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Contribution of University Research to Ethiopian Sustainable Development

Prof. Derebssa Dufera

1. Introduction

Education is widely accepted as a leading instrument for promoting development. The education sector has a critical role to play in any country’s development, but the role is particularly acute when it comes to African countries that are at the start up or take off stage of development.

Today, more than ever before in human history, the wealth of nations depends on the quality of its population. Global wealth is concentrated less and less in factories, land, tools and machinery and more on the knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of skilled human resources. High-quality human capital is developed in high-quality education systems, with tertiary education providing the advanced skills commanding a premium in today’s workplace. With regard to the benefits of higher education for a country's economy, many observers attribute some Asian countries leap onto the world economic stage as stemming from their decades-long successful efforts to provide high-quality, technically oriented tertiary education to a significant number of their citizens. This has witnessed that the sustained prosperity of a nation depends upon the level and quality of its education system.

Most developed countries have seen a substantial rise in the proportion of their young people receiving higher education. In the developing countries, however,
during the past two or three decades, attention has been given to primary education, which has led to a neglect of tertiary education. For several decades, development agencies have placed great emphasis on primary and, more recently, secondary education. But they have neglected tertiary education as a means to improve economic growth and mitigate poverty. The Dakar summit on “Education for All” in 2000, for example, advocated only for primary education as a driver of broad social welfare. It left tertiary education in the background.

Part of the reason for neglecting higher education within development initiatives lied in the shortage of empirical evidence that it affects economic growth and poverty reduction. Recent evidence, however, suggests that higher education can produce both public and private benefits. In the wake of the recent emergence of the concept of the ‘knowledge economy’, which is considered as major factor of national and international competitiveness, higher education is now reassuming its strategic role in national development. In recent years, organizations such as the World Bank and major donor governments have begun to reconsider their exclusive focus on primary education and are now reaching out to secondary and tertiary education, as the balance between poverty reduction and growth promotion is adjusted within development assistance strategies.

Knowledge-based competition within a globalizing economy is prompting a fresh consideration of the role of research in development and growth. Previously it was often viewed as an expensive and inefficient public service that largely benefited the wealthy and privileged. Now it is understood to make a necessary contribution, in concert with other factors, to the success of national efforts to boost productivity, competitiveness and economic growth. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes an essential complement to national initiatives to boost innovation and performance across economic sectors.
Tertiary education institutions support economic growth strategies and poverty reduction by generating new knowledge, building the capacity to access existing stores of global knowledge, and adapting that knowledge to local use. Diffusion of technical innovations leads to higher productivity and most of these innovations are products of basic and applied research undertaken in universities. Progress in the agriculture, health, and environment sectors and in science, engineering, and technology is heavily dependent on the application of such innovations.

For Ethiopia, where growth is essential if the continent is to climb out of poverty, research and is particularly important. Ethiopia is undergoing rapid economic change with sustained high growth rates for more than a decade making skills increasingly scarce. This has brought about a substantial increase in demand for skilled labor. Despite significant improvements in the education system, it has not been able to achieve similar rapid pace of change in research and innovations as the national economy.

2. Research in Ethiopia and its Role in Development in the Knowledge Era

Every society must have the capacity to generate, acquire, adapt, and apply modern knowledge if it is to take advantage of the opportunities and reduce the risks posed by the rise of the knowledge society. Information is transformed into knowledge when it comes to be “owned,” through absorption, synthesis with prior knowledge and experience in the location in context. Thus, knowledge can only be acquired through doing for one’s self and research is the means through which this can be done. The situation today is that research efforts are very unevenly distributed between different countries and regions. Some industrialized countries conduct the greater part of the world’s research. This picture has several problematic consequences for the Ethiopia that does not have a large share in the global research effort. On the one hand, most
research is directed at problems and questions that are related to the needs of the industrialized countries where the research is conducted. On the other hand, a certain level of education, research and technology competence is necessary to benefit from knowledge developed elsewhere. The inadequacy of such systems in Ethiopia is both cause and effect of the country’s knowledge poverty and deepening material deprivation.

Expenditure in research and development in Ethiopia is less than 0.1 percent of world share; patents developed in Ethiopia account for less than 0.01 percent of world share, compared with 23 percent of United States alone. Similarly, Ethiopian scientific publications account for less than one percent of world share, compared with 30% from North America. What remains clear through all this is the crucial role that Ethiopia’s systems and institutions for knowledge generation, synthesis, adaptation, and application have to play in insuring the advancement of the national interest on all fronts, economic, social, cultural, and political. In view of this, there is no substitute for long-term investment to develop Ethiopian research capacity in general and Rift Valley University in particular.

3. Opportunities and Concerns/threats for Research Undertaking

Ethiopia is today confronted by grand opportunities for economic transformation and development.

- Ethiopia has experienced impressive economic growth in the past ten years.
- There are few political and civil conflicts in Ethiopia today compared to the situation in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Increasing awareness that knowledge, not only natural resources, is key to the continent’s development
– Increasing appreciation of the role and contribution of HE to improving quality at lower levels of education
– The gap between policy and financing is closing fast in Ethiopia
– Recognition by Ethiopian leaders that research is critical for the transformation
– These are vehicles for producing and applying knowledge for Ethiopia’s development.

Although Ethiopia has now recognized the importance of research as a major driver of socio-economic advancement,

– This awareness of the role of research in facilitating development and progress towards the desired targets is very slow.
– In Ethiopia, much of the research carried out is externally driven and therefore has limited relevance and impact in the Ethiopia where it takes place.
– Many government officials and stakeholders including RVU officials have until recently viewed research as a ‘luxury’ sector that does not need serious investment
– The combination of a lack of resources and tempting offers from abroad to researchers
– Reliance of some officials more on foreign researcher findings than on the local researchers

4. **Role of Ethiopian Universities’ Research for Ethiopia’s Development**

Central to the knowledge systems are the universities and their research and advanced training programs. The research function of academia remains a prime source of knowledge and innovation at national, regional and
international levels. To a greater degree than elsewhere, Ethiopian universities continue to provide the vast bulk of its research and train virtually all its researchers. Ethiopian Universities are responsible for research and identifying ways of achieving sustainable production and consumption, including the necessary knowledge, skills and norms of behavior. Thus, the strength of Ethiopian universities and research institutions is a key condition for its development, and their weakness is an index of, as well as a contributor to, its poverty.

Universities’ engagement in research is not a matter of choice, rather a necessity for national/regional development. However, overall, the situation of research universities in Ethiopia remains bleak and they are in need of rapid, effective solutions. Appropriate solutions for development in Ethiopia is research—conceptualized, conducted, analyzed, and published by Ethiopians in Ethiopia and universities are at the top of the transformation chain that generates the skills and competences needed in development. For this reason support for universities’ research should be an important priority of all stakeholders.

Universities also have the potential role of serving as social critics in shaping a vision of the future – a future committed to peace, environmental preservation and sustainable development. The contribution of research in varying fields is crucial. Related to this is the opportunity to study and discuss social, political economic and ethical issues in an atmosphere of tolerance and objectivity. Efforts to relate university teaching and research to global concerns of peace and sustained development need to cut across narrow disciplinary lines. Interdisciplinary collaboration and team work involving universities and major research institutions outside the university becomes crucial.

To ensure that scientific efforts contribute to humanizing development and to improvements in the quality of life of all people, it is vital that global research and development are guided by improved knowledge and responsiveness to the
social conditions in the global community. Here again, the contribution that universities could make along with other institutions of research and development could be significant. At a time when the world is becoming “more confined and dangerous than ever before”, the work of universities in bringing humanity closer to a peaceful planet is becoming even more relevant. Education is one of the most powerful forces in the world, profoundly affecting the way human beings think in decisive moments as well as throughout their lives. Through research and innovations, Universities can play a leadership role in peace-making. Education must reinforce the values shared by the international community, including human rights for all, mutual respect for all cultures and peaceful settlement of disputes. Education could bring humanity closer to a peaceful planet. In order for the governments to make informed decisions with respect to poverty eradication, peace and security as well as sustainable development, researchers at universities in the respective states and regions should provide them concrete data and alternative strategies. However, individual universities in the region have no capacity to support the governments in the fight against poverty and maintaining peace and security and thus call for University consortium.

5. University Collaboration for Research Undertaking
Ethiopian researchers are isolated. There are very few institutions that have the critical mass of researchers in any particular field to allow them to collaborate and carry out research activities with world standard outputs. Having an adequate infrastructure can enable remote collaboration and the building of the needed critical masses; Resources are scarce in Ethiopian and some equipment and applications are too costly for single institutions. Cutting-edge research can be carried out by multiple, inter-disciplinary research teams located in various regions. Not being part of this global community means that Ethiopian researchers cannot participate in such global research
projects. Such research collaborations give access to research networks and can result in co-authored academic publications. However, Ethiopian scientists are often only marginally involved in the design of joint research projects. The result is the absorption of academics’ time without developing sustainable research capacity in universities. These factors only exacerbated the knowledge deficit. A fragmented approach where each institution conducts research commensurate with resources at their disposal has prevailed, thus missing out on benefits of networking across institutions and countries. Thus, Ethiopian universities should collaborate.

Few Ethiopian universities are in a position to excel in more than two or three areas of research specialization. It has therefore been suggested that individual institutions identify and concentrate on building up special institutional capacities in a limited number of areas of strength, actual or potential. Today, in Ethiopia increasingly setting up democratic institutions, the intellectual capacity behind policy-making has improved. Several Ethiopian universities and research institutions are now conducting studies that could be useful in identifying opportunities for economic transformation. There are also many researchers in other countries doing very relevant research, but poor dissemination makes this work inaccessible to Ethiopian policymakers.

Joint research activities play an important role in fostering research capacity, nurturing research culture, pushing the frontiers of knowledge, as well as benchmarking quality. Meticulously developed long-term joint research partnerships have shown successful results. Establishing a regional research network is about putting resources together in order to get more value for money and foster collaboration. In Ethiopia, Consortia of Universities can hardly be sustained at the outset if not supported in any manner by government. Having the backing of government, especially the ministries in charge of higher education is crucial. This critical area should be given priority attention at all
levels. Global research cooperation facilitates interaction and the sharing of benefits, and this includes work undertaken at regional and national levels. These perspectives gained from specific situations permit wide and varied analysis, thus supporting conclusions that are based on a broad base of evidence.

Partnership is one of the best modalities to build Ethiopia’s capacity. A new kind of partnership is needed, based on listening to the Ethiopian voice, on mutual respect and solidarity and rooted in a ground analysis of what actually works. Ethiopian higher education institutions could support each other to improve their poor capacity in conducting development oriented research through mentoring programs and joint research projects with the goal of developing locally appropriate technologies aimed at increasing labor productivity and market competitiveness. The major goal of the Consortium of universities for research development in Ethiopia should be to build a vibrant Ethiopian research capacity that is able to lead world-class multidisciplinary research that makes a positive impact on technological, Economic, social and political development.

