

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

PEDAGOGY IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION OF
ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF RIFT VALLEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT OF DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ART
IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BY

DIRIBA RAGEA TUMSA



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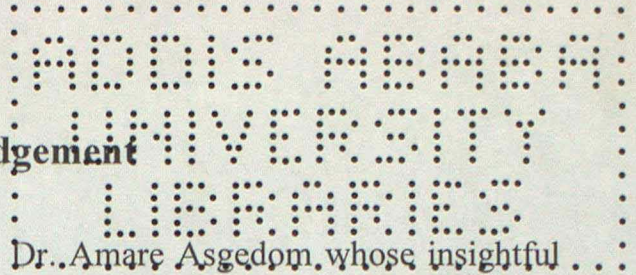
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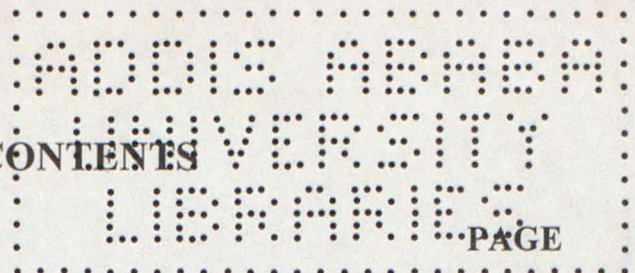


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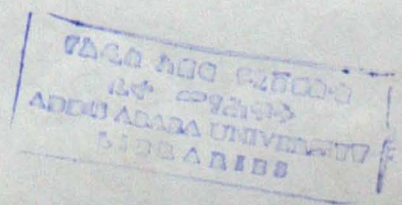
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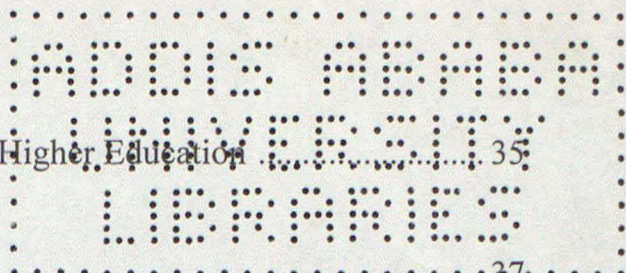
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



	PAGE
Acknowledgment.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
Lists of Appendices and Abbreviations.....	v
Abstract	vi
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Purpose of the Study	4
1.2. Statement of the Problem	4
1.3. Significance of the Study	8
1.4. Delimitation of the Study	9
1.5. Limitation of the Study	9
1.6. Theoretical Framework	9
CHAPTER TWO	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	12
2.1. Meaning of Higher Education.....	12
2.2. Privatization of Higher Institution	13
2.2.1. Why Private Higher Education Institutions?.....	14
2.2.2. Types of Private Higher Education Institutions	16
2.2.3. Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia.....	17
2.3. The Concept of Quality in Higher Education	18
2.4. Pedagogy in Higher Education.....	20
2.4.1. The Content-Oriented Pedagogy	21
2.4.1.1. Reflective Thinking in Content-Oriented Pedagogy	26
2.4.2. Learning-Oriented Pedagogy.....	27
2.4.2.1 .The Critical Thinking in Learning Approach	32
2.5. Higher Education Reforms in Ethiopia.....	34





2.5.1. Pedagogical Policy of Ethiopia's Higher Education 35

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN 37

3.1. The Case Study Method 37

3.2. Data Sources and Sample Selection 38

3.3. Rational for Selecting the Research Setting 39

3.4. Procedures and Data Collection Strategies 40

 3.4.1. Interview 40

 3.4.2. Participant Observation 41

 3.4.3. Document and Archival Analysis 42

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis 42

3.6. Validation Strategies 43

 3.6.1. Triangulation 44

 3.6.2. Ethical Issues 44

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 46

4.1. The Research Setting: Rift Valley University College 46

4.2. Conceptions of Teaching 49

 4.2.1. Directionality of Information 50

 4.2.2. Creating a Context for Learning 55

→ 4.3. Perceptions of Teachers and Students on Learning 59

 4.3.1. Acquisition of Knowledge from a Source 59

 4.3.2. Bringing a Difference 62

 4.3.3. Interactive Versus Semi-Interactive Classrooms 69

 4.3.4. Motivation: Important but Faintly Existent 71

→ 4.4. Issues of Quality 74

 4.4.1. Purpose-Oriented Quality 74

 4.4.2. The Crippled Transformative Quality 76

CHAPTER FIVE

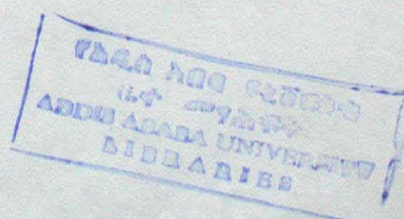
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS 80

5.1. Conclusion 80

5.2. Implications of the Study 83

REFERENCES

APPENDICES



Lists of Appendices and Abbreviations

Lists of Appendices

Appendix A Interview Protocol

Appendix B Interview Guide for Teachers

Appendix C Interview Guide for Students

Abbreviations

FDRE = Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

HERQA = Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

MOE = Ministry Of Education

PHEIs = Private Higher Education Institutions

RVUC = Rift Valley University College

SMUC = St. Mary University College

TGE = Transitional Government of Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

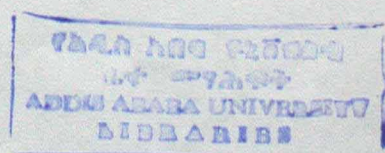
The study was conducted with the objective of exploring how teachers and students understand teaching and learning. The study further examined teachers' and students' motivation in the pedagogical processes and how they perceive quality education. To achieve these objectives, data were collected from Rift Valley University College teachers and students by using in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis. The participants were purposely selected based on their cooperativeness and experiences in the institution. Nineteen participants (11 students and eight teachers) were interviewed using open-ended and semi-structured questions during the conversation process. The data were presented in narrative forms based on the participants understanding and interpretations in addition to my own reflective analysis.

The study revealed that the conception of teaching/learning and quality pedagogy possessed by academics and students vary. Though there were limited attempts of facilitating nature of teaching and learning-pedagogy, teaching appeared to be non-interactive or transmission of information while learning was considered to accept it. As a result the teaching and learning process suffers from reflective and critical-thinking.

Students were found to be passive and ill motivated in the learning process while teachers were highly engaged in delivering the contents. Both teachers and students perceive quality pedagogy from its outcome aspect than the process being in unmotivated and un interactive situations that shade dark light on the quality of output.

Thus instead of meager adoption of different perspectives of pedagogic approaches to pass through the system of higher education with out addressing the encouragement of reflective thinking, academics need to emphasize on the process of teaching and learning in an interactive and motivated manner through facilitating students' understanding and knowledge construction to produce quality education.

①



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the pedagogy of private higher education. It is specifically apprehensive with the teaching and learning process carried out in private higher education institutions focusing on the very understanding of the concept of teaching, learning, teachers' and students' roles in the pedagogical process. Private higher education institutions are proliferating and competing with public higher education (Altbach, 1998). Internationally, the provision of higher-level education by private sectors has been existing since many years. Its pressure has never been lacking both in the 'ideology' and in 'design' of public university systems (Drew, 1999). Nowadays, it is the fast-growing segment of post secondary education through out the world. Its inception and growth in both developed and developing countries appears to have similar trends and elements. Nevertheless, it lacks relatively longer history, stronger policy support and economic grounds in third world nations (Altbach, 2002; Varghese, 2004).

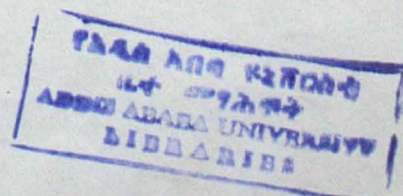
Private higher education institutions vary in their nature and they are broadly categorized into state supported, not-for profit and for-profit higher institutions (Tilak, 1999; Altbach, 1999). The for-profit ones are currently expanding in an alarming rate and call attentions of researchers (Levy, 2002). The trend is also true in Ethiopia, hence; this study focuses on the for-profit private higher institutions those that operate mainly for surplus. Since the institutions are profit seekers the conception of pedagogy and the how of the learning and teaching process was selected and addressed.

In African countries public universities have monopolized the provision of higher education until recently. Varghese (2004) said that the structural adjustment, the deregulation policies and the economic crisis of the state enforced the appearance of market-friendly reforms that made a favorable environment for the emergence

of the private higher education sector in Africa. The nations' legislative measures also paved the way for the establishment of private higher education institutions demonopolizing the sole status of public higher education institutions (Varghese, 2004:5). In addition, he expounds currently, the private sector is a fast expanding section of higher education in Africa though it accounts for a small portion of enrollment in post secondary education (Ibid: 3). The trend is also true in Ethiopia. The expansion of higher education recently taking place in Ethiopia both in public and private institutions has been notable (Saint, 2004:85).

Access to higher education in Ethiopia like other African countries has been restricted to very few public higher education institutions until the launching of Education and Training Policy in 1994. However, today numerous private higher education institutions are operating and playing the role of complementing the public higher education (Damte, 2005). The government is dedicated to the opening out of public and private higher education in the country that shows growth, spreading out and progress in higher education.

