came from abroad. There was little in the curricula related to basic and immediate needs of the Ethiopian society. To the average child the school was essentially an alien institution of which his own parents were entirely ignorant".* (p. 6).

The issue of endowing modern education with a national content and direction is a problem that Ethiopia shares with other colonized countries undermining its exceptionalism and its mere rhetoric. Virtually all studies in Africa condemn the irrelevance and alienating outcomes of the western education system. The proper solution suggested becomes the Africanization of the system. Ali Mazrui (1978) contends for the Africanization of the staffs that would be followed by an Africanized curriculum in ensuring indigenization. Whereas the rest of African countries can ascribe the factor to colonization and its aftermaths, Ethiopia offers the unique case of its failure to properly utilize its leverage of defeating colonialism. Despite Ethiopia's magnificent history of resisting colonialism and its enterprise, a menacing trademark of colonial influence was permeated through the Eurocentric education system. Thus, Ethiopian exceptionalism from the vantage point of its philosophy of education makes a little sense. It rather subscribed to the idea that it, too, ended up by becoming a colony. One can rightly argue that the introduction of Western education in modernization guise had accomplished what "military means had failed to achieve" (Messay 2006:14). This perhaps validates the relevance of the indigenization discourse with all its intricacies in the country.

The Indigenization Discourse and Its Pitfalls

Indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews have been systematically excluded from Eurocentric educational systems for centuries. Education, as it is currently envisioned and practiced in most parts of the world, has been created as a tool to propagate European colonialism, imperialism, and capitalist expansion, which consequently contribute to social and environmental injustice disproportionately affecting indigenous peoples across the globe. As a result, there is a growing global movement towards indigenizing higher education, which seeks to empower indigenous people, their culture and knowledge systems, and reshape education and research paradigms for the benefit of all.

The concept of indigenizing higher education is the process of integrating traditional

knowledge, values, and practices into modern educational systems to create a more comprehensive and equitable learning experience. This approach recognizes the contributions of indigenous people's cultures and their ways of knowing and offers students the opportunity to learn from culturally diverse perspectives.

The concept of indigenization is not merely about the inclusion of indigenous people in a westernized curriculum. It is an approach that seeks to return power, authority, and autonomy to indigenous people to control their own education, research and pedagogical philosophies. Indigenization aims at addressing the historical injustices, inequalities, and imbalances in power that have arisen due to the legacy of colonial exploitation.

So what does it look like to "Indigenize" higher education? The main premise is that indigenous people should have a leading say in the structure, development and teaching of these programs. This requires a

shift in values, power dynamics, and de-colonial thinking by non-indigenous allies. Programs need to be developed in partnership with elders, knowledge-holders and local community leaders. Indigenous Studies programs in universities are one example of an attempt to create learning environments that forefront indigenous knowledge and culture, but it cannot stop there. For instance, more fundamental changes could include giving indigenous peoples representation on institutional governance committees or creating curriculum development groups with indigenous teachers.

In sum, indigenizing higher education is undoubtedly part of a bigger movement towards decolonizing institutions and building more egalitarian societies globally. By recentering indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems, we can create educational systems that reflect a more holistic approach to personal and societal well-being. The transition to creating these systems will require commitment, dialogue and action from both indigenous peoples and the wider public.

We need to respect and attempt to learn the values and philosophies of indigenous people, appreciate them for their invaluable contributions they make to society, and continue to work towards equity and social justice for all.

More recently, the Ethiopian government launched a higher education transformation program in 2018, which aims to increase access, equity, quality, and relevance of higher education in the country. Indigenizing higher education is one of the pillars of this program, reflecting the need to incorporate indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, and languages into the curriculum, teaching, and research activities.

Scholars have been engrossed in showing how the indigenous Ethiopian educational system was sidelined in favor of western system, and call for the need for re-Ethiopianizing it. Acknowledgments were made on the existence of indigenous educational system that stayed for long in the socio-economic and political settings of the Ethiopian society until its dismantlement by Eurocentric epistemology under the guise of modernization. This brought an education system that is de-Ethiopianized which produced intellectual dependency and a colonized mind on the non-colonized state. Apart from superseding intellectual dependency, Western education has been attributed to reproduce social evils, primarily spearheaded by alienated Ethiopian elite in the guise of promoting social transformation (Messay, 2008; Paulos, 2006; Wuhibegezer 2016).