The aims should be to foster vibrant and viable multidisciplinary research hubs at Ethiopian universities; create networks of locally-trained internationally-recognized scholars; and enhance the capacity of Ethiopian universities to lead globally-competitive research and training programs. These goals can be achieved by providing strengthening of infrastructure, skills and faculty commitment to lead and manage research initiatives within Ethiopian institutions; and hence, enhance the retention of skilled researchers within the region. Ethiopia is at a crossroads and cannot and should not wait. Action is needed now and delay cannot be an option.
6. Conclusion

Ethiopia needs a new generation of home-grown, problem-solving, world-class scientists to lead science-based development in the continent. This can only be achieved through establishing an effective system of world-class research universities. Increased financial allocations for higher education and research development in Ethiopia should first and foremost come from Ethiopian governments. Ethiopian leaders are increasingly recognizing that research is essential to lead and implement strategies to achieve the UN Millennium Goals. World-class research universities alone will not accelerate economic growth in Ethiopia. But without a sustainable system of world-class research universities, Ethiopia’s economic growth cannot be accelerated.

A fundamental need for development of research is to have partnerships for exchange of people, ideas, and support facilities. The university and research institutes should enhance their relevance to society by developing partnerships with the local community, industry, and national research facilities. However, these linkages should not be limited nationally, but should extend to include regional and international elements. These actions will enhance the standard of educational expertise both for instruction and for research. Stronger national economies will contribute, through partnerships and linkages, to an equally stronger regional economy.
Academic Plagiarism disguised as Commercialized Private Tutoring in Higher Education: Does it complement or clash with the quality of Education? By Dr. Demoze Degefa

Abstract
Private tutoring is the oldest form of education for human beings. In its modern sense, it has been coined as shadow education for it exists only when formal education exists. Private tutoring is an emerging phenomenon in many developing and developed countries as economically and geographically diverse as the planet itself. Unique to the Ethiopian situation is the fact that private tutoring is demanded by university students particularly those in big cities. The study explores factors that shape the demand for and supply of private tutoring in relation to students’ gradation projects. Data were obtained by interviewing five tutors and organizing Focus Group Discussion with eight students working in Addis Ababa and studying at Addis Ababa University respectively. It was found that the emergence of knowledge entrepreneurs to take the advantage of higher education expansions has shaped the supply of private tutoring. In the same vein, private tutoring is demanded for it only facilitates the graduation of varied student bodies with less contribution to the quality of learning. As it is also demanded for meeting the short-term objectives of university students and it has also paved the way for prevalence of academic dishonesty. Given the country’s educational aspiration—providing quality education efficiently and equitable, the phenomena of private tutoring as a production and distribution education needs to be seriously considered. The pros and cons of the private tutoring system needs to established empirically and policy direction taken accordingly.

Key words: private tutoring, supplementary tutoring, shadow education, the third sector
1. Introduction

Tutoring has been understood as “a method of teaching whereby a student or small group of students receives personalized education” (Medway 1995 cited by Mischo & Haag, 2002). It is mostly meant to supplement the formal education. The concept of tutoring embraces different forms of intervention through different entities. It could be school-based; out of school; at home; or through paid tutors, family, peers, on all or some subjects. In echoing its prevalence across the system of education, Mark Bray (2007) uses the metaphor of “shadow education” referring to private tutoring. The use of the metaphor seems justifiable as it only exists because the mainstream education exists; its size and shape changes as the size and shape of the mainstream education system changes.

Private tutoring is not only a widespread phenomenon across school systems of the world but also it is the oldest human practice. For instance, Ireson (2004) argues that “Long before schools were established, private tutors were employed to teach children in wealthy families” (p.109). Even in the contemporary times when mainstream schooling is flourishing every where, there is an increasing recognition of the prevalence of private tuition around the world and of its potential contribution for students’ learning achievement.

Although quantitative data on the instructional forms; costs incurred; number of participants; and number of institutions is difficult to come by, it is common to see that private tutoring has become a common business in the Addis Ababa. The factors that shape the flourishing of the demand for private tutoring could simply be attributed to commercialization of education that follows the free market economic policy of the country. This general notion however, requires careful and empirical investigation.

Unique to the Ethiopian situation is the fact that private tutoring is demanded by university students particularly those in big cities. The calls usually made by
commercialized tutoring institutions include, among other things, the possibility of assisting university students working on their graduation projects in Addis Ababa. Some advertisements even mention that the services are meant to serve PhD students to the surprise of most scholars of education. Beyond a mere surprise it might beg the question, who are these tutors who can assist PhD students? Are they actors with PhD degree themselves? If not, how is it possible for them to help struggling PhD candidates? How can in emerging nations like Ethiopia, is it possible to find “high level experts” who are not associated with its formal higher learning institutions? The points of curiosity could go on and on. As the issues largely remain less researched, the factors that create the demand for and supply of private tutoring; the costs involved; time spent, forms of instructions offered; institutional setups of private tutors; parental attitude towards private tutoring; and its impact on the mainstream education remain issues worthy investigation. Given the complexity of the subject (being informal sector\(^3\)), this study, however, attempted to address factors that shape the demand for and supply of private tutoring, factors that motivate all stakeholders and escalating commercialized tutoring in universities.

2. Research Methodology

a) Research design

The research design of this study is qualitative approach for two reasons. First, in the Ethiopian context, where data on the number of suppliers, attendants, socioeconomic status of households consuming private tutoring and time spent on tutoring are difficult to get, hence, employing quantitative approach would be rigorous. This methodological problem is not unique to the Ethiopian context. Methodologically speaking, there are logistic difficulties for doing research on private tutoring due to its subtlety, complexity and irregularity

\(^3\) As many of them may not be registered either as private institution or formal sector, some quantitative data are difficult to come by.
(Percy, 2004). Secondly and most importantly, past studies on private tutoring were mainly quantitative research reports depicting the span and intensity of the demand in statistical patterns. For example, the studies have documented that the supply of and demand for private tutoring is determined by income of tutees (or their households), parental education (test for education services), urban location (Dang & Rogers, 2008). Yet these determinants are quantitative in their nature and require a diverse data set to work on. As these researches lacked detailed educational and social explanations for the descriptions of demand patterns and no in-depth investigation was focused on higher education levels. Hence, in a situation where the quantitative data are not easy to come by, exploring the qualitative factors not only compensates for the absence of organized quantitative data set but also charts a new perspective by reflecting on the view of actors.

b) Description of the Participants (subjects)
Informants for the study included university students seeking private tutoring while working on their graduate projects and tutors who participated in the tutoring activity. The data were generated from five tutors and eight tutees operating around Addis Ababa University and studying currently at Addis Ababa University respectively. In terms of sex, age, level of education and current employment status, all the tutors were male and their ages fall between 26-32 years and their educational qualifications include a PhD candidate, 2 Masters Degree graduates, a bachelor degree holder and final year bachelor student. In terms of employment, four of them were employed in public school system as a lecturer in a university; two of them are school teachers; one is a banker and one left informant is just doing his BA degree. Accordingly, tutoring is a part time job for all of the tutor informants. The tutees, likewise, were all male undergraduate final year students within the age range of 21-31 years and they came from the departments of Geography, Afaan Oromoo, Foreign
Language, PSIR, and EdPM. They all are regular students at Addis Ababa University.

c) **Sampling procedure**

The participants of the study were selected by employing purposive, availability and snowball techniques. Owing to the complex nature of commercialized private tutoring, first institutions (agencies) offering graduation project-based (senior essays, masters thesis’s) tutoring service to university students were identified purposefully. The nature of their service was easily identified by the kind of notices the agencies or individuals post in the vicinity of the University (see an attachment in the appendix). Once the institutions/individuals were approached via telephone call, snowball technique was used to approach individual actors (tutors and tutees). Informants were identified and approached on the basis of their availability and interest as most of them were not willing to expose themselves.

d) **Data collection procedures**

The data for the study were generated via unstructured interview and focus group discussion (FGD). The interviews were conducted with the tutors whereas the FGD was meant for tutees (university students). Once, the consent of informants is secured, the time and venue for the interview were fixed at the convenience of informants.

e) **Method of data analysis**

The interviews and focus group discussion were transcribed and the narratives were analyzed using the model as a framework. Data were organized along supply factors and demand factors and further sub-themes were identified. Direct utterances of informants were taken and used to support the emerging themes. Informants were given pseudonyms such as Tutor 1, Tutor 2…to refer to providers of private tutoring and FGD 1, 2, 3… members of the FGD.
3. Model of Analysis

As the objective of the study is to tease out those factors that shape the demand for and supply of commercialized private tutoring at micro levels, the study has employed the standard microeconomic theory of supply of demand for education in interpreting the phenomena of private tutoring. Dang and Rogers (2008) presented the supply and demand for education by typical consumer (student) where private tutoring is available (figure1). The supply of education is represented by the supply curves S0 for private education, S1 for public education, and S2 for public education with private tutoring. So is placed farther up in the left corner compared to S1 and S2 because of the high cost of education. So is more inelastic in price because consumers of private education are less sensitive to the price of education but more sensitive to the quality of education. The rationale for the vertical part of S1 (starting at point A) is that regardless of consumer demand, after certain point public education systems reach their capacity limit, preventing them from offering as much education - in terms of both quantity and quality –as students want (that is, supply becomes perfectly inelastic). S2 shares a common solid upward-sloping curve with S1, but includes a dashed diagonal line starting from point A. This dashed line is less steep than the vertical curve of S1, implying that private tutoring can meet students’ demand for education as opposed to public education. In addition, this dashed line is steeper than the solid part of S2, indicating that the cost of private tutoring is higher than the cost of public education.

The household demand for education is represented by either the demand curve D1 or D2. Even though public education is provided for free in most countries, a household always bears certain costs by being at school instead of working (opportunity costs). With these costs of education, D1 is the demand curve for a representative household, and D2 represent another household that is assumed to have either a high income, stronger preferences in education, or higher
expectation about returns to education. Due to these differences, at each price, a household in D2 would spend more on education than a household in D1. The quantity of education is determined by the interaction between the supply and demand curves (equilibrium). If the representative of household’s demand for education is represented by the demand curve D2, the amount of private education of what the household consumes is Q0, and the amount of public education consumed is Q2. In the presence of private tutoring, the household can consume Q*2, which is larger than Q2.

This framework assumes that 1) the market for private tutoring is competitive, 2) public education reaches a strict capacity constraint after a certain point, and 3) an increase in education units through private tutoring increases students’ human capital. However, these assumptions may not always be valid in practice and may differ from setting to setting within a country and among different countries. For example, the market for private tutoring may not always be perfectly competitive as the sector tends to be highly complex and operates in an informal basis. In addition, public education does not necessarily have a capacity constraint in the long run, and private tutoring may aim for preparation for examinations rather than deepening human capital.