Together with the expansion of higher education institutions the issue of quality must be addressed carefully. Because it is a risk for the country as well as for private institutions engaged in providing higher education. A failure to address quality of education at tertiary level could be riskfull to the overall development attempts. This may happen in that since higher educations produce their graduates to run the various sectors in a society, the service to be given and level of graduates' competency will decline and hinders changes aspired. The issue of quality teaching and learning is a global challenge viewed from an assortment of perspectives and still lacks universally accepted definition, as presented in my review of literature (chapter two). Scholars are continuously suggesting the need to 'standardizing' quality of teaching and learning. For instance, Larsen and Momii (2004) said that quality education has far reaching determination on a social, political and economic situation of a nation. This implies the importance of



quality pedagogy in producing skilled manpower that could be employed and which could create his/her own job opportunity and contribute to the alleviation of societal and economic problems. Therefore, only being educated in higher education does not guarantee meeting personal and social expectations. In a competitive world, one needs good pedagogy to operate successfully. But in situations where graduates fail to compete in the world of work, unemployment will rise and the issue may be reversed though it is not a solitary cause of the education system. The issue is double edged in the case of the for-profit private higher institutions. First, when institutions are unable to produce competent graduates joblessness will rise and create burden to parents and the country. Second, since private investors or companies in the purchase of property, construction of academic building, operation of the institutions etc invest to earn profit, their profit intention may decline and finally lead to collapse. Therefore, it requires carefully managed educational process to control societal and institutional crises.

To promote quality of higher education, governments have established Higher Education 'Quality' Control Agency in their own countries and quality has happened to be the words in higher education today. Evans and Abbott (1998:11) said after the expansion of university education that was allied to the movement from elite to a mass system, government pressure on universities stressed to maintain quality.

In Ethiopian context, there have been notable initiatives to address the issue of quality teaching and learning in higher education. For instance, the statements in education and training policy and the initiatives of the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency can be taken as cases in point. The initiatives were designed to obtain quality education considering the inputs, processes and the outcomes. In pedagogical practices, teachers and students interact based on their understanding and paradigm they favor (Weaver, 1990; Aoki, 1992). Human

beings perform based on their understanding. But it is obvious that every action does not generate quality 'products'. In addition the process of pedagogy through which the action must overtake matters the quality of anticipated education (Banathy, 1996). The process of teaching and learning of course is the central theme of this study. This study attempted to explore the issue from the perspectives of teachers and students' considerate, how classroom interactions going on? What the inspiration of teachers and students look like in the pedagogical processes? To understand these, theories of constructivists and positivists in teaching and learning scene underpinned the study. Pedagogical process in higher education was considered together with the contextual issues that characterize the environment of private higher education in Ethiopia.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

In investigating the teaching and learning process in private higher institution, this case study has the following purposes.

- To explore students' understanding of learning.
- To understand teachers' pedagogical understanding of teaching and its practice.
- To examine the teaching and learning process in private higher education institutions.
- To understand the roles of teachers and students in the instructional processes and
- To examine teachers' and students' motivation in the teaching and learning activity.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The expansion of higher education in the contemporary society seems encouraging perhaps due to its importance. Teshome (2004:2) states higher education is no longer a luxury but essential for survival in the global knowledge based era.

The decision made to expand access to higher education to citizens took the first order of priority nowadays throughout the world. This is primarily related with the rapidly changing global economy, technology and knowledge. As the importance of knowledge and technology is enhanced so does higher education due to its vital roles to construct and expand knowledge. Thus encouraging higher education will tend to result in promoting relatively rapid social and political progress, becoming competitive in the world of economy and knowledge-based market. It also plays a crucial role in increasing and diversifying knowledge. Higher institutions are expected to contribute to the formation of the next generation skilled personnel equipping them with the requisite knowledge and generic wisdom necessary to sustain and develop the national economy. In order to get such benefits governments have made greater commitments to expand access to higher education (Ashcroft, 2004).

Since the introduction of Education and Training Policy, the expansion of higher education was prominently sustained in the case of Ethiopia. This is expressed both in the number of public and private higher education institutions and in their amplified annual enrollment capacity. The number of public higher education institutions has increased from 8 in 1998 to 21 in 2006/7 while the private accredited ones increased from 8 at the beginning of 2005 to 58 at the middle of 2006 and still expanding. With regard to annual enrollment capacity, public higher education institutions has augmented from 3,000 in 1994 to 41,050 in 2006/7 while the private sectors enrollment grow from almost nothing to 23 % (Teshome, 2004; The Ethiopian Herald, October, 2006; 2006; MOE, 1999). This indicates the massification of higher education both in public and private sectors.

Together with the expansion of private higher institutions, the pedagogical dimension (teaching and learning process) in which graduates produced must get due attention. Pedagogy has to do with the design and management of the teaching and learning process involving subject matter or content knowledge and a variety of academic appreciation, skills and understanding (Gordon, 1995). In education, teachers and students' understanding of pedagogy and their interaction in the process is a crucial issue for learning to happen.

Learning could be of two types that yielded by distinct pedagogical approaches. Arends (1994) and Cohen et al (1993) classified learning in to rote learning and meaning understanding or intrinsic learning. The rote learning is a duplication of contents based on mere memorization employing surface learning, while the intrinsic learning is perceptive of concepts, development of own understanding and reflective view either inductive or deductively making meaning out of experience, environment and active interactions. The results achieved through these learning approaches vary due to the disparity in depth of cognitive thinking employed, affective behaviors developed and skills acquired in learning process. Ramsden (2003:106) quoting the saying of A.N. Whitehead States "I merely utter the warning that education is a difficult problem to be solved by no one simple formula." This implies that meaningful teaching and learning is not confined to a specific technique, strategy or a formula to operate, rather it is the collective thoughtful dealings between teacher and students organizing experiences and activities of learners. In order to promote such type of learning; classroom situation needs to be conducive in teacher-students' relationships, in teachers' and students' conception of the process of pedagogy and their inspiration to achieve it and so on.

Quality teaching and learning could be affected by numerous factors. According to the study conducted by Daniel (2004) the way teachers understand construction of knowledge; teacher's knowledge of the subject matter; their knowledge of the

appropriate delivery methods; teachers and students motivation in the instructional process etc influence the quality of education in the Ethiopia's public higher educations. With regard to the pedagogical approach, his findings revealed that the higher education teachers employed lecture method as a common mode of instruction in college of further education and elsewhere. Since teachers usually focus on giving lectures, students depend mainly on lecture notes and independent learning is not encouraged.

- In private higher education institutions assuming the aforementioned factors constant, their for-profit nature, the presence of part-time instructors and less competence of students (i.e. students who could not join public higher education enrolled to PHEIs of the country in most cases) may further affect the quality of education.

In line to the pedagogic process of public higher education in Ethiopia many studies have been made explicitly by educators and appeared in the reputable journals, Flambeau, graduate theses and others. However, in PHEIs perhaps due to their newness in the country and due to their for-profit characteristics the place given for research does not seem soundable. Adesina (2006:18) said about the reluctance of private colleges in research activities, as the effort to shift the provision of higher education to the private sector does not address the critical issue of what universities are about: production of knowledge. He argued that private Universities across Africa and most developing countries are known for any commitment to research (Ibid). In Ethiopia few private higher education institutions for instance St. Mary University College and Unity University College carried out different studies in their institutions in general and on the process of teaching and learning in particular and presented on the annual conferences of PHEIs at various occasions. However, in the case of RVUC the researcher identified that the issue of pedagogy was not investigated.

The present study is attempted to explore how teachers and students understand teaching and learning? How they are motivated in the pedagogic process and teachers and how students understand quality education in Rift valley University College?

BASIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Data was gathered based on the following questions.

1. How do students understand learning?
2. What is teachers' understanding of teaching?
3. How motivated are students and teachers in the pedagogical process?
4. How do students and teachers understand good pedagogy?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Intentional performance has own worth to realize. Similarly, the findings of this study are expected to have the following values.

- The study helps private institutions and teachers to enhance their understanding on the how of teaching and learning to promote learners' creative thinking and problem solving capacity.
- The study may contribute to the efforts made to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in private higher institutions.
- The findings may help teachers and students to identify important motivational learning strategies to provide quality education.
- The results may give an insight to the institution's officials as how teaching and learning is going on based on the observed evidences.

- The findings may help in adding perspectives to the prior understanding of students' on what teaching and learning is and their role in a meaningful construction of knowledge.
- The study would serve as a springboard for further researches in the area of pedagogy in private higher institutions.

1.4. Delimitation of the Study

Pedagogy or teaching and learning process in an institution is a vast issue and is difficult to carry out investigation on it at once. Hence, this study was delimited to examine the quality of pedagogic process based on teachers and students' understanding of the process, their roles, nature of their interaction and motivation in the teaching and learning set-up. In addition, though quality of pedagogy is influenced by various physical and human related inputs; in this study, however; only the teaching and learning course of action from the viewpoint of teachers' and students' conception of it and their real activity in the practice was stressed.

1.5. Limitation of the study

Even though the institution was willing to provide data for this study the researcher could not get female teacher participants due to the tightness of their time.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

In this case study my theoretical framework is the perspective of knowledge construction instead of content communication. Holliday (2002:52) put theoretical framework as covering 'the main features' of the research design and their presumed relationships, and saying that it forces researchers to be explicit about what they think and they are doing. Hence, teachers and students' understanding of teaching, learning and their motivation in the institution were used as a framework for the study. The interaction between teachers and students in the pedagogical process to produce learning in students is also highlighted.

To accomplish this study, the following theoretical assumptions were adopted in the overall research design.

- Teaching is encouraging learners to practice, to take responsibility of their own learning, to process knowledge in making meaning of their own understanding rather than declaring knowledge.
- Learning is a human activity which (least) needs manipulation by others and understood in a context. It is an active process of constructing knowledge through interactive and egalitarian learner-teacher relationship than acquiring it through mere telling.
- Instruction is a process of supporting the construction of knowledge rather than communicating it. It is a two-way situation resulting in learned knowledge addressed through construction and reconstruction processes between well-motivated facilitators or teachers and learners in teaching and learning situation (Cunningham and Duffy, 1996). Teaching and learning process can take place in the form of two categories; surface or rote learning and deep or meaningful learning processes. The former is a pedagogical practice in which teachers control the overall classroom and deliver the instruction on the basis of their own expertise. Students provided very little or no opportunity to contribute to the learning process and it is viewed as a surface learning approach that results in knowledge accumulation through indoctrination (Freire, 2003).