Indigenous education in Ethiopia is ascribed for training state bureaucrats, minting coins, erecting obelisks, philosophy, music, art, healing, herbal medicine, soil and water conservation, food processing, terracing and pastoral traditions connected with egalitarian socio-political norms, inventing local technologies of iron-smelting, tanning, pottery and weaving (Pankhurst, 1968; Teshome, 1979). Nullifying the scientific foundations of these educational institutions, Ethiopia imported western education by sidelining its indigenous knowledge system. The way forward against such de- Ethiopianized education system is Re-Ethiopianizing. Wuhibegezer (2016) argues for "the repatriating of the new Ethiopian educational modernity from exile should focus on the re-invention of the glorious past" (p. 83). Messay (2006) in his part suggested that way out from the present predicament on the radical reformulation of the educational policy. This reformulation demands critical attempt of Ethiopianizing the curriculum and reinforcing Ethiopian traditional values and culture.

The revival of traditions in the particular sense of realizing the liberation of the study of "Ethiopian history and culture from Eurocentric concepts is, therefore, the most urgent and primary task" (p.4). Bekele (2015) wanted to look at the case wider in the continental level and suggested to indigenize and remold the university in such a way that it serves our purpose. The continent is abundant with its natural resources. The fact that hinders the proper utilization of its wealth has to do, among others, with the failure to use knowledge existing locally and globally in an appropriate manner. He presents the lack of subjectivity depicted by the "Hegelian and neo-Marxist traditions of Habermas and critical theory generally as crucial to address much of Africa's problems (p.30).

The discourse on the idea of indigenization is centrally anchored on universities as they are agencies entrusted in salvaging people from its quagmire and bringing sustainable development. The philosophy behind the idea of a university, however, has been contentious among scholars.

The Idea of a University

The debate between the disinterested pursuit for truth and instrumental function is a long-standing and ongoing one within academia, and specifically within the idea of a university. The disinterested pursuit for truth refers to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding purely for their own sake, without any regard for the practical applications or usefulness of that knowledge. Instrumental function, on the other hand, refers to the belief that knowledge should be pursued only in so far as it can serve some practical purpose or help to solve some immediate problems.

In the context of a university, these two approaches represent different visions of what a university and its primary purpose should be. Should a university be a place where scholars pursue knowledge for its own sake, with no concern for how that knowledge might be applied? Or should a university be primarily focused on serving the needs of society and solving practical problems?

Proponents of the disinterested pursuit for truth argue that universities should be places devoted to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Knowledge, Newman (1852) argues is "capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it is really such, is its own reward" (p. 128). University education is fundamentally geared towards the training of liberal education, which in return consists of disciplining the mind.

That is to say, they should be spaces where scholars are free to follow their curiosity and explore the mysteries of the universe, without being constrained by concerns about practical applications or commercial viability. They argue that this approach allows for the greatest freedom of thought and inquiry, and that it often leads to breakthroughs and innovations that would not have been possible if researchers had been more concerned with immediate practical applications.

Jaspers (1959) contends that university is the sacred place where man exploits the highest form of freedom to "search for truth and to teach truth in defiance of anyone who wishes to curtail this freedom" (p. xvii). He made the fiercest critique on the sheer utilitarian conception in university's role claiming that "*all the university recognizes* is *responsibility to truth*. *This struggle for truth must not be confused with a struggle for economic existence. It occurs on the level of disinterested investigation*" (p. 63).

Wilhelm Von Humboldt, in the same vein noted "*knowledge should be cultivated for its own sake and not its uses*" and it is the task of universities to be engaged in this rationale (in Marginson, 2008:3).

Critics of this approach, however, argue that it is elitist and impractical. They point out that many of the problems facing the world today, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change, are urgent and require immediate attention. They argue that universities should be using their resources to help solve these problems, rather than allowing scholars to indulge in esoteric pursuits that have no immediate relevance to people's lives.

The other view, with respect to the idea of a university is the instrumental function view, which argues that universities should be geared towards meeting the practical needs of society. Universities are supposed to have a more practical focus, including the production of skilled technicians. This approach views universities as tools of social and economic progress; places where researchers should be focused on developing solutions to pressing problems like disease, hunger, and climate change. Proponents of this view argue that universities have a social responsibility to address these issues, and that they should be putting their resources towards finding practical solutions that can make a real difference in people's lives. William James (2007) argues that the purpose of a university is to provide practical training for students, so that they can apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems. The main purpose of a university is to produce "technically efficient" individuals who can make important contributions to society through their work.