Despite these weaknesses, the framework can help understand the phenomena of private tutoring in a wider perspective and explain what factors influence the decision of both consumers (tutees) and suppliers (tutors) to take part in the private tutoring market. It can also serve to pinpoint the capacity constraints of formal public education in the study area.

Figure 1: Education Supply and Demand with Private Tutoring
Source: Dang and Rogers, 2008

4. Review of Literature

This section provides summary of past researches related to, in one way or another, the topic along three dimensions. These dimensions are: arguments for and against private tutoring; the impacts of private tutoring; and policy responses to private tutoring in that order. Commercialized private tutoring has traditionally been associated with Confucianism cultural region of the East Asia including Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan (Lee, Park, and Lee, 2009; Dang & Rogers, 2008). Private tutoring is an emerging phenomenon in many developing and developed countries (Dang & Rogers, 2008). There are arguments for the expansion of private tutoring. In most cases, it is argued on the basis that private tutoring compensates for the ineffective and the low quality of formal education. For instance, Greek students claim that private tutoring helps them get extra help to enhance their performance, fill the learning gaps owing to the shortcomings and the weaknesses of the formal school (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013). Its potential for remedying the weaknesses of formal education usually lies in its methodology and approach. For example, Dang and Rogers (2008) maintain that private tutoring is sought for by students as it can provide more individualized instruction than is possible via formal schooling; and even less formal and more flexible than private tutoring. Hence, the major argument for private tutoring is its unique pedagogical departure. In addition, it is also argued that private tutoring may reduce the workload of mainstream teachers by helping students understand the materials which have been or will be presented during the ordinary school day (Bray, 2007). Moreover, private tutoring is seen as a mechanism for tapping tutors income (usually underpaid mainstream teachers). For instance, Mark Bray (2006) argues that tutoring also, of course, shapes the livelihoods of the tutors. Some tutors are mainstream teachers who gain extra incomes from supplementary
lessons. Others are employees of companies that provide tutoring, or students, retirees or other individuals who are self-employed. Many observers are critical of the existence and impact of tutoring, but among its positive dimensions may be the employment and incomes that it provides for tutors.

This approach to teacher compensation might have far reaching implications for effective utilization of teachers under circumstances where such teachers have to teach in formal school as well. They put in less effort in the main stream schooling than expected because of the pay difference. In line with this argument, Jayachandran (2014.p.30) observes that “Teachers have an incentive to teach less during school in order to increase demand for tutoring, if tutoring, and school instruction are substitutes”. Taking the issues further, Biswal (1999) argues that private tutoring by public school teachers is an act of teacher corruption.

Nonetheless there are arguments against the provision of private tutoring. The critics make their points from educational, economic and social points of view. For instance, according to Percy, (2004), the major driver for private tutoring is the imperative of high-stake examinations. However, training students for examinations only may not be the best training for it may not boost creative learning. Hence, it may not lead to the expected increase in human capital (Bray, 2007). The critics also take economic perspectives in denouncing private tutoring. Though in most system public education is provided for free or at reasonable cost, private tuition places economic burden on households. For instance, in Greece household expenditure on private tutoring makes 48.4% of the total private expenditure on primary education and 16.1% of the public expenditure for education (Kassotakis & Verdis, 2013). The additional cost borne by individual families is not only taxing to them but makes the education production process more expensive that would have been the case as some parents have to pay twice- private costs of formal schooling and costs incurred
for opting for private tutoring. Finally, criticisms are labeled against private tutoring for it creates and exacerbates social inequalities. It is argued that “If left to market forces, private tutoring is likely to maintain and exacerbate social inequalities since prosperous families are more easily able to invest in greater and superior quality of tutoring” (Bray, et al, 2013:2). This is an issue that requires a policy direction as most education systems across the world promote equity in access to education to provide for more equitable distribution of social opportunities.

A closer look at the phenomena of private tutoring requires summarizing the past research on the impact of private tutoring. As a continuation of the arguments indicated earlier and to link with policy stances taken by systems across the world, it is an imperative to be curious whether private tutoring is bad or good? In either of the directions, the major point would be what is the impact of private tutoring?

The perspective in this dimension is reported in terms of the educational, economic and social impacts of private tutoring. Despite the general agreement that tutoring would provide more time on task and therefore more opportunity to learn, the impact of private tutoring on academic achievement is rather a mixed blessing. Data on the academic achievement of students come from two types of studies—those based on subjective answers of perceived improvement and on the objective academic performance data (Lee, Park, & Lee, 2009). Those studies focusing on subjective perceptions of participants revealed a success story. For example, Kramer and Werner (1998 cited in Lee, Park & Lee, 2009) studied the subjective perception of German parents and students and found that 54% of the respondents maintained that private tutoring has a positive effect on academic achievement (Lee, Park, & Lee, 2009). Similar studies conducted in Japan also indicated that 34.1% and 27.3% of Japanese and their children attending after-school classes acknowledged that after-
school education is helpful in helping children better understand school curriculum respectively (MEXT, 1994 cited in Lee, Park & Lee, 2009). However, studies that investigated the impact of private tutoring based on empirical data showed mixed results. To begin with, based on data from Korean data panel Park and Kim (2001) and Yang and Kim (2003) as cited in Lee, Park and Lee (2009) reported that tutoring contributed to the improvement of the mathematics and science scores at statistically significant levels. Similarly, a multivariate analysis undertaken by Lee (2001) cited in Lee, Park and Lee (2009) revealed that the effect of private tutoring was small but it was the next most influential factor after intelligence, effort, and social environment.

In contrast to the above research, there were studies that claimed private tutoring did not display a pure effect on academic achievement. For example, Egypt’s Ministry of Education surveyed 18,000 students and found that private tutoring had no significant impact achievement (Fergany, 1994 cited in Bray & Silova, 2006). Similarly, Sung (2003) cited in Lee, Park and Lee(2009) analyzed the academic achievement data of the first and second year students in a high school in Seoul as the result showed no effects on academic achievement.

The impact of private tutoring is more evident at school system level than on individual student’s academic achievement. Like learning achievement, its impact on mainstream public education is mixed in nature. Private tutoring can have positive effect if it helps students understand and enjoy their mainstream lessons. In the majority of the cases, however, evidences show that private tutoring has negative effect on mainstream education in a number of ways. The most comprehensive evidence on the impact of private tutoring on mainstream education comes from Mark Bray’s (2009) research. His analysis includes both positive and negative impacts of private tutoring on mainstream education. The positive ones include the fact that private tutoring allows more resources
allocated to education; better use of out-of-school time; and reduction of the workload of mainstream teachers. On the other hand, it diverts resources away from their use by mainstream actors; teacher and student absenteeism; disparity in the mainstream class and introduction of cramming approaches to textbook contents.

The impact of private tutoring extends to social dimensions of societies as well. Private tutoring leads to pressure on tutees; also impacts social relationships and has implications for social inequalities (Bray, 2007). When students have to attend private tutoring after school, they may study longer hours and deprive them of time to socialize and relax. Similarly, private tutoring can implicate the equity objective of the mainstream schooling. For example, it is argued that private tutoring not only creates but also exacerbates social inequality as stunts from richer families can have unlimited access to better quality private tutoring services (Bray, 1999; Bray, 2007; Bray, 2009). This could pose threat to social stability eventually. Finally, private tutoring impacts social relationships as students do not find to socialize with their peers and families.

Policy responses to private tutoring seem to depend on the perceived impact of private tutoring on mainstreaming education, student learning achievement and its implication for educational equality and educational resource utilization. There is no coherent policy responses in different countries as the contexts (cultural factors, economic factors, and educational factors) vary. One cannot claim that private tutoring is bad or good as the research on the area is inconclusive owing to methodological challenges and the nature of private tutoring as a sector. Cognizant of its impact (positive or negative) researchers, however, have suggested either of the policy directions to optimize its impact. For example, Bray (2007) presents six policy options: (1) a non-interventionist policy (2) monitoring, but not intervention (3) regulation and control (4) encouragement (5) a mixed approach and (6) prohibition. To opt for either of
the policy directions, policy makers must ask (1) to what extent is private tutoring a problem which damages educational, social and economic objectives and needs to be controlled? (2) to what extent is private tutoring a potential asset which has not hitherto been used fully and which should be encouraged (Bray, 2009).

According to the non-interventionist policy, government lacks capacity to control market in the education system, and that market influences the quality and price of private tutoring. For example, the Japanese government does not regulate any private institutes (Lee, Park and Lee, 2009: 915). Secondly, some countries react to private tutoring by slightly taking more actions. This includes some monitoring to secure data on size, shape and impact of the sector (Bray, 2007). Thirdly, other countries have attempted to control and regulate the expansion of private tutoring. The regulation policy direction is taken up by the policy makers as they admit the positive aspects of private tutoring and want to develop supportive systems to maximize its potential advantages and minimize its defects (for example in countries like Taiwan and Hong Kong) (Lee, Park & Lee, 2009).

Nonetheless other systems have encouraged the expansion of private tutoring on the rationale that private tutoring is more tailored to tutees learning needs than formal education and can also contribute the development of human capital. For example, the Singaporean government encourages tutoring service offered by non-profit making welfare organizations (Bray, 2007). It has been documented that a mixed approach has been among the policy reactions to private tutoring. The mixed approach combines both regulation and prohibition. The prohibition applies to a situation whereby teachers tutor their students which in some countries considered unethical. On the other hand, the government might still be willing to permit mainstream teachers to provide tutoring for other students (Bray, 2007).
Finally, other countries prefer to prohibit the expansion of private tutoring. These countries take such actions as they assume that private tutoring fosters social inequalities. For example, Bray (2007, p.77) reports that “official bans on tutoring have been announced …in Cambodia, Mauritius, Myanmar, and the Republic of Korea”.

5. Data Presentation and Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore the issues that shape the demand for and supply of commercialized tutoring in higher education in reference to university student seeking for private support while working on their graduation projects (senior essays, master’s theses and PhD dissertations). Accordingly, qualitative dated were collected via interview and focus group discussion and the results are categorically presented as follows. The data presentation includes the forces inducing the expansion of private tutoring; the factors that shape the demand for private tutoring, the motivation for supplying private tutoring and the comparative advantage of private tutoring over the university-based support offered by formal supervisors in that order.

To begin with, private tutoring for higher education has emerged from rarity to common phenomena for several reasons. An informant who sees it as an opportunity nostalgically refers to the phenomena in its historical antecedent:

> It is being expanded all over Addis Ababa now. The business has started by availing course-based tutoring for distance education students as far as a decade ago in the heydays of the nation’s distance education access in its history. Currently, it has got its own network; for example, there are actors and brokers in such areas as Megenagna, Saris, Mexico, sadist kilo where you find private colleges and public universities. The main users are students attending these institutions” (Tutor 3).
As the metaphor of shadow education rightly used to describe the phenomena of private tutoring, its expansion is associated with dynamics in the higher education sector itself.