The second is a teaching and learning arena that focuses on the enhancement of learners' cognitive development through students' active engagement in learning and facilitating role of teachers (Anderson and Damarin, 1996). Contrary to the first one, much is expected from learners to construct their own understanding through deep processing of experiences, perspectives, views, etc that help in knowledge construction and reconstruction through a joint discourse

(Brown,1993). My perspective here is that deep learning incorporates teachers and students' engagement in pedagogical circumstances and knowledge construction.

In constructed learning, teachers, learners and groups of learners interact enthusiastically to build and reconstruct knowledge through process and arrive at deep understanding through debates and initiation. In such environment, one needs to establish democratic and motivating situations and encourage learners to internalize the curriculum. Thus, we need a kind of pedagogy where reflectivity and criticality of teachers and students is demonstrated. Students are more likely to learn effectively if they are motivated to learn and to work (Brown, 1997:22). My research, therefore, emphasized on the interactive process of pedagogy to attain quality education. Nevertheless, in the absence of these issues and meaningful interaction between teachers and students, knowledge will simply be delivered to the passive listener and learning becomes mechanical. And this type of approach is understood as content or teacher-oriented pedagogy.

Hence, my case study has explored the extent to which it was interactive or teacher-oriented pedagogy.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Meaning of Higher Education

In this part of the study issues such as the meaning of higher education, privatization of higher education institutions, the why and types of private higher education institutions and their initiatives in Ethiopia were discussed as a context of the study. The theoretical grounds for quality and pedagogy in higher education, the reflective and critical thinking during the teaching and learning processes, higher education reforms and its pedagogical policy in Ethiopia were also addressed.

Scholars in the area of higher education made many attempts to define higher education. Among these, Knowles (1977) defined it as post secondary education incorporating vocational schools, specialized training institutions, propriety schools and formal programs that prepare individuals for careers in colleges and Universities. It is an education responsible to cultivate higher professionals. Unger (1996) also forwarded that higher education is a broad term referring to formal study beyond the secondary school level, usually provided by colleges and universities. Slantcheva (2005) on his part extended the definition of higher educations to institution that embrace teaching, learning, scholarship and research. These activities are, and should be at the heart of higher education. It is the center where various problems are solved through investigations and pedagogic process conducted to produce a trained personnel. It also runs the scholarship program to expand access to post secondary education. Therefore, this definition seems to incorporate all other definitions given by different authorities. Generally, any type of education given by accredited colleges and universities at post secondary institution level is considered as higher education.

Higher education is broadly categorized into public and private sectors. They differ from each other by ownership, source of fund, management and kind of students enrolled (Rae, 1996).

The public higher education institutions are established by a state to serve all students that are eligible to join higher education based on the country education policy (FDRE, 2003). According to the proclamation, they are owned, managed and funded by the state. Besides, they are not profit seekers.

On the contrary, private higher education institutions are established, managed and funded by individual owners or company. In most cases, they enroll students who missed the chance to join public higher institutions (Ibid). But there are situations where students of wealthier families join searching for quality education (Sayed, 2001). In most cases, private higher education institutions are profit seekers though few are not for profit ones. However, both higher education institutions have similarity in policy formulated by the state in which they are working. For instance, in our case (Ethiopia) both are contributing their own based on the education policy launched (TGE, 1994).

2.2. Privatization of Higher Education Institution

Privatization can be conceptualized as a movement driven by fear of limited state capability of investment. It is fostered by renewed belief in market forces and declared as promoting choice, responsiveness and efficiency (Rae, 1996). Within higher education, privatization is a comet that has not reached its Zenith (Damte, 2005). It has been embraced in developing countries as a means of mounting access to higher education by harnessing private resources (World Bank, 1994). Varghese (2004) said two core changes happened in higher education. He viewed them as the use of market principles in the operation and management of institutions of higher education while the ownership rests within the public domain and the development of the non-state sector in tertiary education.

The emergence of post-secondary education was aimed at various issues. Rae (1996) expand the aims of private higher institutions as to enhance the flow of private wealth in higher education to make higher education more approachable to the working of the market, economic growth and make academics more responsive to the realities of a production-oriented society. It allows tertiary education to be more flexible and diverse to empower students. Private higher education institutions (PHEIs) are not exactly similar rather they vary in their management and source of finance. In relation to this, one can generally regard them as institutions that comprise both universities and colleges which necessarily managed, but not necessarily totally privately funded and acknowledged for imparting tertiary education (Wongsothorn and Yibing, 1995). Nonetheless, PHEIs around the world share numerous common features. They are relatively small in size, limited in programs, market-oriented, fee and tuition dependent (Damtew, 2005). Often they are reliant on part time staff, very few of them offer post-graduate programs but they are adaptive, creative, flexible and efficient (Varghese, 2004).

2.2 1. Why Private Higher Education Institutions?

Various scholars gave distinct reasons to private higher education initiatives. Altbach (1998) viewed them into political and economic terms. These are understood first, from the transition of state planning to market forces associated with the expansion of the private sector in all sector of the economy. Hence, Levy (2002) suggested that opening the way for private sector becomes a mandatory phenomenon during the decentralization and/or privatization of the education influenced by the state policy.

Second, public universities in many countries were unable to satisfy the growing social demand for higher education in terms of numbers and of the type of programs offered. Therefore, private sectors satisfy the needs of groups of students with specific interest in areas unavailable in public tertiary education

institutions (Kodin, 1996).

Third, the decline in the capacity of the state to fund education reduced the efficiency of the public sector to provide continuous and adequate funding support for an expanding higher education sector.

Fourth, in certain instances funding agencies prevailed over governments to put a curb on the expansion of public tertiary education. In 1991 for example, the World Bank encouraged the Kenyan government to restrict the growth of enrollment in public universities to more than 3 percent per year until 2017 by advancing credit assistance (Varghese, 2004). Therefore, private sectors presented as an alternative to meet the social demand.

Fifth non-state institutions were also established to reduce the disproportionate number of students applying for a degree in the technical and science fields (example the Russian Federation). Finally, deregulation policies and advances in information globalized tertiary education as a transnational operation, thereby broadening the scope for the private division to venture in to the sector. Many of those who provide cross-boarder e-learning facilities are private operator working on a full-cost basis (Altbach, 1998).

Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002) and Sayed (2001) on the other hand assert that private higher education institutions emerged and expanded in some cases due to their quality provision of education assumed to be non-existing in public owned institutions. In fact mostly wealthier families who always seek 'something better' for their children so that they could be at an advantage in the labor market have done the search for quality in private institutions.

In general these reasons of course along with many others, lay grounds for the emergence and growth of the private higher education institutions that have been observed in the different parts of the world. However, all private sectors do not fall in to the same category.

2.2.2. Types of Private Higher Education Institutions

Educators classify PHEIs in different ways based on the operation of higher education system in their countries. Hadihardaja (1995) categorized higher education as academics, poly techniques, institutes and universities in Indonesia. Others classify focusing on the type of award to be provided such as certificates, diploma and degrees.

Varghese (2004) grouped private higher institutions in to three. These are the state supported; not for-profit and for-profit private higher education institutions. State supported private institutions are those that receive funding support from the government. In such institutions in some cases the state regulates the amount of fees levied by the institutions as in the case of India.

The not-for-profit private institutions are mostly sponsored by religious organizations. Basically, they function based on trust and heavily depend on endowments and fees collected from the students. These types of institutions were operating all over the world by Christian and Islamic organizations. They are very prominent in USA, Europe, Latin America and Arab countries (Altbach, 1998). Contrary to the first two, for-profit private higher institutions operate and produce profit. They are privately owned institutions working for surplus and they never accept fund from the government (Varghese, 2004). The institutions were legitimized recently and highly dependent up on student fees as major source of funding the institution. Altbach said PHEIs mostly offer market-oriented courses and at times are affiliated to universities based abroad. After examining the context of the institution Varghese (2004) in his book reduced and broadly categorized the private higher institutions in to for-profit and not for-profit institution.

In general, though various educators classified private higher education institutions differently, the second classification made by Varghese was used for

the purpose of this study.

2.2.3. Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia

Ethiopia owns a long period of elite education tied with the Orthodox Church. However, secular higher education was initiated in 1950 with the foundation of the University College of Addis Ababa (Amare, 2005). There after, in the next two decades various specialized technical colleges were established hosting educational tradition that was greatly influenced by the Orthodox Church. The country demonstrates impressive changes in education in general and in higher education in particular.

The total tertiary level enrollment prior and in 1970s was very low. In relation to this, Aklilu (1973) documented that only 948 students enrolled to the pioneer University College of Addis Ababa in 1961/62 in the regular program. The enrollment in 1970 was little improved to 4,500 out of a national population of 34 million resulting in the enrollment ration of 0.2 percent, which was among the lowest in the world (Teshome, 1990).

- As it can be understood from the above discussion access to higher education during the 1970s and 1980s was very narrow and was restricted to very few citizens. However, such condition ended up and the horizon of access to higher education was extended during the launching of the current education and training policy of Ethiopia. The policy paved way for the expansion of higher education both in public and private sector (TGE, 1994).

The demand for tertiary level education highly increased since few decades in Ethiopia. Due to limited economic situation and the overwhelming demand, the government calls for the private initiatives. As a result, as of 1997 a lot of PHEIs were proliferated in the country (Woundwosen, 2003). The institutions had begun enrolling a number of students from year to year. Likewise, according to MOE (2003) report enrollment in private tertiary education grew from 11,175 in 2000/01

to 29,237 in 2001/2 and still growing. This enables the enrollment at private higher education institutions to reach 18 percent (Teshome, 2003). Even though private higher institutions in Ethiopia are relatively new phenomenon, it is a rapidly expanding part of Ethiopia's higher education system. In the year 2003 alone the sector increased by 43 percent and accounts for 24 percent of all tertiary enrollments in the consecutive academic year (Saint, 2004). Since higher education is expanding the issue of quality got attention though its thought is a slippery one.