John Dewey (2008) believed that education should be focused on preparing students for practical, real-world problems. He argued that universities should be more closely connected to the needs of society and should produce graduates who were ready to apply their knowledge to apply their knowledge to practical problems. Universities are expected to focus on producing graduates who are skilled in practical areas such as Engineering and business. He argued that universities should be more closely connected to the needs of industry and should produce graduates who are ready to contribute to the workforce.

Critics of the instrumental function approach, however, argue that it can sometimes lead to a narrowing of vision and an obsession with the immediate and the practical. They point out that important scientific and intellectual breakthroughs often come from seemingly irrelevant or esoteric investigations, and that cutting off funding for these types of projects could limit the potential for truly groundbreaking discoveries.

The debate between the disinterested pursuit for truth and instrumental function is one that will likely continue for many years to come. There are strong arguments on both sides, and both approaches have their merits and drawbacks. Finding the right balance between these two approaches is the key challenge facing universities today, as they seek to promote intellectual freedom and inquiry while also dealing with pressing problems facing the world today.

In reality, most universities today strive to strike a balance between these two approaches. They recognize the importance of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, while also acknowledging the need

to address pressing social and economic problems. As such, they often invest in both basic research into fundamental principles and practical research into problems that have more immediate relevance.

It is here that Eguale (2003) presented his notion of '**በተዋህዶ ከበረ**' as paradigmatic conception that may presumably accommodate Ethiopian cultural values and Western science and technology. With challenging the *tabula rasa* depiction of the modernization discourse against the non-West, he equally criticized the Manichean approach of indigenization scholars that presents a strict dichotomy between the West and the Rest.

Apart from the either/or debate dominating the philosophy of a university, he rather argued that a university needs to have role to critically investigate in exploring the diverse forms of knowledge to then form a creative synthesis. The Ethiopian indigenous higher education seems leanings towards the disinterested pursuit of truth with a spiritual overtone having in its own merits. This, however, could not help an advancement in science and technology which is a major pillar for societal development sustainably. As the currently popular idea of sustainable development needs the marriage of the two, Eguale's notions appear still a *sine-qua-non*. Sustainable development represents a holistic development that embraces the material and spiritual aspect of life duly considering the long existing cultural values and social norms and the needs of future generations. In this journey, the role of higher education is undisputedly critical.

Eguale Gebreyohannes: 'በተዋህዶ ከበረ'

Eguale Gebreyohannes was an Ethiopian scholar, educator, and philosopher who made significant contributions to the development of higher education in Ethiopia. He was a strong advocate for the idea of a university as a space for intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, and the pursuit of knowledge. He believed that a university needs to play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and cultural development of the nation. He placed a strong emphasis on the need for universities to be grounded in local knowledge and traditions while obtaining the capability to synchronize Western science and technology. He argued that universities should not simply replicate western models of educations, but should instead draw on the rich cultural and intellectual resources. He underlines the need for indigenization of a university though not identical with the dominant discourses. He acknowledges the universal nature of knowledge when he says:

"ዕውቀት ሲባል በጠቅላላ በማናቸውም ሰው ዘንድ በአምሳለ ዘርዕ ያለ ነገር ነው … ያንተም የኔም አይደለም። የሁላችንም ነው። ብቻ አንዱ ቀደም ብሎ ይገልፃቸዋል፤ ያስገኛቸዋል" (Eguale, 2003;58)

"Knowledge in its entirety prevails in everybody … it's neither mine nor yours. It rather belongs to all of us. However, one may explain or attain it first."

While affirming the universal nature of knowledge, he remained skeptical of its universality in terms of knowledge production and dissemination. He believed that the current global knowledge system is dominated by Western epistemologies and that this has led to the marginalization of non-Western knowledge systems. This domination has created a situation where non-Western knowledge systems are

often dismissed as inferior or irrelevant. With this however, Eguale was not advocating a bizarre and absolute rejection of Western knowledge. He wrote:

ይህ የአውሮጳ መንፈስ ወይም ሥልጣኔ አንድ ጠባይ አለው። በአመጣጡ መሠረት ከቦታውና ከጊዜው ጋር የተያያዘ ነው። ግን በንፁህ የህሊና ጥረት የተገኘ ጠቅላላ የሰው መንፈስ ሕግ ስለሆነ በሁሉም ዘንድ የሚፀና ነው። እሊህን የህሊና ህግጋት ወይም የሥልጣኔ ፍሬዎች ያስገኙት አውሮጳውያን ናቸው። ግን እስያውያንም አፍሪካውያንም በትምህርት የራሳቸው ለማድረግ ይችላሉ ... በሀገራችንም ከአምሳ ዓመት ጀምሮ የትምህርት ዓላማ ከምዕራብ ሥልጣኔ ጋር የተያያዘ ሆኖአል። ሁለት መንገዶች አሉ። አንደኛው ይህንን ብቻውን ተቀብሎ ያለፈውን ያረጀ ነገር ነው ብሎ ጨርሶ መተው ነው። ሁለተኛው ደግሞ ሰው ራሱን እኔነቱን ለመካድ በላዲስ መፋቅ ስለማይችል የራሳችን ብለን የምንጠራውን ከአዲሱ ከምዕራባዊው ጋር በማፃመር በማዋሐድ ወደፊት አዲስ ኅብር ለመፍጠር እንሂድ የሚል ነው። ሁለተኛውን የምንከተል መሆናችን ግልፅ ነው። (p.58)

This European spirit or civilization has a distinct characteristic. It is anchored on its own time and space. Since it is founded on a pure Geist, it will prevail all over. Though, Europeans now formed this Geist and brought civilization, the Africans and Asians would possess it with Education … the goal of education for the past fifty years has been associated with the Western one. There are two options now. One is dismantling the local attributing it with anachronism and backward while accepting the Western one in a wholesale. The other lies on the impracticality of denying oneself and underlines a new system with a creative synthesis of ours with the Western one. It's obvious that we follow the later.

Eguale attempted to attain a peculiar synthesis between what is perceived as Ethiopian values and Western progress. He aimed to advance a new notion of progress that equally accommodates Ethiopian cultural values and Western science and technology. He further notes:

የቅኔ ትምህርት ለኢትዮጲያ ትልቅ ሀብት ነው ... በስዕልና በህንፃ ረገድ የታሪክ ማዕበል ከምድር በታች የደበቀውን ለምርመራ ትተን የአክሱምን እና የላስታን ሕንፃዎች ብቻ ብናስታውስ በዚህም በኩል ቢያንስ እንኳ ቦታው ባዶ አለመሆኑን ለመረዳት ይቻላል። አንድ የዘነጋነው ነገር አለ። ይህም ቴክኖሎጂ ነው። ቴክኖሎጂ በዛሬ መልኩ የአውሮጳውያን ፍጥረት ነው .... በዚህ ረገድ በብዙ በጥቅል ልንወስደውና በሀገራችን በብዙ ተዘርቶ በብዙ ሊያፈራ የሚያስፈልግ ነገር አለ። (p.74)

"Qine Education is Ethiopia's rich resource … in areas of painting and architecture – the Obelisk of Aksum and the Lasta buildings just to mention few are manifestation that it was not *tabula rasa*. There is something that we forgot however. And that is technology. Technology in its most recent feature is a European creation … there are lots of things that we need to appropriate holistically in this regard."

Eguale ascribed a university to have this mission of producing a youth who is capable of appropriating this technology. The curricula, he argued needs to be devised in such a way that would realize this appropriation. He further argued that if a nation has a system of education that balances different intellectual traditions, then the major predicaments of our society will be resolved. He pronounced the Platonic thesis that knowledge is the foundation of virtue and societal justice. The Greeks, Eguale maintains, embodied the principle of an intrinsic interest in knowledge as the basis of societal improvement. With comparing the education systems of the West and the Ethiopian, he situated the

problem in our knowledge system to be founded on hostility towards modern Western scientific education and instrumental rationality. European modernity rather was instrumental and learned a lot from different intellectual traditions although it is geared

towards the controlling of the natural world.

Eguale argues that technology is the unique possession of the West and underlined the need to learn from Western system of education. The task of the Ethiopian university along the intellectual becomes identification of the limitations of Western and non-Western, material and immaterial forms of knowledge in establishing an inventive synthesis. As he notes:

በዓለም የመጀመርያ ወይም በሥልጣኔ ታሪክ መጀመሪያ ላይ አይደለንም። በዓለም መጨረሻም አይደለንም፤ በመካከል ላይ ነን። በኃላችን ብዙ ዘመናት አልፈዋል። በነዚህ ዘመናት ውስጥ ሰዎች በብዙ ትግል ተዳከመው ያስገኙዋቸው የሥልጣኔ ቅርሶች እንደቦታውና እንደ ዘመኑ የተለያዩ ናቸው። የትምህርት ጠባይ ከነዚህ የሥልጣኔ ቅርሶች ጋር የተያያዘ ስለሆነ በአንድ ሀገር ውስጥ ፀንቶ የሚገኘው ሥልጣኔ በመጀመሪያ መመርመር አለበት።

We are neither first nor last in the history of civilizations. We are rather in the middle. We have passed centuries. There are diverse forms of civilization that people marked. It is the very purpose of education to critically examine this civilization.