The major dynamics in the history of Ethiopian higher education institutions over the last two decades was the seemingly uncontrolled expansion of different actors to offer higher education service. Interestingly enough is opening of higher education sector to non-traditional students and new suppliers of higher education. The move could be commendable in helping the nation develop the required human capital as its needs yet the pros and cons open system of higher education should be established beforehand. The expansion of private tuition is the byproduct of the new order of higher education who merits has not yet been established. An Informant observes that: “some years back, private tutoring exists rarely, but now increasing. Its advantage, however, has not been established either for educational institutions, even for attendants but it is increasingly being offered in all corners of the City” (Tutor2).

The new suppliers of higher education are not limited to domestic actors. The foreign suppliers of higher education maintain offshore campuses and students in which case for they must resort to private tutoring as a mode of delivery. An informant maintains that:

Foreign universities operating in Ethiopia have also contributed to the expansion of the business as most their attendants are busy NGO staff who do not have the time for their course requirements but have got a better purse than an average Ethiopia civil servant. It is not only the expansion HE as such but the rapid expansion of their distance education component over the last decade created a fertile ground for the PT business. The distance education program attendants, however, lack both the capacity and the time to meet the requirements of their
respective universities including Tutor marked assignments, and senior project to mention the few”(Tutor 3).

As a general observation, the expansion of private tutoring is associated with the higher education dynamics. As a result, multifaceted changes are observable: students; families; teachers; and independent tutors as well.

A closer analysis of institutional variables and individual actors’ rationality seems an important landscape worth considering. The supply of private tutoring is shaped by the following factors. Using the standard microeconomic theory of supply of and demand for private tutoring, the supply factors simply include those conditions that urge the suppliers of private tutoring in order to decide how more service to offer. That is to say why they have decided to move from supply curve S1 to supply curve S2 or what motivates suppliers to additional education service (* Q2-Q2, see Figure 1)? Several explanations can be offered based on the data obtained from actors. For some, private tutoring has become a lucrative business. For example, it is confessed that “My major goal is to make extra money. I am not doing it for the Heaven’s sake” (Tutor 5). This bold assertion has also been echoed by others by underlining the lucrative nature of the business. An informant maintains;

I do it for financial gains. I do charge 3000 ETB for a single proposal and 7000 ETB for the whole thesis. This is quite big money when compared to my monthly salary. Even this price quote is the minimum and tuition fees will be higher than this one depending on academic capacity of the customer. It will be higher for weaker ones as this requires longer hours to correct (Tutor 2).

Similarly, another informant also capitalizes the financial return from the tutoring:

I want to make some money out of it. I do charge different tuition fees depending on the level of the level education and costumers’ paying
capacity. Though it varies from department to department, I do charge an average of 2000 birr for BA students and 5000-7000 for MA students. When there is a broker in between the charges would be less than this. Like any other business, there are brokers across the city that go between the customers and tutors.

The market for private tutoring seems non-competitive and the suppliers can fix the price at rate that meets their needs. In most cases the financial gain would higher than that claimed by formal supervisors. In some colleges, for instance, supervising a master’s degree student pays them only 3500 Birr student and the supervisor must be at the rank of assistant professor or better to take up the job. Seen from narrow financial perspective, engaging in private tutoring is more rewarding than what is in Ethiopian higher institutions a system. The majority of the informants are public servants living on meager salaries in the abundance of entrepreneurial opportunities. The supply of private tutoring seems to have facilitated with the emergence of knowledge entrepreneurs.

In addition to the lucrative nature of its business, some institutional factors have also encouraged the suppliers of private tutors. Researcher’s observation has also showed that there are creations of opportunities for the private tutoring in the formal education systems. Included in this opportunity is enrollment of under qualified or marginal qualified students into university systems. This created some gaps in actual ability of the students and their formal supervisor’s expectation.

A tutor observer says:

There is a huge gap between instructors’ expectations and the actual ability of students. Therefore these students do not want their instructor discover these gaps. Instead they opt for our services because we approach them in a friendly manner and talk to them in their languages and meet them as frequently as they want (Tutor 3).
The students’ capacity problems and the formal instructor handling the situation are expressed by comments:

Some instructors are excellent in research but they expect their students to be as good as themselves and as a result they offer them little support. The students have fear of asking small things as this would lead to unfair reaction by their formal supervisor. Formal supervisors usually say, do not you know this? You are expected to do so, and so as a senior student/as a graduate student (Tutor3).

The presence of such students is associated with the relatively open admission of non-traditional students who neither have the time nor the ability to meet the expectation of their formal supervisors. The presence of such students on campus and the concomitant failure of the formal supervisor to lessen their expectation are seen as an opportunity by the entrepreneurs. In light of this, the excerpt shows:

I had a lady customer working for an NGO on children affairs and studying on a distance modality. She sought my support starting from topic selection all the way to proposal development and writing the whole paper. I would say it is like as if I have the whole paper myself.

5.1. Factors shaping the Demand for Private Tutoring

Some factors that shape the supply of private tutoring also affects the decision to buy private tutoring service. From the above model, it is simply looking into factors that implicated the decision to buy additional education service, i.e. moving from D1 to D2 despite the increment in price. As was discussed earlier the price of education increased by 100% in D2 than it was in D1. The data showed that several factors have caused customers (tutees in this case) to decide to demand private tutoring by bearing considerable additional costs. To begin

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4 In the language of the tutors, students buying service are addressed as customers.
with, the goal of private tutoring is more consistent with some student’s goal than the formal advisement process. The student who opts for private tutoring is more interested in graduating with little care for learning opportunities that research exercise offers. A student informant mentions that:

> Our major goal for seeing the private tutor is to graduate without any stress. Hence private tutors are preferred as they do not let students frustrate. What they do is they simply download and reorganize. It is not their knowledge of research but their friendly treatment. They simply copy from previous work and reorganize it so that it fits the purpose of the customer” (FGD1).

Discussion in the other focus group discussion showed that:

> Some students do not want to bear the burden of carrying out research. They prefer the opportunity out there-paying and get it done. On top of this, in some departments, oral defense is either non-existent or less rigorous than it used to be (FGD3).

Seeing graduation rather than developing skills of research, as an objective, is not simply because these students have low achievement but also it has to do with the orientation they have about graduation projects. The experiences of some undergraduate students can explain the situation.

> Senior students usually prefer to talk about their final university lives. They speak about success stories while doing their research project. Those who got excellent grades supported by private tutors do get listened whilst they share their experiences as a way out for those having difficulties in meeting the requirements. For example, I know of a classmate who has been panicking with here project work as she could not meet the expectation of her supervisor, then she was advised to see others for support. Even for those who try by their own, the discouragement comes from peers. The usual advice
is why you put in this much effort for a BA degree (FGD 2). The importance socially attached to the value of graduation projects could be commendable but at the same time it can create some disillusionment and frustration when students are not properly guided as how to face the academic challenges therewith. Lack of appropriate orientation on how of the research could lead to desperation and candidates could look for all other possible means. Lack of commitment on the part of formal advisors has been complained by student respondents:

Some advisors require us simply to do all the chapters at once and submit instead of chapter by chapter. This is done towards to the graduation weeks. If my work is rejected as unacceptable I might fail to graduate as I have not time to rework my project. Therefore I prefer to buy the readymade instead of delaying my graduation by a year (FGD 4).

The tutors not only share this view but also they consider it as an opportunity for them to take over the reasonability helping the student out. A tutor observed this:

Most formal supervisors are not ready to support their students (being absent for consultation, only short time meeting with students, infrequent meetings, meeting them through department secretaries rather than face to face…). Even when they meet their supervisees, the discussion did not help owing to lack of good rapport. Some supervisors consider themselves legitimate kings. They are not open to hear their students. Some students will have met with their supervisors only for few days before graduation (Tutor 5).
Students’ frustration increases as they are engulfed with some paradoxes. On the one hand they see the importance graduation projects; on the other they have offered small support. Their frustration is stated as follows:

Senior essay is being given a high emphasis and it has been credited and remains a decisive graduation requirement. Its grade is entirely based on the paper as there are neither quizzes nor other alternative mechanisms of evaluation. Its implication for MA studies cannot be undermined. In most cases it is a- year- long course. It is an individual work whereas other courses have group assignment whereby individual students could pass the exams easily. For most students it is the first scholarly contribution. Yet there is lack of sufficient orientation on how to handle the course. But the only orientation is how important it is both for graduation and future careers. Yet small guidance is offered (FGD3).

Candidates experience helplessness both for lack of intensive support as well as failure to build good rapport with their respective supervisors. The weaker the students are the more they require intensive and frequent support from their supervisors. In the absence of such an environment, students resort to other options as they are required to deliver some output despite their individual differences. Tutors view the situation as follows:

Individual difference between supervisors exists. The customers feel more comfortable working with me than their supervisors. Students ask me questions which they do not ask their formal supervisors. They do so as to conceal their weaknesses for fear of getting undermined by their instructors for asking ‘silly questions’. Students complain that the usual reaction to their curiosity is: do not you know this being a graduate student? I am approached more easily and more frequently
than their formal supervisors as I do not have rigid consultations hours. Then I facilitate the relationship between them (Tutor 2).

Consumers of private tutoring service also confirm this position when they say: Private tutors are better than formal supervisors as the formers use friendly approach though formal supervisors are more knowledgeable. Private tutors are not only friendly people but also they know the expectations and requirements set by our formal supervisors. And private tutors are preferred to formal supervisors for their friendly approach than their ability… they are Mr. Okay (FGD2).

Private tutors and their service are demanded by tutees not because of the formers’ expert advice but for their proper handling of students. In terms of profile, private tutors are less qualified than formal supervisors, for example, in academic qualifications and experience. Private tutors are as junior as 4th year students are seen advising his peers. Qualification is not an issue for the consumers of private tutoring: “Some do not disclose their qualifications to customers. Their usual answer is: what do you want if you get it done for you. Why you worry about my profile?” (FGD5).

Private tutoring is highly demanded as it facilitates students’ alternative objectives. It is not possible to assume that every student is motivated to gain knowledge and skills; there are some students whose goal is hunting for the certificates (diploma; degree, PhD, etc). For these types of students, private tutoring seems appropriate choice. The data showed that the presence of such student has been confirmed by the words of tutors as follows:

My customers are those students who could not carry out the research and finish their studies. Sometimes they see me just to deal with statistics part of their work as they want simply to finish their studies; no more; no less. There was a MA student who came to me for assistance. But he had to study what I have done for him before the
defense. When he was asked to explain his work by the examiners, he responded to them by mentioning that he has been assisted by experts. Then they advised him to master what has been done by somebody as a result he could not score better grades (Tutor1).