2.3. The Concept of Quality in Higher Education

The concept of quality in education has been discussed for a long period of time. According to Ayalew (2002), the concern with quality in education goes as far back as Plato's work: *The Republic*. Nevertheless, the concept of quality in education has not been reached to one universally accepted definition. The definition given by Mosha (1998:38) that says quality in higher education is the level of excellence in performance, which can be measured by establishing acceptable criteria and student of good performance. Though, this definition focuses performance based on preset criteria inputs, processes and out puts are considered in quality issues. Loder (1998) stated that the relationship between inputs and out puts is influenced by various factors and out puts and processes are also numerous and complex.

Assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in higher education is currently of major concern. To this end, Harvey and Knight (1996) distinguish five definitions of quality as exceptional, perfection, fit for purpose, value for money and as transformation.

Quality as Exceptional

According to Harvey and Knight (1996) this aspect of quality considers quality as something special that could be related with the notion of distinctiveness or

exclusivity. Moreover, it is a view of quality as exceeding very high standards. In education, this notion of quality tends to focus on input and output. For instance, a higher education institution that enrolls the best students and provides them with the best resources will excel (Ibid). Regardless of the process by which students learn, the excellence remains focusing on the level of input and output as an absolute measure of quality.

Quality as Perfection

Quality as perfection focuses on processes and sets specifications that aim to meet perfectly Harvey and knight (1996). This notion of quality perhaps is applicable to administrative tasks for instance maintenance of students' records but it does not fit well with the idea of expository learning.

Quality as Fitness for Purpose

This notion approaches quality only based on the purpose of an institution. Harvey (1994) noted that the "purpose" is that of the institutions or universities which include mainly teaching and research. The research purposes of universities focus on the investigation of the academic issues to strengthen the pedagogical process. The teaching purpose on the other hand restricted to the purpose of getting students to learn effectively, and to accredit that they have learned to publicly recognizable standards. Therefore, the result expected in this case is students' standardized learning.

Quality as Value for Money

Value for money is a market view of quality that relates quality of education to "value for money" through its demands for efficiency and effectiveness. A quality institution in this view is one that satisfies the demands of public accountability. For example, it produces more graduates for less public expenditure.

Quality as Transformation

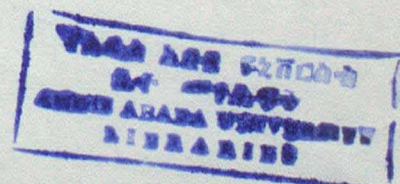
This notion of quality presupposes a fundamental purpose of higher education. It concerns with the transforming of the life experiences of students by enhancing and empowering them (Harvey, 1994:51). Quality teaching transforms students' perceptions of their world, and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems; it also transforms teachers' conceptions of their role as a teacher and the culture of the institution itself.

Generally, in the context of higher education, the existence of a number of objectives and criteria related to inputs, process and output make the concept of quality multifaceted and subjective. As it has been discussed, quality takes into account components such as teaching, learning, research, teachers, learners and instructional environment etc. Among the five dimensions of quality discussed, quality as fitness for purpose, as value for money and the transforming aspects are strongly related to the quality of pedagogy.

The issue of quality has also been a crucial concern in higher education of Ethiopia. This can be observed from the fact that the policy established, proclamation made and the establishment of higher education relevance and Quality Agency.

2.4. Pedagogy in Higher Education

In the pedagogical scenario, there are two distinctly different and even contradictory ways of viewing how learning to occur in higher education. Tagg and Barr (1999) said the first conception view learning through transmission of information while the other perceives learning as part of the construction of knowledge. According to these scholars the base for this differentiation is the degree of students' involvement in the learning process. The conceptions are discussed in the following sections.



2.4.1. The Content-Oriented Pedagogy

The content-oriented pedagogy is grounded in the positivist philosophy and known by various educators as direct instruction teacher-centered, surface approach, conventional and traditional instruction (Aggrawal, 1996).

The approach put instructors as a sole expert in the classroom, students as passive receivers of knowledge, curriculum as a package of complete and perfect knowledge that must be delivered to students by direct instruction (Erickson, 1998:143-144). This pedagogical approach expects quality teaching and learning from systematically organized content, teacher-centered instruction with little instructor-student interaction.

Tagg and Barr (1999) argued that content-oriented approach has a mission to provide instruction from faculty to students in achieving access for diverse students by improving quality of instruction. This shows the over emphasis of instruction than the quality of learning.

However, in order to make learning possible, Evans and Abbott (1998) argued what students need to do. They said:

The learning process at higher level should be characterized by certain distinctive features that students are required not only to acquire an extensive technical knowledge of their subject but also the related skills involved in applying that knowledge with in a profession. The knowledge goes beyond the acquisition of detailed factual knowledge; it involves the development of conceptual understanding and critical-thinking about the subject matter (p.70).

The teacher during the presentation session needs to enhance the thinking power of students by posing critical questions in the process of instruction and hear the voices of students. In line to this, Ferrett (1997:138) expounds, as instructors allow time to students for reflection during their lectures, critical-thinking will be promoted. To do this, instructors need to provide insights to students and exploit

their talents. Therefore, it is possible to enhance the involvement of students by accepting students' reflective views as the input to the instructional process though the approach is content-oriented.

Instructors are at the center of pedagogical process to achieve quality teaching and learning. According to Erickson (1998), instructors and texts are the sources of authority while students do not have significant voice in learning beyond absorption of message and respond to the specific subject matter based on set exercises and in examinations. Authority is given for instructors to structure content sequentially so as to disseminate the knowledge to students employing "appropriate" method of instruction (Farrant, 1994:125). The instructor dominates most of the class time by "Chalk and talk" methods of teaching in which the teacher remain active. Instructor also serves as the only source of knowledge, classroom manager, evaluator of the teaching process and decision maker in general. He/she explains the content, provides examples to enhance students memorization (Frazel, 1995:74). The presence of such gap in the classroom may put instructors and students very far apart from each other and may erode teacher-student interaction and virtue from the pedagogical process (Stephen, 1999).

Students have their own roles though it is very limited. In most cases they are the submissive recipients of information sitting down and react to environmental stimuli in objective manner except limited interactions made with an instructor (Burton et al, 1996). Since all the contents, objectives and the specific teaching methodology by which the task is to be done was planned and centrally performed by the instructor, students are consented to make a sort of mechanical learning. Students are given a nil opportunity in classroom learning and final subjected to objective tests rarely to diagnose learning and largely to set up grades.

In general, students in content-oriented pedagogy are not engaged in a rigorous activity that perhaps produces learning through the course of action as the learning-oriented approach. This is because students are simply provided with

ready-made materials that require least effort of thinking and practice. If students are supplied with abstract issues they could have been engaged in critical thinking. In order to keep students in a meaningful learning, therefore, their roles need to be enhanced by encouraging them to learn themselves at through reflection-on-action.

Interaction of an instructor with students in the teaching and learning is a major process in the college system (Sotto, 1994). This is because all mandatory messages such as expectations, power relations and attitudes towards others and the learning process are passed through verbal and non-verbal indications. The atmosphere of classroom is determined by the daily student-instructor interactions and interpersonal relationships. The kind and extent of classroom interaction is related to instructor's styles of teaching and facilitation of learning.

According to scholars such as Tagg and Barr (1999) and Ballantine (1993) interaction of classroom instructor with his/her students can be grouped in to authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire styles. All of the techniques put both teachers and students at different places to play their roles.

The authoritarian interaction mandated an instructor to exercise full power in the teaching process. Farrant (1994) said in an instructor-dominated classroom the interaction pattern is imbalanced and students remain listeners than speakers. All situations in the class are controlled by the instructor and students' freedom undermined. The authoritarian interaction is mostly practiced in the content-oriented approach where quality of pedagogy is highly expected from the quality of entering students and faculty instruction.

In democratic interactions on the contrary, students are at the heart of the learning process. Ballantine (1993) stressed that learners actively involve in the decision-making that shape classroom activities. Students are given freedom to play a part in determining about their learning and seek facilitation from instructors with out supremacy. Silberman (1996) states the learning-oriented conception demands

democratic interaction between teachers and learners and among learners too. Therefore, the interaction style expects quality pedagogy from learning happened, from concept formation and competence (Tagg and Barr, 1999).

The process of interaction in learning classroom general based on the active engagement of students in learning tasks and trustful communication where an instructor teacher strives to create conducive situation for learning.

The laissez-faire interaction provides a general freedom for students in the classroom (Ballantine, 1993). Students learn themselves without restriction determining their own fate. However, due to the absence of facilitator who may help students during difficulty; their learning perhaps challenged and left unsuccessful. This interaction style sees quality pedagogy in the classroom/learning situation/where complete freedom is given to students.

The interaction of instructors and students could happen when motivation exists. In teaching and learning process students' motivation to learn need to be stressed to enhance learning. Ross and Roe (1998) state poorly motivated students are unlikely to learn much of anything, no matter how well an instructor teaches. A student is motivated to learn based on his/her internal beliefs and reinforcement made (Myers, 1998). Hence, an instructor must know his/her student to help them in learning.

Motivational researchers suggest a lot on motivation grouping it into extrinsic and intrinsic. Ross and Roe (1998) for example suggest on the former as an effort to make a learner effective employing external rewards and punishments achieve a given goal in short period of time hence it disappears when the student reaches the immediate target. It is a mechanical and artificial type of stimulation of students to try harder. In most cases students in such kind of learning value the reward more than the learning (Ibid).

In content-oriented classrooms the application of extrinsic motivation is regularly

observed. During failures or success of students, tests and examinations punishments or incentives of any sorts are provided for students based on their achievement level. Therefore, in order to initiate the students, instructors need to use appropriate motivating strategy to enhance students' reflective thinking based on the content.