Eguale's approach differs from the modernizing programs brought forth by erstwhile indigenizing scholars in that his intention has not been an attempt to elevate Ethiopia's cultural past as the source of perfection and romanticizing it. He rather believed that development goals and purposes can be valid across societies and be attained through instituting a new system of education that is capable of the creative synthesis-**'በተዋህዶ ከበረ'**

Conclusion

Ethiopia's peculiar non-colonial historical trajectory of education could not help in providing leverage to introduce a philosophy of education of its own. Contrary to its exceptionalist rhetoric, its higher education system is now functioning within the Eurocentric epistemological paradigm responsible for marginalization, silence, stereotype, and de-centering of its heritage and indigenous epistemologies.

Scholars suggested indigenization of the Eurocentric epistemological tradition that embraces the notion of re-centering of the indigenous knowledge systems. The emancipatory camp has been widely known for the 'Ethiopianization' of school curriculums and challenges the assumed center of knowledge. Just different from the established discourse of the westernization reversal, Eguale coined the concept '**በተዋህዶ ከበረ**' as **a** crucial deliberation to fill the limits of the indigenous knowledge system and embrace its inventory capabilities.

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Closing Remarks, Tedla Haile, Executive V/P, St. Mary's University

Distinguished Guests, Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are now to end the two-day sessions carrying with us the salient points that the Keynote Speakers, the Panelists and the paper presenters have given us as assignments. With that note, it is time to thank all who have contributed to the success of this eventful conference.

It is worth noting here that since the first conference was launched in 2003, the Ministry of Education has partnered with us and taken center stage in making opening remarks. This year is no different. Despite his busy schedule, H.E. Dr Samuel Kifle, State Minister of Education arrived here on time to grace the occasion. We thank him and his Ministry for the continuous support they have given the University.

The Association of African Universities has also enduring partnership with St. Mary's. As has been in the previous years, Prof. Olusola Oyewole's presence on line to give opening remarks underscores the continuity of the support. We thank him very much. Prof. Damtew Tefera, the Founding Director of the International Network for Higher Education in Africa, based in South Africa, as Keynote Speaker and being a long-time friend of St. Mary's, has closely worked with the conference organizers and has contributed to the success of the conference to a significant level. Our thanks to him is immense.

Dr Rita Bissoonauth, Director, UNESCO liaison Officer to the AUC and UNECA, and UNESCO Representative to Ethiopia, whose office has worked with SMU on a number of occasions, deserves words of thanks for her Keynote speech. Prof. Saeed Bakri, the President of the Association of African Universities has equally been a longtime friend of SMU spanning more than ten years. We applaud his persistent support to our annual event. Dr Teshome Yezengaw, Associate V/President for International Research and Development at Indiana State University, as a friend of St. Mary's, has traveled long distances from the USA to take part in the conference; many thanks to him. I would also thank Prof. N.V. Varghese, the eminent scholar, who now works for the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, in India, for travelling from India to be a panelist at this conference.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Thanks, are also due to the panelists Dr Frew Tegegn, President of Bahir Dar University, and Dr Solomon Negash from Kennesaw University. My thanks also go to the Chairs, Prof Masresha Fetene, former President of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Belay Kassa, former President of Haramaya University and former Rector of pan-African University, currently President of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, and Dr Getnet Tizazu, Associate Professor of Education at AAU, together with the rapporteurs who assisted them. I thank the Master of Ceremonies, At Mekdela Mekuria and Dr Ayenachew Assefa.

St. Mary's staff members who have served at the reception desk and our ICT team who assisted the Power Point presenters, the General Services who have handled the cumbersome task of routine activities deserve the highest appreciation. Equally praise worthy are our Motor Pool staff and the Finance Office. Most of all, our team of

Research and Knowledge Management Office, led by Dr Misganaw Solomon, V/P for Research and International Communications, who have made the conference successful beginning to end, working day and night, should be hailed for their tasking work.

I would like to thank Inter Luxury Hotel for keeping us energized with the refreshments and for allowing us a syndicate room for a high-level meeting yesterday.

Finally, I thank you, participants, for your patience throughout the two-day conference. With that I declare the conference closed.

Thank you.