Respondents were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of tutoring whether it helps build human capital or just demanded for sake of passing examinations. Accordingly, they argued that it is effective as far as the objective of their customers is concerned;

Our support facilitates their graduation but we do not bother whether they comprehend research skills as such. Particularly, for low achieving students the objective is simply graduating (Tutor2). Similarly, it is effective for the objective- avoids delayed graduation. Even, while only 10 days remain for defense, they get better grades (Tutor 1).

Consumers themselves justify their attitudes desperately as follows;

I do recommend private tutoring to my fellow mates. Because as they could not find job easily whatever merit they might have, …I even advise them to buy grades as the labor market treats unfairly both who have done themselves or get it done by somebody else. I even advise them to get one from other universities (FGD 5).

Some institutional variables have also created good environment for the demand of private tutoring. These are the push factors associated with the course offering and student explosion. The data show that most students do not find it easy to transfers skills and knowledge of research into practice due to lack of sufficient practical experiences. A tutor maintained the following fact:

I wanted to help them as they do not have good background to do the task. In addition to this, it helps me to make some money. I also do sympathize with my customers as the courses they take during
the course work do not prepare them for practical application when it comes to statistical analysis. Their courses are deficient as they lack hands-on skill. I think they miss the actual data manipulation skills. Look, the student has to deal with a huge data set unlike when experiment small data during courses (Tutor 1).

Another informant also echoed how research courses for graduate students are handled at the university:

I myself suffered a lot during my MA studies as I had difficulty of putting theory into practice. We were given the skills of handling SPSS all in CDs in which I myself could not put into action when I was an MA student. I felt the presence of practical knowledge gap since then and I see that many people still struggling with it. I became uniquely expert in the SPSS analysis from among my fellow classmates as I used to urge my professors to help me build my capacity. But those shy away or opted for short cuts could not avoid their deficiencies. At the beginning I was to help myself and I did not have the intention of helping others but was to help myself. Later on I became an expert most sought after in as far as private tutoring is concerned (Tutor 2).

Some observed the explosions of students:

The number of students admitted to the university education is increasing both in undergraduate and post graduate level training. The supervisors do not find enough time to monitor their students’ progress individually (Tutor5).

The pedagogical shift in university education is also associated with the institutional variables. Some posited that:

The university education system also encourages the expansion of private tutoring. It focuses on output than process. For example,
students are expected to score good grades by whatever means and complete their studies in shortest possible time. Nobody cares how grades are awarded. I do not think this is the university’s cherished wisdom but the pressure of external forces has induced such a culture whereby students are simply focusing on graduation and graduation only period. The university system promotes inflated grades and in the number of graduates has increased recently. For instance, earlier graduating from AAU was quite difficult (FGD8).

A tutor shares the concern of the student respondents as he argues that “Earlier teaching was highly teacher centered with little responsibility for the learner whereas currently it is becoming student-centered and much of the responsibility is left to the student” (Tutor 2).

Similarly, informants were asked to mention the focus of their support in relation to working on graduation projects. A tutor says “My customers usually struggle with statistical tools, have got difficulties in selecting appropriate statistical test for their research questions and dealing with statistical analysis using the software” (Tutor1).

To make things worse, formal supervisors rarely provide sufficient support for these ill-prepared students. Tutees said that:

There is no uniformity in terms of requirements- it goes as suited supervisors’ goals. The supervisors want to finish the job of supervising quickly as they got something to do off the campus-moonlighting. Of course, there are some who do their jobs very hard but some do not. They got tired of listening to students concerns. Do it this way and go and look for someone who would help you if you do not understand what I am saying (FGD7).

They further mentioned this:
Advisors are usually assigned on the basis of chance rather than on the basis of their area of expertise. They may not support students properly. For example, my supervisor is expert in media but not poetry. I am working on poetry under the supervision a supervisor not expert in poetry. Therefore, students sometimes fail to understand what the formal advisor tells him to do (FGD).

Moreover, private tutors sought for they can smooth the relationship between the students and their supervisors as they know the expectation of the instructors. Tutors argued their support as it complements the instructors’ effort as:

University professors want the research to be done the way they want it even if the students’ approach is the best one. In this my service plays a great role as I can simply tailor the paper to the professors’ requirement” (Tutor 2). On top of these formal supervisors is busy doing other activities. Some of them advise too many students as a result of which feedback delays occur, while graduation is approaching and the panicking students must see someone for help-private tutors (Tutor3).

The focus of the private tutoring for students are working on their graduation seems to include the most part of research work. Although the focus goes by the request of the customers, there seems some visible pattern. Informants observed the following:

I am focusing on the analysis part of the thesis writing. I do not work on data entry but assist my customers on data analysis and interpretation. If they ask me about statistical steps I would tell them but they rarely ask such a question rather they focus on analysis and interpretation (Tutor1). Such assistance might sound acceptable but includes data interpretation, which is core element in any research. If students get data interpretation done by tutors, it offers them little chance of learning. Some others to say the following:
My service includes all helping in all chapters if the customers require but I focus on issues that could be raised during oral examinations such as research questions, problem statement, methodology, data sources, instruments and literature review. For literature review, we download from the Internet. This is, however, the most difficult part of my job (Tutor4).

The support offered as includes data collection “As they lack the motivation to collect real data from the field as it is difficult for them. I do collect data on their behalf” (Tutor 3). The data showed that service varies from minimal support for some to the extent of selling and/or buying a readymade work. The reason for this includes the fact that the customers do not know what it takes to do research. In practice they cannot do it. They have a simplified view of research (Tutor2).

Finally, the study explains the perspectives of actors as to continue with having private tutoring and their views are different. Those informants who argue for its continuity and do so by mentioning some condition as the following excerpts indicated:

I think private tutoring should be continued as far as technology is around. I wish to offer extended tutoring on conceptual issues for knowledge acquisition. I wish also university supervisor consider dealing with statistical issues as part the advising process rather than refer to somebody else- definitely private tutors (Tutor 1).

Others saw it from employment point of view:

It is a business on its own right, it is means for earning living for a good number of people (both employed and unemployed). For instance, I am employed in one of the government schools in Addis but I am enjoying a better pay than my formal service (Tutor 2).

Furthermore, some argued that it should be stooped for ethical reasons:
It is good to support some weak students. But there are times when tutors do the whole job for the customer which is not only unethical and unfair but also with undesirable consequences for the nation’s education. I have not tried this myself. But there are other friends who commit this crime. I wish I would do something else- which relates to my profession and my experiences. There are some rich students who want to get readymade paper and they ask us to do everything for them. Of course, their pay proposal is tempting (Tutor 3).

The ethical issues are further underlined in the speech of a tutor:

I want to stop it as many students require me to do the whole research for them. I think this is not faire. Sometimes I get this temptation not to decline the financial offer. But this is not unethical but hurts the students and the nation. Most students get graduated by simply copying. It should be stopped (Tutor 4).

Nonetheless, the students have the perspectives that private tutoring be stopped. From the FGD, this extract stated that:

Private tutoring needs to be stopped. It leads the country to loss its potential future researchers for market as private tutoring does not lead to any meaningful learning; the nation is losing its future researchers. It is eroding students’ self confidence as private tutors do not equip students with the skills of how to solve practical problems. It is also illegal as it is hurting the country economy. It means double payment - wastage of resources (FGD6).

6. Discussion

This paper is aimed to explore the phenomena private tutoring in higher education in relations to students’ graduation projects depending on the social and educational factors in shaping the demand for and supply of private tutoring in Addis Ababa based on qualitative data sources. The qualitative data obtained
and its analysis show that the supply of private tutoring is shaped by two important factors. The emergences of knowledge entrepreneurs and factors associated with higher education dynamics. Similarly, the demand for private tutoring is shaped by students’ learning goal displacement, and intuitional variables being as push factors in demanding an ‘alternative source of education’ - private tutoring.

In light of this, the private tutoring service has become a lucrative business on its own; hence, this has shaped the subject under study. Many employed and unemployed graduates (even final year university students) are earning their livelihood from the sector. In terms financial gains, it was learned that private tutors earn much from more than formal university based supervisors. In a context where the labor market in the public service (the presence of unemployed graduates and non-competitive salary scale) remains less competitive, it has become the order to find knowledge entrepreneurs like any other entrepreneurs. It is interesting to note that the providers of private tutoring are public employees who want to top up their incomes by taking advantages of available opportunities.

The opportunities for the knowledge entrepreneurs are created by the dynamics of higher education sub-sector itself. The expansion higher education and the presence of new providers of higher education have created the opportunity for knowledge entrepreneurs to advantage of. With increasing admission both in public and private universities and colleges comes the possibility of admitting marginally qualified students into the systems. It is also evident that the provision of higher education by different entities other than the state has allowed the admission of non-traditional students into higher education system. These non-traditional students have to attend their university education on part-time basis in which case they may not have sufficient time for their education. This requires special remedial assistance for these non-traditional students to
meet the university requirements. The data clearly indicated that the phenomenon of private tutoring program for higher education is associated with the expansion of distance education in this country.

The demand for private tutoring is shaped by learning goal displacements and some institutional variables. As enrollment increases the possibility that some students are simply looking for university level qualification becomes inevitable. Students might have faced frustration when they pass through formal institutional learning-teaching processes; hence, significant numbers of students look for better short-cuts than confronting these challenges to meeting graduation requirements. The challenges come either from lack of time or the academic preparation or capability. Thus, these types of students are more readily demand private tutoring as way out.

There are also many other institutional variables in promoting private tutoring which include problems of skills transfers, absence of adequate support from formal supervisors. As indicated by the data the preparatory courses are offered in such a way that students find it difficult to put them into action. Research education is as much a matter of practicing as it is matter knowing. Learning to research is like as learning to swim. One cannot learn swimming without actually swimming in the pool. Students, even above average ones, may find it difficult to practice research as they near to graduation if they were not given the opportunity and educational responsibility to practice research in earlier times.

To make things worse, students with less preparation on research works do not establish good research rapport and they usually are not offered intensive support in doing so. Good research rapport with the formal supervisors is constrained due to expectation gaps. The data showed that some university instructors do not have clear and logical guideline while assessing their students’ capacities, potentials and limitations prevail in their research
outcomes. In most cases, university instructors assume that their students have good research skills, but on the contrary, most students lack even basic research skills. In such circumstances, some students fail to establish working relationships with their research supervisors. As a remedy, these students will look for someone who would tolerate their weaknesses. Some students with lesser capacity than expected by their supervisors would be ridiculed and embarrassed by their formal supervisors instead of enjoying intensive support. Hence, private tutors preferred to be their formal supervisors as compared to their supervisors in higher institutions. Private supervisors, hence, have not rigid consultation hours and approaches. Put differently, they are ready to ‘help’ their customers any time and in any where the request comes.