Contrary to the extrinsic motivation, the intrinsic one is an inner motive to achieve ones own goal. As to Myers (1998) it is an impetus arises out of students' needs, attitudes and values. Internal motive is long lasting; part of an individual that drives a person to wards his/her goals. Successful experiences tend to increase students internal drives, but frequent failures may eventually obliterate inner motivation (Ros and Rae, 1998).

When learning activities provided for internally motivated students, it will help them compete each other and to accomplish internal learning goals. As a result, the students become hard workers; possess a confidence to confront a challenging task as opposed to the extrinsically motivated students.

Generally, instructors employing content-oriented pedagogy are more active than students in explaining, monitoring and describing facts and disseminate information to students. They provide students with common body of knowledge that all learners must know regardless of their readiness to learn the content. Thus, they employ reproductive learning style.

In this case one can imagine the great passivity of students while the instructor is vigorous enough in all the teaching activities. The intention of learning designed for students may miss its target due to their less involvement in learning process. Therefore, as Tagg and Barr (1999) assert the quality of mere instruction maintained over looking that of learning. This perhaps also shared by the students' inactiveness and least motivation in learning. However, there are opportunities to improve these conditions through reflection of students.

2.4.1.1. Reflective Thinking in Content-Oriented Pedagogy

Reflection is useful in teaching and learning process. It is thinking for an extended period by linking recent experiences to earlier ones in order to promote interrelated mental schema (Burton, 1980:122). Nevertheless, reflection in this context is approached as 'reflection-on-action' that exactly occurs with a practice simultaneously (Light and Cox, 2001:52-53). It is reflection on an issue at hand not related with the accumulated experiences through critical thinking. That is thinking on a particular task and producing ones own view based on various aspects. It is believed that, as the reflective thinking is encompassing more processes, the better reflection it will produce (Ibid). This shows, as the process continues students aware of their own knowledge, gaps in their knowledge, assumptions and past experiences due to their mental engagement in searching things related with the case in point.

In a content-oriented pedagogy that centers on the content and quality of presentation the instructor controls, students are also invited to reflect their view though it is not extended. According to Schön (1991:277) when instructors describe the information, it feeds reflection enabling the inquirer to criticize, test and restructure his/her understandings. Thus, reasonable time need to be given for reflection. But Schon stressed on the relevance of the reflective idea to make it operate with in their system of understanding saying that every reflection that does not serve knowledge and is not guided by practical needs and aims is... "Out of order" ... it interrupts any doing, any ordinary activities, no matter what they happen to be (p. 278). Therefore, instructors need to provoke and stimulate the mind with new ideas, thoughts and the desire to learn in the context under discussion.

The interaction of the instructor with students is limited due to the nature of the pedagogic process. However, it is possible to improve the interaction by providing time during the presentation for students to reflect up on the content to enable

them understand and construct their own knowledge (Light and Cox, 2001:105).

The provision of time for students to share the concepts of that part of the content with neighbor and the formation of small groups of students to exchange their views may also enhance the interaction. In facilitating such important conditions, therefore, instructors using their subject matter knowledge can create a context that induces students to reflect on the knowledge presented to learn from other perspectives. However, the reflective thinking of students in content-oriental pedagogy provides relatively less students involvement than learning-oriented that could negatively influence students' learning.

Generally, reflective teaching from its very character is an emancipatory approach concerned to improve practice rather than collect knowledge and to foster the rationality and autonomy of teachers (Parker, 1997:31). Therefore, is very useful to appraise self improvement qualities in pedagogical processes

2.4.2. Learning-Oriented Pedagogy

The learning-oriented pedagogy is relatively a new approach that focuses on students' learning as exactly opposite to the content-oriented one. Scholars for example, Unger (1996), Tagg and Barr (1999) know it as deep learning approach, indirect-instruction, learner-centered, conventional and modern instruction. All the terminologies given to the learning-oriented conception are emphasizing on the students' learning putting them at the hub of the pedagogical course of action.

The teaching and learning process in the learning-oriented approach varies from the content-oriented in the actions of instructors', learners' and the how of learning going on. The approach also denotes teaching in different ways. Robertson (1987) for instance states teaching in deep learning as action undertaken with the intension of bringing about learning in another. In this way teaching is different from mere telling. But the instructor interact directly with learner in a reasonably conductive situation to bring learning so as to facilitate the students act by him or

her self in a meaningful manner and utilize in a life process. Statement suggested by Geredler (1997) best describes the purpose of interaction. He states learning as the product of interactions among knowledge of learners, environmental messages and students' performances. The approach assumes learning as meaningful when learners understand something, relate it with their lives and use it. To this end Aggrawal (1995) noted that the applicability of contents learned by students realizes its usefulness in practical life. The learning approach thus value teaching and learning only when it is learner-centered, based on understanding than reproduction of knowledge. Therefore, in order to make learning, the need and interests of learners, how to design the curriculum, methods used and etc must be considered (Amare, 2000; Nuan, 1998).

In the pedagogical process the consideration of students' desires and interest has its won purpose. Amare (2000) stated that for learning to take place the need and interest of learners is a crucial factor to be addressed. This is because human need and interest is his/her internal feeling that raises ones own commitment and the will to learn. Real learning then only carried on when students involve totally. Thus, engage students in meaningful learning continuous activities must be set.

In learning-oriented approach learners and the how of learning receive due attention than what is taught (Nuan, 1998). That is due to the emphasis given to the development of learning skills to enable students learn independently. It is to provide chances for students' to bring out their talents in the learning.

Instructors have paramount importance in learning-oriented approach. They are very important even more than the content-oriented one (Anderson and Damarin, 1996). Oser et al (1992) and Calkins (1986) state instructors in a learning classroom have the roles of guider, facilitator, manager, researcher and motivator of students' learning.

The guiding role of teachers required throughout the learning process. Oser et al (1992) assert when students are responsible to run their own activities and learning outcomes, the instructor sets the stage and accomplish the learning process guiding the life in the classroom. The instructor should direct and supervise the tasks and make sure that all learners are proceeding productively. In order to make students booming in learning, the instructor needs to arouse their interest. In line to this, Sotto (1994) indicates instructors must demonstrate teaching behaviors that help learners to learn. Sotto suggests these behaviors as being clear, enthusiastic, task oriented, being indirect using variety of approaches, good questioning and showing criticality in the process in general.

In situations where students are actively engaged in deep learning, the instructor must facilitate the learning condition. He/she has to follow difficulty faced and give hints, care for readiness of the learner to learn concepts, facts and experiences they are encountering (Dunkin, 1987). The instructor also needs to assist the learners to comprehend how the contents and concepts are related to their needs.

The role of watching, listening and asking questions in order to learn about students and how they learn is another responsibility of instructors to be more helpful to students. Powers (1999) in this regard states learning begins when the instructor learn from the learner putting his/her self in students' place so that he may understand what students learn and the way they understand it. This could help the instructor as a sort of investigation. Supporting this, Calkins (1986) noted that there is a thin line between research and teaching, and when an instructor teaches students, they also teach him/her since they show how they learn. Therefore, instructors have to carefully watch and listen to them. In such cases, the instructor is able to incorporate on going experiences in the classroom in to the negotiation and construction of lessons with small groups and individuals in a flexible and creative manner.

Finally, instructors are also an exciting agent in the learning process. Emphasizing

on this, Oser et al (1992) expound instructors in the learning approach should inspire learners' interest, stimulate powers of autonomous intellectual detection and fortify the capability to organize and use knowledge. This will be realized when communication between the instructor and students is shared. In general, though learning takes place between an instructor and students in various forms through out the process; the pillars of learning process are in the hand of the learners.

The role of students in learning-oriented approach is strictly different from the content-oriented one. As Anderson et al (1998) said learners are the center of learning. All the activities performed target students' learning through their active involvement in the process of teaching and learning. The scholars identify the role of learners as active agents, meaning builders and information processors in the learning situation.

Bruner (1990) asserts students in deep learning are always considered as active agents in the process of meaningful learning. Since learning is primary designed for learners through the integral support of the instructor, they are given a prominent role to demonstrate. This confirm that the instructor is no longer seen as an expert, who knows the answers to problems he/she constructed that require students to respond accordingly rather than to construct their own meanings.

The construction of meaning or knowledge is anther type of students' role in the learning-oriented pedagogy. Arends (1997) said the role is achieved when the instructor provides meaningful experiences for students' and arrange the learning environments and make them to interact with others. In the interaction process, students will get opportunity to make meaning individually and socially. Learning is constructing meaning; there is no other kind (Kafai and Resnick, 1996).

Generally, learning approach focuses on the development of students' analytic potential through information processing of learners stimulated by a democratic

classroom facilitator and learning environment. The approach sees meaningful learning in the context of interactive classroom.

Interaction in the learning-oriented pedagogy is a central point where experiences of different kinds shared. It is a means to exchange a meaning but not mere information. Morris and Stones (1973) said teaching in learning classroom as to possess suitable communicative environment between the students and facilitator, and among students. Interaction also plays a greater role in thinking process. McCormick and Pressley (1997) suggested that good thinking requires complex interactions, enthusiasm and knowledge. According to these educators students' motivation together with knowledge will result in productive thinking. Therefore, interaction, enthusiasm and knowledge must appear together. The interaction of students with each other, with teacher and their interpersonal processing of information realize intended learning.

As in the case of content-oriented pedagogy, instructors do not control the communication through dissemination of information (McCormick and Pressley, 1997). But since the influence is shared with students in the learning approach, their interaction pattern also changes to two-dimensional to promote learning to the level of understanding. To achieve this, there should be motivated student and facilitator who could effectively interact with environment and with groups in general.

The stimulation of students plays a greater role in learning. Aggrawal (1996) suggests the importance of motivation in learning process as to arouse, to sustain and energize activity of students in learning. Silberman (1996) also expounds meaningful learning is attained through internally motivated learner and facilitator. And it enables the endurance of learning for a long period of time. Therefore, classroom facilitator must work to alter students' perceptions and beliefs. The view of critical-thinking must be encouraged in students' learning.

2.4.2.1. The Critical Thinking in Learning Approach

The best way to learn about university teaching is not to be given information by outside experts who determines what students need to know. Instead, they need to learn as problem solvers, through active involvement, practical experience and critical reflection about the experience (Evans and Abbotti, 1998:165-166). That is how learning happens when reflection exists critically.

According to Nichols and Brown (1996:226) critical theory implies the conception of challenging the notion of pure reasons showing its changeability depending on the culture and the power in which it is embedded. It emphasizes the practical over the theoretical though the two are inseparable. It is also useful to make problematic what is taken for granted. Therefore, critical theory demands students and teachers to challenge the already established knowledge and create contextual understanding.

Different scholars relating it with the surrounding environment conceptualize critical-thinking. Ferrett (1997:20) defines it as using a reasonable, rational and systematic thought process to think through problems or situation rather than irrational or faintly thinking. She conceived it as purposive and energetic process. Nelson et al (1993:160) state critical-thinking as a multidimensional process that involves decoding, analyzing, processing, reasoning and evaluating information. This conception approached criticality as a complex and interrelated process. From this, it is possible to deduce the importance of sufficient time for the analytical thinking, creation of meaning and understanding unlike simple reflection on a spot. Thus, this could help to see the gap between critical-thinking and mere reflection. To this end, Nelson et al suggest:

You cannot just tell some one to do critical-thinking. Instructors in traditional colleges cannot teach thinking the same way they try to explain a subject by lecturing. Critical-thinking requires active

involvement in the reflective act and goes well beyond the mechanical recitation of information imported by instructor (160).

Critical-thinking demands active participation of students to reflect their own understanding. But reflection with out such engagement, (as in the case of content-oriented) does not invite students for an elongated time. Thus, it leads to shallow thinking that further resulted in failure in decision-making and problem solving (Ferrett, 1997:137). On the other hand, critical-thinking not only does successful decision-making and problem solving but also explores different options than setting for a few known ideas (Ibid). Therefore, it is an issue helpful for students. Because as students engaged in criticality, it allows them the ability to understand the social construction of the world around them and their relation to it (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 1998:3). As students become familiar with their environment and develop critical-thinking, they start manipulating the environment in a creative manner. In such conditions, the collaboration of critical instructors and students expand the knowledge of their world through process, contextualization and cultivate new ways of searching about things that attempt to make sense of themselves and contemporary society (Bentley, 1998:169-188). It enables students to learn alternatives instead of probing for the absolute answer.

The roles and pedagogic conceptions of instructors is a profound issue to realize criticality in learning. Steinberg and Kincheloe (1998:17) state:

Critical teachers with subject matter knowledge use their authority to provide a context where knowledge can be produced. Such a research-orient context induces students to reflect on the knowledge presented, to learn from other perspectives. When teachers induce students to refuse to see themselves in classrooms as consumers of knowledge, the foundation is laid for students to discover personal meaning in knowledge circulating in the classroom. Students in authoritarian traditional classrooms consume data, students as researchers examine data in relation to their own lived experiences.

The view of these scholars highlights on the provision of context with abstract ideas and concept processing that serves as the foundation of knowledge as a tool for developing deeper understanding of key concepts.

Generally, teaching and learning must call for a board knowledge and perspectives based on the “why”, the “what” and the “how” to make instructors and students more insightful in their approaches to pedagogic process and problem solving. In a critical-thinking classroom instructors need to be creative, flexible and supportive to foster students’ criticality.

2.5. Higher Education Reforms in Ethiopia

Higher education has a prominent role in enhancing and diversifying knowledge for a country development. Considering this the Ethiopian government launched a new education and training policy in general and made reforms through the higher education proclamation in particular (TGE, 1994; FDRE, 2003). The proclamation provided higher education institutions to operate in an autonomous manner to determine subjects and level studied by students; to hire workers; to reward and manage all categories and levels of staff; to determine their internal organizational arrangements and to provide quality education supported with research.

The reforms made emphasized on equity; quality; access and relevance at higher education institution was explicitly put by the Education Sector Development program two or ESDP II (2002). These reforms include:

- Expansion of the existing institutions and the establishment of new institutions to increase the enrollment in higher education through the creation of new programs both under graduate and post graduate.
- Enhancement in the leadership and management of the institutions.
- The means to ensure the quality and relevance of education and training programs. To achieve this HERQA was established to accredit higher

education institutions and to under take quality assurance.

- Improvement in institutional efficiency through training top and middle managers, establishing Pedagogical Resource Centers in each higher education institutions and in developing student-centered curriculum.
- Provision of a legislative background for the sector through higher education proclamation.
- Invitation of private higher education institutions to educate a much higher portion of students.

Most of these have surely been done; new institutions in different corners of the country have been established and expansion of the old universities made. The enrollment of under graduate increased. The private higher education sector expanded more rapidly and grown to 23% of the tertiary learners (Teshome, 2004)

From the above discussion one can understand that managerial and academic tasks together with expansion of higher education institutions have been carried out in the country. The government has made various higher education reforms to realize the aspirations and needs of national development. Among the various reforms done, the pedagogical process was addressed since it is the concern of this study.

2.5.1. Pedagogical Policy of Ethiopia's Higher Education

As it has been repeatedly discussed in this study, the role of higher education in general and private higher education institutions in particular is accessing tertiary education to citizens. To realize such issues the state encourages PHEIs through polices regulations, proclamations and guidelines as to how to supply education to citizens (TGE, 1994) and (FDRE, 2003).

In the Education and Training Policy it is clearly shown that teaching and learning process is based on the development of problem solving ability of nation through suitable pedagogical principle since it is geared to nurture the cognitive, inventive,



and appreciative potential of citizens by appropriately relating education to environment and societal needs (TGE, 1994). In order to achieve these both public and private higher education institutions are expected to provide quality education standardizing required inputs, effectively operating the process and produce competitive graduates. In line with teaching and learning in higher institutions, HERQA (2006) states the pedagogical process need to foster students' knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and stimulate engagement and participation in the learning process. In addition students' in-depth learning, self-reflection and self-responsibility should be encouraged employing variety of pedagogical techniques. Therefore, teachers carry greater responsibility to involve students in the pedagogical practice to build up their confidence in a continuous classroom interaction.

According to experiences I had in relation to content and learning-oriented approaches discussed, though Ethiopia's education policies and schemes mostly based on the learning approach, there are also rudiments of content approach in the organization of courses, teachers' roles and examinations.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The major purpose of this study is to explore and examine teachers and students' understanding of pedagogy and its quality in the context of private higher education institution. It is also targeting to examine the motivation of teachers and students during the instructional process in the institution. In order to secure reliable data both from teachers and from students in a confidential manner, therefore, appropriate method of investigation is imperative. Thus, the case study method is preferred to secure data for the study. The method is employed because of its suitability to answer the "how" and "why" questions and produce a holistic, intensive description and interpretation of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988:9)

3.1. The Case Study Method

Qualitative case study was used to conduct the research in view of understanding the private higher education institution in the context of the quality pedagogy. Qualitative case study was used because of various reasons. It is live method employed to create meaningful interpretations based on the natural settings and produce analytical induction and helpful to construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations (Merriam, 1988:165-166). It is also used to think more broadly about a research problem and enables to study the inner experiences of people as they interact (Creswell, 2003:182). This is to accentuate on the intrinsic interests, attitude and views of participants. However, this does not contradict the representation of both participant viewpoints and researcher's reflective perspectives rather the two perspectives are coined together to reach at the objective intended (Creswell, 2003:182).

In addition, the distinctive features of qualitative research such as the emergent, holistic and its interpretiveness (Hammersley, 1990) were reflected. Moreover,

qualitative research uses different forms of data than those used in traditional logical-positivist research methods (Best and Kahn, 2004:184). They assert that

Qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: in-depth open interview, participant observation; and written documents. The data from interviews consists of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, and feelings, descriptions of people's activities, actions and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis in qualitative inquiry yields excerpts, quotations or entire passages from organization, clinical or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys (p.184).

Generally, qualitative case study method is chosen to have real and original data from participants in whatever form required without restricting their perspectives.

3.2. Data Sources and Sample Selection

Important data for the study was gathered from teachers and students of Adama Rift Valley University College. Besides, to address the context of the study area documents were used through the officials of the institution. The study was conducted primarily based on in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The researcher interviewed eight teachers and eleven students since they are the ones who are directly involved in the teaching and learning process. The officials were used to provide data related with the general institutional context and they were excluded from the interview conducted on the process of pedagogy due to their limited role in the process.

All the student participants were second and third years chosen from different departments based on their willingness to participate in the interview. Second and third year students were also purposely selected due to their acquaintance with the college's teaching and learning process in relation to the first year students. The

students included were eight males and three females. Similarly, the eight teacher participants were selected from different departments and interviewed based on their willingness. Though, an attempt was made, the researcher could not get a single female teacher participant for the study. Furthermore, after negotiating with the interviewed teachers about the intention to observe the classrooms, four classes were purposely selected and observed based on the teachers' conceptions of teaching obtained through interviews to see the actual classroom scenario, the interaction and motivation of teachers and students in teaching and learning processes.

3.3. Rational for Selecting the Research Setting

As I have indicated earlier, the research setting is Rift Valley University College in Adama town. The university college was selected due to various reasons.

Since the research design is qualitative case study that requires in-depth understanding of human interaction through near-native fluency in the language of the research participants and the investigator (Gall et al, 1996:547), primarily private colleges functioning in the Oromia region emphasized by the researcher since Afan Oromo is my vernacular language.