7. Conclusion
The important question is, however, should Ethiopia’s education system tolerate and accept private tutoring as an alternative formal education? The data as well as the analysis indicated that private tutoring is not contributing to the deepening of human capital development rather it is serving as means of meeting short-time ends from both suppliers and consumers of private tutoring. Suppliers are looking at it as a green pasture and consumers are considering as way out of personal and institutional challenges. Given the country’s education direction- providing quality education efficiently and equitable, the phenomena of private tutoring as a production and distribution of education needs to be seriously considered. The pros and cons of the private tutoring system needs to established empirically and policy direction taken accordingly.

8. References


The comparative Analysis of Academic Performance of Students With Respect to Gender Vis-à-vis Instructors’ Performance in the College of Business and Economics, Ambo University. 

By: Kefyalew Tadesse

Abstract

This study was intended to analyze instructors’ performance in teaching learning process vis-a-vis academic performance of students from gender perspectives. To achieve these objectives, both primary and secondary data were collected. The primary data were obtained using questionnaire designed to assess instructors’ performance in teaching learning process. Moreover, focus group discussion was conducted with students from all departments incorporating both male and female representatives. Stratified random sampling technique was used with 15% of students in the College of Business and Economics taken as respondents. Nearly 50% of instructors were randomly taken to be assessed by instructors. Moreover, secondary data were obtained from students’ academic report of 2011/12 in the first semester. Qualitative and quantitative survey was used as a design of the research. Statistical tests have been made using chi-square and t-test employing SPSS as a tool. It was found out that the academic performance of students is relatively poor in aggregate. This was attributed to students’ attitudinal problems towards better learning methods. At α=0.05, male students’ academic performance tested to be significantly different from the female counterparts as (p=000). At α=0.05, the

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5 Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting, Ambo University, P.O.Box 19, Ambo, Ethiopia. E-mail: ilmayad@yahoo.com; Tel. 0911763234
teaching learning performance of instructors as rated by students was found to be not significantly different between male and female students. Descriptively, the teaching learning performance of instructors was rated to be very high (88.6%) and the response of male and female students about instructors’ performance was not significantly different (p-value = 0.688). Special support program should be designed for female students to capacitate and enable them to improve their academic performance like special tutorial program; providing academic and non academic counseling and mentorship as needed. The university should encourage instructors to do more in dealing with students attitudinal changes towards learning for better performance.

Key words: Academic performance, Gender education, Teaching Learning process.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education quality influences what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. Whether a particular education system is of high or low quality can be judged in terms of input, output and process. However, much discussion of educational quality is centered on only system inputs in terms of the provision of teachers, teaching materials and other facilities, and on output in terms of students’ achievement (Derebssa, 2006). According to Dejene A. and Schippers (2007), improving the quality of education through improving the teaching-learning process is assumed to be cost-effective than through improving system input which is more difficult for countries like Ethiopia. Realizing this fact, parallel with the rapid expansion of the education system the government called for improving quality of education by employing interactive teaching and learning process.

According to (Barrow & Leu, 2006), process quality factors relate to teachers’ and students’ activities and interactions in the classroom. This implies that for
the teaching learning process to be of higher quality, students and teachers should take part in the process actively. A teaching strategy is not just about the activities of teachers, although that will be one component. It is actually a plan for someone else’s learning, and it embodies the presentations which the teacher might make, the exercises and activities designed for students, materials which will be supplied or suggested for students to work with, and ways in which evidence of their understanding and ability will be collected. A teaching strategy means all of the activities and resources that a teacher plans in order to enable students to learn (Derebssa, 2006).

As found out by Heritage (2010) assessment has two essential purposes: to provide information on students’ current levels of achievement and to inform what teachers should do in classrooms to ensure that students make progress toward desired outcomes. The first purpose has been paid attention in recent years, especially in accountability contexts, where measuring student achievement in relation to standards has been of primary importance. Despite its centrality to effective practice in the classroom, the second purpose has attracted rather less attention. The default assumption has apparently been that teachers will determine what needs to be done next to move learning forward, using the assessment information about students’ present achievement levels. This is an assumption that has inherent problems. A student-centred approach, which actively engages the young person in the learning process, is critical if skills which result in healthy behaviors are to be promoted and developed. Consideration should be given to enable students to plan some learning experiences. Barrow and Liu (2006) had found out that teachers explained quality education in terms of student participation and asking questions to build their self-confidence. They also referred to the importance of employing various teaching strategies and materials to motivate students as well as continuously assessing student performance.
1.2 Problem statement

In an effort to enhance the education quality, closely monitoring the instructors’ performance so as to provide feedback as needed is critical. This is because; instructors are the key actors in betterment of educational quality in any context. Besides, assessment of the academic performance of male and female students is very important to selectively respond to mitigate the problem based on the result. If not, this poses difficulty to address the performance gap of male and female students. Moreover, it is less likely to understand what is really going on, related to performance of instructors in teaching / learning process. Other than for the purpose of promoting or granting scholarship for instructors or for other purpose, no formal study was made to assess the instructors’ performance in teaching-learning process in our University so far. In line with this, the academic performance from gender perspective is not examined. Thus, this study is designed to investigate performance of instructors’ teaching-learning process linked with the students’ academic performance of students focusing on gender aspect. The result of the study is helpful because in the later periods, it may be used as baseline information to analyze the improvement or deterioration in the teaching learning process and academic performance of students. Hence, the study bridges the currently existing gaps.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this article is to determine whether there is difference in academic performance of male and female students and whether there is response difference of male and female students’ evaluation of teachers’ teaching learning and assessment performance.

Specific objectives

➢ To investigate the academic performance difference of male and female students
➢ To examine the teaching, learning and assessment performance of instructors
➢ To explore the response difference of male and female students about the performance of instructors regarding teaching and learning.
➢ To investigate the instructors’ performance in teaching learning process in relation to students’ academic performance.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

\[ H_0: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does not vary significantly} \]
\[ H_a: \text{Academic performance of male and female students does vary significantly} \]

Hypothesis 2

\[ H_0: \text{There is no significant difference in mean response between male and female students} \]
\[ H_a: \text{There is significant difference in mean response between male and female student.} \]

Hypothesis 3

\[ H_0: \text{There is no significant difference in mean response between second year and third year students} \]
\[ H_a: \text{There is significant difference in mean response between second year and third year students} \]

2. Methods

2.1 Sampling Design

The units of analysis were students and instructors of Ambo University, College of Business and Economics. There were total of 405 second and third year students as of the end of the first semester of 2011/12 academic year in the
regular program at the college attending in five programs out of which 61 students or about 15% were selected randomly to assess the teaching learning performance of students. The ratio of male to female in the entire population was 3:1 and first year students were not considered as subjects of study as they were admitted lately, in the second semester. There were also about 45 instructors in the college out of which about 50% selected randomly to be assessed by students.

The students’ and instructors’ lists were obtained and sample respondents were taken from all sections and departments and both gender (male and female) to minimize sampling bias. Moreover, all second and third year students’ academic performance were taken and processed.

2.2 Data collection methods

Secondary and primary data were obtained for the study to be successfully carried out. Particularly, secondary data (the most recent students’ cumulative grade points average of the entire program and all the students) were obtained. Primary data were obtained using questionnaire in line with getting the opinion of students regarding teaching, learning and assessment performance of instructors of the entire courses. To quantify the response of students about the instructors performance, five points likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) is used. The experts and persons who have ample experience have commented on the exhaustiveness of parameters selected for assessment of instructors’ performance in teaching learning process and based on the comment, the revised questionnaires were distributed to the students. Pilot test had been conducted in line with assessing whether the question items were clear and understandable to the respondents.

2.3 Data Processing and Analysis

The design of the research is case study that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. In order to test the significance of the
academic performance difference between male and female students, Chi-square is used by categorizing the academic performance proxy (CGPA) as High (CGPA\(\geq\)2.75), Medium (CGPA\(>\)2.00 but less than 2.75) and Low (CGPA\(<\)2.00) and the number (frequency) of students in each performance range is considered. In order to test whether there is significant difference in mean response between male and female respondents (students) the t-test was used. The response of the students was labeled using likert scale: ‘strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree’. To obtain the response of students, positive statements were developed and the value of the labels range from 5 for strongly agree to 1 for strongly disagree. Therefore the possible highest value for a response was 5 and the lowest value for a response was 1.

3. Results And Discussion

This section presents the academic performance of male and female students in comparative form. Following it, the chi square table is constructed to test whether there is significant difference in academic performance between male and female student. The analysis was undertaken and displayed by using bar chart as a tool.

3.1 Comparative Analysis of Academic Performance of male and Female Students

Students’ academic record shows that about 45% of total male population scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 while only 22% of total female students scored the CGPA specified. The proportion of male students who scored CGPA of more than 2.75, which is (45%) is more than the proportion of total students scoring the same which is (39%). But the proportion of female students scoring CGPA more than 2.75, which is 22% is much less than the proportion of total students scoring the same (39%). On the other hand, about 9% of male students were academically warned or dismissed compared to 23% of their female
counterpart. This clearly indicates that female students perform lower than their male counterpart. This is clearly displayed in the figure below.

![Bar chart showing academic performance of male and female students](chart.png)

**Fig 1** Academic performance of male and female students comparatively

**Table 1** Academic performance of male and female students in range

The table above shows students’ academic performance categorized in ranges between male and females, i.e academic performance is categorized as high (CGPA=2.75), medium performance (CGPA between 2.00 and 2.75) and low CGPA less than 2.00. The question of whether the academic performance difference is statistically significant is tested below:
**Hypothesis 1.**

\( H_0 \): Academic performance of male and female students does not vary significantly

\( H_a \): Academic performance of male and female students does vary significantly

The observed frequency, expected frequency and computation of the chi square value related to academic performance of students from the gender perspective are as shown below:

**Table 2** Observed and expected frequencies

At 95% confidence, the degree of freedom is computed as follows: \((2-1)*(3-1)= 2\). Therefore, the chi square value at 5% critical value and 2 degree of freedom, as read from chi square distribution table is 5.99 while the calculated chi square value is 24.47 as shown above. This implies that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the academic performance difference between male and female students is significant, that means the male students are performing more than their female counterparts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Range</th>
<th>Count of Second year students</th>
<th>Count of Third year students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&gt;=2.75</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=&lt;CGPA&lt;2.75</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&lt;2.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>305</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>405</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Comparative analysis of academic performance by batch

The figure below shows that about 45% of total second year students scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 while only 33% of total third year students scored the CGPA specified. This specifically shows that second year students have performed better as compared to the third year students. From the chart below, one can easily understand that the percentage of second year students who scored CGPA greater or equal to 2.75 is more than the percentage of all students scoring the same. On the other hand, about 12% of second year students were academically warned or dismissed compared to 13% of the third year students who are academically warned or dismissed. This clearly indicates that almost equal proportion of students of second and third year are academically warned or dismissed in the first semester of 2011/12 academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Frequency(O)</th>
<th>Expected frequency(E)</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2</th>
<th>(O-E)^2/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculated Chi square value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Academic performance of students by batch

To precisely test the academic performance difference between second and third year students, chi-square test is used as follows.
Test of performance difference between second and third year students

Table 3 Academic performance range of second and third year students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Frequency(O)</th>
<th>Expected frequency(E)</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2</th>
<th>(O-E)^2/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculated Chi square value 6.18

Hypothesis2.

H₀: Academic performance of second and third year students does not vary significantly

Hₐ: Academic performance of second and third year students does vary significantly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Range</th>
<th>Count of Second year students</th>
<th>Count of Third year students</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&gt;=2.75</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;=CGPA&lt;2.75</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGPA&lt;2.00</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vary significantly
Table 4 Observed and expected frequencies

At 95% confidence, the degree of freedom is computed as follows: 
\[(2-1) \times (3-1) = 2\].
Therefore, the chi square value at 5% critical value and 2 degree of freedom, as read from chi square distribution table is \(5.99\) while the calculated chi square value is \(6.18\) as shown above. This implies that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the academic performance difference between second and third year students is significant, that means the second year students performed better than their third year counterparts.

3.3 Assessment Result of Instructors’ Performance

a) Response of male and female students on instructors’ performance

In the figure below the mean response of male and female students on teaching learning for parameters mentioned from number 1 to 20, which are proxies of instructors’ performance in teaching learning process whose maximum value is 5 and minimum value is 1. The grand mean performance of instructors is 88.5%. This shows that the teaching learning performance of instructors from the students’ rating perspective is very good. Whether the mean response difference of male and female is statistically significant is tested. For this purpose, independent sample t-test was used and shown as follows.

Fig 3. Mean response of male and female students

Hypothesis 3.
There is no significant difference in mean response between male and female students

There is significant difference in mean response between male and female student.

The hypothesis is tested using the t-test and the output is displayed as follows in the following tables
The Levene’s test for equal variances yields a $p$-value of 0.947. This means that the mean response difference is statistically insignificant and the statistics in the first row should be used because, the responses are assumed to have equal variances. The $p$-value (sig 2-tailed is 0.688) is greater than 0.05, indicates that there is insignificant different between average assessment result of female and male students. This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted implying that the response is independent of gender. This mean there is no statistically significant difference between mean responses of male and female students about the instructors.

**b) Response of second and third year students on instructors’ performance**

The following shows the summary of second and third year student’s mean response about their instructors.

**Hypothesis**

$H_0$: *There is no significant difference in assessment result between second year and third year students*

$H_a$: *There is significant difference in assessment result between second year and third year students*
Average response of second year students on instructors’ academic performance is 82.8% and the response of the third year students of the same is 91.8%. This shows that third year students’ mean response on instructors’ performance is higher than the mean response of second year students.

The figure below shows the mean response distribution of male and female students for parameters mentioned from number 1 to 20, which are proxies of instructors’ performance in teaching learning process whose maximum value is 5 and minimum value is 1. The response of second year students is consistently less than the mean response of third year students except for proxy number 17.

Fig 4. Mean response of male and female students

Whether there is statistically significant difference between mean response of second and third year students’ response, t-test is used as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>classyear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59
The Levene’s test of equal variance has p-value of 0.034, less than 0.05 implying that equal variances is not assumed. Therefore, the second row is considered for interpretation. The p-value (sig 2-tailed is 0.000) is less than 0.05, indicates that there is significant different between average assessment result of second year and third year students. This shows that the null hypothesis is not accepted implying that the response is not independent of class year. This mean there is statistically significant difference between mean responses of 2nd and 3rd year students about the instructors. Particularly, the average response of 2nd year students is 4.14, which is lower than the average response of 3rd year students, which is 4.59

### Independent Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>4.839</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-7.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-7.261</td>
<td>25.744</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

- The academic performance of male and female students’ show that male students have performed better than female students and this difference is tested to be statistically significant.

- When academic performance of second year students are compared with the third year students, second year students have performed better as compared with their third year counterparts. This is a good signal for future improvement. Again the difference is tested and found to be slightly significant.

- The teaching-learning performance of instructors in the college was found to be very good. The mean response difference of male and female students is statistically not significant and hence we can say that the academic performance of instructors is rated to be consistently high for male and female students.

- The overall academic performance of students was relatively poor; particularly out of 100 students about 12 students are academically warned or dismissed. Only 39% of students scored the high category academic performance (CGPA greater or equal to 2.75) and majority of students, i.e. nearly 50% of them scored moderate academic performance. When we see the teaching learning performance of instructors, it is quite mismatch as instructors performance rated to be very good.

- The relatively poor performance of students is not attributable to performance of instructors in teaching learning process.

4.2 Recommendations

- The fact that academic performance of female students is relatively poor necessitates that there should be special support program for female
students to capacitate and enable them to improve their academic performance. This could be in the form of critically evaluating and identifying courses for special tutorial program; providing academic and non academic counseling and mentorship as needed; arranging workshop and panel discussion to create awareness as to how to properly use time, study methods and the likes; establishing the system of cooperative learning and peer support

- For the relatively poor overall academic performance of students, there should be institutional determination to implement the new methods of learning-teaching and assessment. Moreover providing timely feedback to assist them learn more. Besides, it is advisable to fulfill the basic facilities and services of education.

- The teaching learning and assessment performance of instructors is very encouraging and poor academic performance of students is not attributable to teaching learning performance of instructors. Hence the performance of instructors needs to be kept up and worked for better performance.

- Students have specifically commented that in implementing the continuous assessment approach, sometimes overstretching students is becoming visible and not notifying the exam schedule ahead of time is becoming apparent. Hence instructors should try to implement it optimally.

5. **References**


Dejene A. and Schippers 2007. Teacher-Cantered versus Student-Cantered Learning Approaches Vol. 2 No. 2

Derebssa D. 2006. Tension between Traditional and Modern Teaching-Learning


Washington, D.C.
Students' Perception towards Service Quality of Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (EiABC), Addis Ababa University. By Birhanu Tsegaye

Abstract
This study attempted at assessing the perception of students’ towards service quality of Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (EiABC), and to identify if there is a gap that may exist between the perceptions and expectations of Students’. To this end, descriptive research method was employed. A questionnaire used for this investigation is limited to a sample of 200 respondents from which 123 questionnaires were fully answered. The sampling procedure used was non-probability convenient sampling. The measurements used were based on widely accepted SERVQUAL model. A descriptive statistics analysis percentage, mean, Graphs and gap analysis was used to see the gap between students’ perceptions and their actual expectation. The study shows that EiABC do not meet the service expectations of the students because there is a significant gap between student’s perceptions and expectations. Given today’s competitive Higher Education services environment in the country, it is believed that, it is appropriate for the management of the Institute to seriously examine students’ expectations and customer service system. Therefore, EiABC need to better understand its students and continuously measure and evaluate its service quality performance in order to improve its service quality based on students’ perception.

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1. **Introduction**

Nowadays, the business environment has become highly competitive and dynamic. In this situation, service sector organizations are required to provide quality customer service, and must contribute to societal welfare, as it is their main existence. It is only through meeting expectations of customers and customer satisfaction that they can respond to the challenges of globalization in terms of competition and achieve a competitive advantage.

Measuring service quality in higher education institutions continues to be a challenging and incommodious endeavor. Although there have been numerous studies and continuous efforts on the part of many institutions to improve the quality of their services, much of this improvement has been driven by regional and national accrediting agencies using tangible quality measures. As a result, much of the focus on service quality measurement has been on technical quality inputs and occasionally on student outputs, rather than on student satisfaction (Darlene & Bunda, 1991).

In a competitive higher education marketplace, the quality of services delivered separates an institution from its competitors (Weideman, 1989). Providing an institutional service that exceeds students’ expectations does not happen automatically; rather, it must be deliberately managed. In order to effectively manage the quality of services, management must first ascertain a comprehensive understanding of students’ needs and expectations. Then they must formulate a distinctive service proposition—a proposal regarding how they will choose to serve students, and finally implement it through a strategy of “student-friendly” policies, practices, and procedures. The institutional services that support student learning are changing based on growing student demands in service areas such as admissions and registration, teaching-learning, academic advising, food services, and financial aid, internships, extra-curricular activities, among others. Higher education leaders must be attuned to these
changing demands to maintain student loyalty and ensure that their institutions are meeting or exceeding student expectations.

2. Statement of the problem

Higher education institutions share the same characteristics as those of other service businesses. From the students’ vantage point, the perception of institutional services is inseparable from the people who deliver those services—the service providers. Their services are intangible, heterogeneous, variable, and perishable and the students themselves participate in the service delivery process because they must interact with the service providers (Gronroos, 1992). Unlike other service businesses, however, many higher education institutions erroneously view students as a captive audience and consider the demand for their educational services as inelastic. As competition, the business methods for measuring customer satisfaction will prove valuable to higher education institutions (Shank, Walker, & Hayes, 1995).

In a competitive higher education marketplace, the quality of services delivered separates an institution from its competitors (Weideman, 1989). Providing an institutional service that exceeds students’ expectations does not happen automatically; rather, it must be deliberately managed. Measuring service quality in higher education institutions continues to be a challenging and incommodious endeavor. Although there have been numerous studies and continuous efforts on the part of many institutions to improve the quality of their services, much of this improvement has been driven by regional and national accrediting agencies using tangible quality measures. As a result, much of the focus on service quality measurement has been on technical quality inputs and occasionally on student outputs, rather than on student satisfaction (Darlene & Bunda, 1991).

In order to effectively manage the quality of services, management must first ascertain a comprehensive understanding of students’ needs and expectations.
Then they must formulate a distinctive service proposition—a proposal regarding how they will choose to serve students, and finally implement it through a strategy of “student-friendly” policies, practices, and procedures. The institutional services that support student learning are changing based on growing student demands in service areas such as admissions and registration, teaching-learning, academic advising, food services, and financial aid, internships, extra-curricular activities, among others. Higher education leaders must be attuned to these changing demands to maintain student loyalty and ensure that their institutions are meeting or exceeding student expectations. From this, the following research questions can be raised:

- How do the students perceive the service quality of the Institute?
- Is there any significant difference between students’ expectation and perceived performance?
- What is the level of students’ satisfaction in the Institute?
- What are the most important service qualities attributes from students’ viewpoint?
- What are the possible mechanisms of improving service quality in the future?

3. Objective of the study

- To identify whether there is significant differences between expectation of students’ and perceived performance of the Institute.
- To identify the most important service quality attributes from the viewpoint of students’.
- To identify the level of students’ satisfaction and their awareness about ways of meeting expectations of students'.

4. Methodology

4.1. Design of the Study
Descriptive survey was employed using standardized questionnaire adapted for this study with the intention of getting the general picture of the existing service quality and customer satisfaction.

4.2. Data Sources
Both primary and secondary sources were used.

4.3. Participants
The researcher selected AAU, EiABC as a sample for this particular study, as a relevant site to conduct research on the problem under study.