Second, though many private colleges are functioning in the region the researcher has conducted a sort of comparison in line to sustainability of colleges; years of function made; number of enrollment and institutional organization among private colleges. In doing so RVUC was found to be better in the region.

Third, since access to the required data is one of the crucial stages of the research activity, the researcher has made a preliminary survey on the possibility of getting data and how to get it from the institution. The university college has shown its willingness to provide the data for this study.

The researcher has preferred to conduct the study focusing on second and third year students of the institution for the following reasons.

1. They were believed to have experiences on the approaches of teaching and methods of assessment their teachers employ in the pedagogic processes.
2. Because of their experiences the students were assumed to express in detail their understanding on the teaching/learning and view a concept from different perspectives.
3. They were also the one who better explain and justify the general pedagogic scenario of the institution than the first year students.

3.4. Procedures and Data Collection Strategies

In-depth interviews and classroom observations were used as methods of data generation in order to answer the research questions. The process of data collection through the strategies was carried out for two months in the institution.

3.4.1. Interview

Unstructured interview was used as a major data collection strategy. Interview represents a classic qualitative research method that is directly interactive (Lecompte and Preissle, 1993:1650). Interview was used since it enables participants to explain their views without any restriction. In order to secure pertinent data interview guide was prepared and used for both teacher and student participants (See Appendix, B and C). These interviews were made with eight teachers and eleven students in order to understand their conception about teaching and learning in Rift Valley University College. For this purpose, interview protocol was prepared in a manner that includes ethical issues of this research (See Appendix, A).

Gall et al (1996:547) citing kir and Miller (1986) said that qualitative research involves "watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their

own language on their own terms. Therefore, the interviews were conducted by using Afan Oromo and Amharic languages based on the preference of the participants. Accordingly, out of the nineteen participants sixteen of them were interviewed in Afan Oromo and the left three in Amharic. Open-ended questions were forwarded to the participants focusing on the particular issue at a time. The interviews were recorded as it was from all the participants.

The data from interview was primarily collected by tape recorder and brief notes were taken during the interview session focusing on important points (Creswell, 2003:189; Merriam, 1988:81). The data obtained was transcribed carefully before the researcher translated the information in to English and coded based on its type.

3.4.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation was used to observe the instructional processes and teachers' and students' state of motivation in teaching and learning processes. It is a qualitative strategy frequently used in social science research. In order to carry out the classroom observations the researcher established a suitable relationship with teachers and students and successfully observes the classrooms situations. During the stay in the classes, detailed notation of behaviors, events and the contexts surrounding the events and behaviors were addressed. This was based on the Best and Kahn (2004:199) suggestion that stress the issue saying:

Observation can be of the setting or physical environment, social interactions, physical activities, non-verbal communications, planned and unplanned activities and interaction and unobtrusive indicators (e.g., dust on equipment may indicate a lack of use). The observer also should be alert for non-occurrences, things that should have happened but did not.

Thus, in this study the comprehensive situations and events in the setting were observed noting the happenings and issues not occurred but understood through implications being with the participants for the whole period of the classes.

3.4.3. Document and Archival Analysis

Document and archival analysis are reserved methods produced to preserve data and to publicize certain information of an institution (Robinson and Saveyne, 1996:1184). In this study an administrative document was used to state the context of the institution including its vision, mission and objectives. Higher education proclamation, Ministry of education's annual abstracts and various literatures were also used to enrich the study to its purposes.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Many researchers developed various methods of analyzing qualitative research data that enable them to produce bits of knowledge to the world of investigation. Naturalistic data require due attention through out the research process because of its thickness, plausibility and interrelated concepts. They are considered to be rough materials researchers gather from the setting they are exploring; they are the particulars that form the basis of analysis (Robinson and Saveyne, 1996:1185). As a result, they should be analyzed continually, throughout the study, from conceptualization through the entire data collection phase, into the interpretation and writing of the thesis.

In relation to the approaches of qualitative data analysis Tesch (1990) in Gall et al (1996: 562) grouped them into interpretational, structural and reflective. She explained interpretational analysis as "a process of examining case study data closely to find constructs, themes and patterns that can describe and explain the phenomenon being studied. Thus, the researcher used interpretational analysis approach for this study since the purpose of this study is to understand the conception teachers and students possess about pedagogy in private higher education.

In the interpretational process of data analysis, categorization is very important to sufficiently encompass and summarize the data gathered. Likewise, based on the objectives of the study, first the researcher grouped the data generated into different categories. After thorough examination of the data the researcher reduced and categorized it into three major themes: Conception of teaching; perceptions of teachers and students' on learning and issues of quality. These three major themes were also organized into sub-themes. Accordingly, under conception of teaching the sub-themes included were: directionality of information and creating a context for learning. A major theme, perceptions of teachers and students on learning encompassed acquisition of knowledge from a source; bringing a difference; interactive versus semi-interactive classrooms and motivation: Important but faintly existent while propose-oriented quality and the crippled transformative quality are addressed under the major theme issues of quality.

Generally, the analysis of the data was sensed between inductive and deductive reasoning and between description and interpretation to produce personal judgments. The analysis also relied on the theoretical framework developed and the relevant literature.

3.6. Validation Strategies

Validity in qualitative research design does not carry the same connotations as it does in quantitative research. In quantitative research it stands for generalizability. But it is used to suggest whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the participants and the researcher's account in qualitative design (Creswell 2003:195).

The term validity is used here to represent the quality of the study conducted. Therefore, in this study attempt of spending prolonged time in the field; using rich and thick description to convey the findings, presenting negative or discrepant information, triangulation, and consideration of ethical issues were addressed.

Due to the nature of the research design the in-depth and open-ended interviews were made based on the general detail of the setting and events seen, heard and read; thick descriptions were produced incorporating different perspectives since real life is made of opposite views that do not always coalesce.

3.6.1. Triangulation

Using multiple data collection methods, data sources, and analysts to check the credibility of case study findings is very important to raise the quality of the study. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 214-215) explained there are four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation- employing a variety of data sources to collect information; theory triangulation employing multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data; investigator triangulation is using several different researchers or evaluators to crosscheck the findings and methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods to study a single problem. Thus, the researcher used data triangulation attempting to see the convergence and divergence of the participants' perception on the case under study. Therefore, the researcher believes that it enabled him to well understand the issue of pedagogy in the institution.

3.6.2. Ethical Issues

Ethics is a set of guidelines or human caution on the part of the researcher that guides the appropriate treatment of participants in the research (Best and Kahn, 1999). In a research activity involving human being as participants the ethical rules to protect them should be considered. Likewise, the ethical issues were considered in this study in arriving at the findings. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) for instance stressed the ethical issues explaining that the interests of research participants need to be taken in to account through informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and others. In a more comprehensive manner, Creswell (2003: 63) said that ethical issues in research activity should arise from problem

identification, specifying statement, purpose and research problems and collecting, analyzing data and writing up the results.

In all the processes of the research, the researcher employed ethical principles starting from proposing ethical values for this research and informed the participants before each interviews (see Appendix, A). In order to make the data more secret the researcher used pseudo names during the narration those do not refer to any body.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. The Research Setting: Rift Valley University College

The research site is one of the private higher education institutions currently operating in the country. It is found in Adama town, which is located at a distance of about hundred kilometers south east of Addis Ababa in Oromia Regional State. It is one of the business centers and highly expanding towns in the country.

The town has got fourteen kebeles administrated under the city's administration with a total population of about 200,000. There are two government higher institutions in the town: Adama University and Adama Teachers Training Institution. The town is also the center of many local and international non-governmental organizations. With regard to the private higher education institutions more than five colleges are currently functioning in the town.

Among the private sectors functioning in the Adama town, Rift Valley University College is the first in enrollment and establishment running its system in two different campuses. These are the main and the health faculty campuses. As it can be understood from its name the health faculty is separately established and carrying out health trainings.

The main campus includes the head offices of the University College; faculty of business and Economics; faculty of Technology; faculty of Law and faculty of Education. Both of the campuses are found in the center of the town. The health faculty is found in front of the main road from Addis Ababa to Djibouti seaport on a big building while the main campus is within an area of 26,000 square meters at a distance of about three hundred meters from the main road.

The foundation of the college was first conceived by a group of educators and an investor prior to the year 2000. After the negotiation of the individuals matured and the permission to work was given by authorities of education, the college started its operation in Adama town in October 2000 (RVUC, 2006). By the year 2001 and later the college started expanding to different parts of Oromia Region and to Addis Ababa. The college has currently enrolled over nine thousand regular, extension and distance students in its twelve campuses and fourteen distance education centers in the country. Out of these, there were 3522 degree and diploma students learning in the Adama campuses.

The University College has got eleven big buildings comprising of the head offices; three computer laboratory rooms with computers for computer science; one big auditorium; one library; two separate blocks of classrooms two blocks of classrooms with offices of departments and teachers. There are 42 classrooms each of which holds at an average of 35 to 40 arms chairs. The other four blocks are Academic Dean Office; registrar office; staff launch and other subordinate administrative offices. There are also two small buildings, one of which serves for the college guards and the other one as latrine. There were 168 administrative workers of which 87 are males and 81 are females. There were also 109 instructors out of which 90 are males and 19 are females.

The operation of Rift valley University College is taking place under five faculties that holds nine degrees and twelve diploma programs and started its system with motto that says, "We are dedicated to fuel the engines of development; the potential and the work force of the country".

Like other Private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, RVUC was started based on the government initiatives to fill the gap and curb of the countries skilled personnel. The founders of RVUC responded to this invitation and brought up the college with the following vision.

Vision of the Rift Valley University College

The University College envisions to become a full fledged private higher learning university in Ethiopia where all Ethiopians and other are beneficiaries of the wealth of the university college's excellence in all fields of study. It also envisioned to be known for its distinctive strength of integrity, flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness, risk taking and commitments to work for the common good of society.