Sampling Techniques - Convenience sampling techniques

4.4. Method of Data Analysis
Statistical tool used to analyze the data is mainly descriptive analysis, particularly percentage, comparison of means and Gap Analysis.

The SERVQUAL Scale
Service quality is an old concept and was initiated in 1980s, grown in 1990s and progressed in the 21st century. However, measuring and managing this concept from the consumer’s point of view is still a debatable issue. A number of instruments were available to measure service quality as stated in Service quality models review of (Armstrong, Mok et al. 1997; Seth, Deshmukh et al. 2005). Technical and functional quality model (Gronroos 1984), GAP model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml et al. 1985), Evaluated performance and normed quality model (Teas 1994) are among service quality instruments in different service industries. Nevertheless, the SERVQUAL model received much support from researchers (Carman 1990; Bojanic 1991; Finn and Lamb 1991; Saleh and Ryan 1991; Babakus and Mangold 1992; Avkiran 1994; Akan 1995; Johns and Tyas 1996; Johnson and Sirikit 2002) etc and it is the base for all other models.

Research suggests that customers do not perceive quality in a single dimension, but rather judge quality based on various factors relevant to the context. A
number of researchers agree that service quality can be determined by comparing the expectations of customers with their perception of the actual service performance Grönroos 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1982; Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988; Barrington and Olsen 1987 (cited in (Marković 2010).

SERVQUAL model is one of the well known instruments to measure service quality from the viewpoint of customer’s. It was developed by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml et al. 1985) and was later refined. There are five service dimensions, which include;

1. Reliability: The ability to provide the promised service dependably and accurately. Reliability is the customer expectation that the service is accomplished on time every time, in the same manner, and without errors.

2. Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Keeping customers waiting, particularly for no apparent reason, creates negative perceptions of quality. In the event of a service failure, the ability to recover quickly with professionalism can create very positive perceptions of quality.

3. Assurance: the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. The assurance dimension includes competence to perform the service, politeness and respect for the customer, and effective communication with the customer.

4. Empathy: The provision of caring, individualized attention the organization provides its customers. Empathy includes approachability, sense of security, and the effort to understand the customer’s needs.

5. Tangible: the service provider’s physical installations, equipment, people and communication material. Since there is no physical element to be assessed on services, clients often trust the tangible evidence that surrounds it when making their assessment.
In addition to these dimensions, the researcher believes that the service quality in each dimension is again dependent on the customer geographic and socio-demographic characteristics that refer to certain characteristics of a population. The parameters used for these dimensions are age, gender, occupation, income, education level, religion, and geographical location and influence culture and price.

On the SERVQUAL instrument, the service quality measurement is based on the comparison of customers’ expectations and their perceptions of delivering service. The difference between expectations and perception scores is called the SERVQUAL gap. A negative gap indicates that received service did not meet customers’ expectations. On the contrary, a positive gap indicates that customers perceived that service delivery exceeded their expectations.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Mean Perception, Expectation and Gap Scores of Modified SERVQUAL Dimensions

As Parasuraman et.al (1998) states SERVQUAL score is calculated by the difference between perception and expectation. As the value of SERVQUAL score is higher and positive value, the better the service quality is. The gaps between the perceptions and expectations of the service quality attributes were discussed in the following sections, using descriptive statistics the mean scores for expectation, perception and service quality Gap scores for the modified SERVQUAL dimensions are provided in the following tables taking the perceived performance and expected service, and assessing the service quality of a given dimensions. As shown in the following tables, all 43 modified service quality attributes do not exceed the customers’ expectations level. In other words, the customers’ desired levels are higher than perceptions level on all 43 attributes.

5.2. Gap Score Analysis
The highest mean perception score (3.03) reveal to a statement “EiABC has a professional image” followed by the statement “EiABC Instructor's has the knowledge to answer my questions relating to the course content.” with a mean perception score of 2.98. While the lowest mean perception (1.99) was observed in the statement “EiABC provides sufficient residence for students” on a five point rating scale. Also, the highest mean expectation (4.12) is on the attributes, that is, “Instructors at Excellent Universities will be highly educated in their respective fields”. Whereas, the second highest mean expectation is observed in the statement “Excellent Universities will run excellent quality programs”, which was 4.08.

The lowest expectation mean was observed in the statement "Employees at Excellent Universities will understand students’ specific needs" with a mean value of 3.49.

Concerning the Gap between mean scores of perception and expectation, the lowest Gap (-2.04) was indicated on item ‘EiABC provides sufficient residence for students’ followed by the statement that describes "employees will tell you exactly when the service will be performed" with a gap of (-1.73). Whereas, the highest Gap (-0.93) was observed on ‘Graduates of the Institute will be easily employable”. This shows that the perceived performance and expectation of customers was somewhat comparable concerning the employability of students in the labor market.

From this one can easily understand that EiABC performed well with regard to Professional image and in working on improving the knowledge of instructors. The Institute is also expected to work a lot on improving the quality and expansion of students’ dormitories. Among the 43 attributes on about 18 items EiABC is performing below average. There is no item in which EiABC went above expectations of students.

5.3. Overall Satisfaction
Students were asked to rate the overall quality of EiABC and rated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The overall service quality of EiABC is rated as excellent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table above concerning overall service quality of EiABC, about one-third (33.6%) of the respondents reported that they strongly disagree with the statement followed by those (31.1%) who reported that they disagree with the statement about the excellence of EiABC service quality. And, little over one-fifth (20.5%) of them stated as uncertain, where as 2.5% and 12.3% stated strongly agree and agree with the statement, respectively. It is clearly shown in the table that about (64.7%) of the respondents rated the overall service quality of the Institute as not excellent.

This indicates that, the service quality of the Institute was rated by majority of the respondents as below average, so the concerned management body needs to pay great attention about the poor performance of the Institute and take measures to avoid for its future success in this competitive world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In general, I am highly satisfied with the services of EiABC</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disagree & 33 & 26.8 \\ Uncertain & 35 & 28.5 \\ Agree & 17 & 13.8 \\ Strongly agree & 3 & 2.4 \\ Total & 123 & 100.0 \\

The above table indicates the level of students’ satisfaction with the services of the Institute. Accordingly majority (55.3%) of them responded about their dissatisfaction with the services EiABC is delivering. And a considerable number (28.5%) of them were not sure about their level of satisfaction. Only 16.2% were satisfied with EiABC services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I highly recommend this Institute (EiABC) to others</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Table, it is clear that a considerable number of respondents (41.5%) were not interested to recommend the Institute to others, while 30.9% of respondents mentioned that they were not sure whether to recommend the Institute to others or not. On the other hand, 27.7% expressed their agreement towards the statement. That means, they may recommend the Institute to others. Basically, the negative attitude reported not to recommend
the Institute to others comes from the dissatisfaction in service quality of the institute. From the above Table, it can also be argued that a significant number of respondents expressed their positive loyalty towards the Institute.

It can be said that, those who are dissatisfied with the Institute’s service will not only unwilling to recommend the Institute to others, but will not also need to continue with the Institute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The complaint handling procedures of the Institute highly affected my satisfaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table above indicates, the response of respondents concerning the extent that the Institute’s complaint handling procedures affect their satisfaction. They clearly indicated that, almost half (48.8%) of respondents disagree with the statement, while 31.7% were uncertain whether the complaint handling procedures of the Institute affected their satisfaction or not. Only 19.5% of them were said that the Institute’s complaint handling procedures has affected their satisfaction. From this one can easily deduce that, the Institute should pay great attention to its complaint handling procedures, because, if students were handled well, they will be satisfied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Institute clearly communicates to students about how and where to complain in case of problems</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in the table about two-third (66.7%) of respondents replied that the Institute do not clearly communicate students about where and how to complain in case of problems. Less than 15% or 14.6% of respondents agreed that the Institute do have a clear communication with the students. The rest (18.7%) were uncertain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to find out overall satisfaction towards the Institute, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction. It can be noted from the table that a significant proportion of the respondents (51.6%, out of which 27% were highly dissatisfied and 24.6% dissatisfied) expressed their dissatisfaction towards EiABC considering the service quality aspects of the Institute. On the other hand, a considerable number of respondents (32%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied towards the Institutes’ service, while 16.4% of the
respondents expressed their satisfaction towards the Institutes service.

5.4. Most Important Service Quality Attributes in Education Sector

One of the objectives of this study is to identify the most important service quality attributes from the viewpoint of students’. Table below summarizes the mean value of the top ten services attributes of 123 respondents in hierarchical order.

Table : Most important service quality attribute in hierarchical order, N=123

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Attributes</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructors at Excellent Universities will be highly educated in their respective fields</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Universities will run excellent quality programs</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Universities will have modern-looking equipment.</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor at Excellent Universities will communicate well in classroom</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent University will provide sufficient residence for students</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent University Instructor's will provide feedback about students progress</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proportion between theory and practice at Excellent Universities will be appropriate</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculums designed by Excellent Universities will be up to date.</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Universities will have a professional image</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Universities will offer a wide range of programs with various specializations</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in the above table Students’ most important service quality is ‘Instructors level of education in their respective fields’ and the mean (4.12) is close to the highest value of 5 on the 5 point scale. As indicated in the table “Running excellent quality programs" is the second most important attribute having average mean value of 4.08, whereas, having modern-looking equipment (4.05) is the third most important service quality attribute. Among
service quality attributes, offering a wide range of programs with various specializations is found to be the least with mean 4.01.

6. Conclusions
The following conclusions were made:

- The Gap scores indicated that there was discrepancy between the expectations and perceptions of students’ regarding service quality rendered by the Institute which would negatively affect the attitude of the students and stakeholders toward the Institute.
- Unless the Institute improves the quality of its services, its image in the country would be negatively affected.
- Unless the concerned body takes a serious measure to improve service quality of the institute and level of customer satisfaction, the existence of the Institute will be in question.

7. Recommendations
- The Management of the University should focus on construction/extension of building for dormitories so that every student who is in need can get the service.
- The University (Institute) should conduct regular student survey and has to have a customer service officer who can be there to listen to the complaints of students’ and work on improving the service being with the concerned bodies of the Institute.
- Develop and implement mandatory, ongoing customer service training for all “front-line” staff, including student workers, to ensure that students are consistently treated with respect, kindness, and concern for their individual needs.
- Develop and implement an ongoing reward and recognition program to honor excellent student service.
• Cross-train key student services personnel to ensure timely access to accurate information in response to student inquiries.
• Establish an on-going student feedback mechanism, such as a web page and suggestion boxes, to evaluate progress.
• Improve communication channels between administrative, academic and students; let them know how to forward complaints in case of problems.
• Build new classes, increase number of seats, keep tangible components clean, attractive, modern looking
• Improve skills of employees through providing training required to perform their jobs.
• Preparing service delivery policy and guidelines.
• Promote service delivery culture amongst all employees.
• Develop a culture of using different communication channels to inform and aware everybody as something new arises.

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