Missions of the Rift Valley University College

The mission of the university college is to provide quality education, skills and aptitudes necessary for living and contribute to the body of knowledge. The expansion of varieties of training by updating programs to build the nations' capacity was also stated as a mission.

The RVUC stated its objectives as developing more flexible study roots focusing on TVET, health, ICT, business, law and language in establishing center of competency for relevant research and consultancy service, providing community service and developing local culture and language. The University College also aimed at reaching the country through expanding the establishment of center for distance education and conducting short-term professional skill training.

The RVUC has established a close relationship with the surrounding community and engaged in playing its role in various aspects. Among these it is providing support to students from needy families and also possessed its own football team, which is currently a member of the regional championships games. In the soccer match made with seven government and private colleges and universities, the team of RVUC finally competed for the trophy with St.Mary's University College and it took the trophy of the year beating St.Mary's team (SMUC, 2007:10). The university college organized students to enable them exercise administrative activities and to aware of their responsibilities in the community in establishing

the clubs of anti AIV/AIDS, entertainment and other social affairs. The club for Oromo culture and language development is as old as the college's life. Therefore, this study was conducted in the university college with the aforementioned contexts.

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the data generated from in-depth interviews with teachers and students and classroom observations made in selected classrooms concerning the pedagogical processes and their perception of its quality. In all the cases pseudo names are used to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants accounts. Therefore, the names used in the case descriptions do not belong to any individual teacher and student in the study area. If any of the names used overlaps with someone it is just mere twist of fate.

The data is organized in to three main themes: conceptions of teaching, perceptions of teachers and students on learning, and issues of quality. These three major themes also have their own sub-themes. Under the conceptions of teaching: directionality of information and creating a context for learning were presented. The perception of teachers and students on learning incorporates sub-themes such as acquisition of knowledge from a source; bringing a difference; interactive versus semi-interactive classrooms and motivation: Important but faintly existent. Similarly purpose-oriented quality and the crippled transformative quality are constituted under the major theme issues of quality.

4.2. Conceptions of Teaching

Among the main objectives of this study, analyzing how teachers understand teaching was one. To do so, the researcher held in-depth interviews with eight teachers and conducted four classroom observations to secure data. The data concerning these issues of teaching are presented and analyzed in this section.

The analysis is made by categorizing the data pertinent to the issue of teaching in two distinct dimensions of sub themes. The analysis presented in this section takes

the theoretical assumptions of this research shown under the theoretical framework. That is, conceptualizing teaching as encouraging learners to practice, to take responsibility of their own learning to process knowledge by making meaning of their own understanding than disseminating information.

4.2.1. Directionality of Information

In describing this dimension of the conception of teaching, teachers' arguments were based on their teaching practices that are guided by their beliefs and how they proceed with teaching process. As rationalization for their beliefs and the how of teaching, teachers place the purposes and contents of their courses at the center.

Among many other assertions Bewketu's view, one of the teacher participants who is teaching accounting in the institution best suits this. He described the justification of his conception of teaching by focusing on the attainment of prescribed course purposes .His excerpt:

A teacher needs to present required contents for students in a structured and attractive manner. First, by revising previous points focusing on major ones and then continuing current lesson with its introduction, presentation... to achieve the objectives set. Students also have given opportunities to provide feedback to my overall presentation. These are what I always did with in my classes.

Hizetu, another teacher participant who is engaged in giving health courses in RVUC also took similar position in his conception of teaching with Bewketu. He conceived teaching as:

The presentation of designed contents of the course to students in a pre-planned schedule using appropriate method and enabling them aware through motivating their participation...to attain the objectives identified... I should be prepared, organized and explain things clearly.

Both teachers' views reveal that the teaching process strongly emphasized on systematically arranged body of contents by external body or without involvement of students and mandate students to take part in giving feedbacks through a sort of stimulation made by the teachers. According to these participants teaching need to emphasize on the importance of covering the syllabus and ensuring that students acquire the 'correct' information and ideas. The absence of students' exposure to content designing in itself has adverse effect on the conception of teaching the teachers possess. It could make teachers recognize themselves as 'sole' determiners of teaching process in employing any method of teaching they think it is appropriate. In this regard Bewuketu illustrates:

In most cases I employ lecture method that helps me to make students familiar with the basic principles, theories and concepts of accounting. Then after, I provide them some examples based on the contents covered. ... it is at this point where students reflect their understanding in solving the problems given. This does not mean that totally no participation of students. Actually they are given a chance to ask questions on unclear points and respond to questions raised in the process of the presentation.

It is interesting to note that both Bewuketu and Hizetu argued for the importance of traditional forms of teaching or surface learning. And this approach from its very nature stresses on the passive learner pedagogic techniques. Certainly, vast quantities of principles, theories and concepts of accounting require memorization. The most productive way to present this information according to these teachers is presentation, which is simple recitation that does not encourage reflective thinking of students in the process of the lessons. Nichols and Brown (1996) argued that mere recitation or surface learning of students as being more reproductive learning than transformative. More specifically, Hizetu reported:

Though learners are required to proceed learning on their own... I do not discount teachers' presentation ... I think it has a place. I feel that, I cannot start doing realistic things until students have got a large body of knowledge to work with.



All the above excerpts are telling what teachers believe regarding their theory of teaching. Their beliefs are based on their adoption of a philosophical perspective of teaching as transfer of knowledge.

There were also other teachers who run their teaching process by presenting contents tied with objectives set and require practical activities from students. They also recognize teaching as the cumulative effect of teachers structured presentation of content, his classroom management, continuous follow up, assessment of students' performance and helping them improve their understating. With regard to this Teshager asserts:

When I see teaching, it is presenting a given content to students and enabling them acquire a required knowledge to achieve goals set. To make possible students develop skills... I keep them in individual and group activities and supervise their performances and provide feedback.

On the same issue another participant, Belina, has a notion of emphasizing on the tasks and assessment leading to the attainment of objectives expected in his course. He said:

Teaching is the process of performing tasks to help students demonstrate behavioral change... It incorporates evaluation of changes brought that could lead to revision of the contents or to make an insignificant inputs... feedbacks and also serve as indicators of level of changes achieved and initiation of students in the teaching situation...

Slightly different from the first two participants, the views of Teshager and Belina could be described as focusing on students activity with an emphasis on providing assignments designed to ensure learning and helping students to develop a skill. Yet, the assumptions of these teachers still remain the same, the teacher-centered pedagogy; or the content-centered pedagogy (Farrant, 1994). The above anecdotes

seem realized in Belina's class that he flexibly arranges his classroom in different ways. During his presentations he made the classroom layout traditional or students sit in rows and clearly deliver his contents with a limited participation of students in giving short responses and raising some blurred points using them as a feedback in the process. In another classroom layout, Belina, engaged the students in-group activities forming groups of four to five students in each. He made the groups to proceed with various topics providing them criteria as how to go through, how to organize and how to present it. Soon after, the groups start discussion and negotiation. Though the process seems not interactive at the beginning, it began ameliorating later through time. Based on the group activities, Belina reported:

Students are expected to present their assignments based on the criteria given to them... discussions will be made by the class in accordance with the concepts raised for a group. After discussion, I forward important issues as appreciations, comments, and additional points and summarize with conclusions.

According to excerpts of the four teacher participants (Bewketu, Hizetu, Teshager and Belina), their conception of teaching lean to content-oriented approach with exception to limited efforts made to engage students in group activities. Content-oriented pedagogy by its very nature focus on contents designed and objectives set putting lesser emphasis on students' participation (Arends, 1994) and the issue is also reflected by the teacher participants' beliefs.

Students in their part express their conception of teaching expecting much from their teachers. Like wise, Mitike argued about teaching as

..the organization of course contents and important knowledge by a teacher prior to class and its presentation. I recognize teachers are more experienced, especially in educational affairs than we. Therefore, a lot is expected of them in shaping our thinking, developing our skills...

Most of the views of student participants more or less coalesce with Mitike's argument centering on the importance of course coverage and knowledge delivered by teachers. However, a student participant, Besira, has different conception of teaching. As to him, it is

Presenting content to students and enabling them to know it: through trial and errors... in which teachers guide students giving necessary corrections and supports. Therefore, we can develop our own skills, knowledge...

The tale formed by Besira seem to extend the dimension of teaching from simple dissemination of information by teachers to a sort of students' reflective' input through practice. Nevertheless, the contribution of teachers seems weighing that of students. In teaching as encouraging where learners took the responsibility of their own learning however, requires teachers to lead students without detail presentation and engaging them in active and thorough learning. Based on this, Blond and Webb (1997:101) argued that, a straightforward delivery of information is not teaching or facilitation of learning rather it is 'pouring of knowledge' that does not invite students actively. Thus, if an engagement of students to learning is desired, only brainstorming is important than full presentation.

The fact learnt from the in-depth interviews made with teachers and student participants about the issue at hand would be unfavorable as how to carryout the teaching processes. In the conception of teaching presented and discussed above students do not have enough opportunity to participate and teachers dominate the teaching process.

The rationales underlying this claim are the dominance of teachers' presentations, less students' reflective learning, greater emphasis given to contents of the course and objectives, and students expectations of teachers to present a vast portion of contents. However, teaching does not only focus on contents and objectives through coherent and detailed presentations of teachers rather than the

consideration of students' active involvement through out the process employing variety of pedagogical techniques. Besides, most of the teachers have not heard and observed while attempting to pull out students' reflective thinking providing them with appropriate time for reflection.

4.2.2. Creating a Context for Learning

The in-depth interviews made with students and teacher participants on the conception of teaching has second dimension in which some of the participants argued teaching as facilitation of understanding in students. In this dimension, the conception of the participants about teaching is similar with a perspective of constructivists emphasizing on the context in which learning takes place. In relation to context for learning, Robertson (1987) asserts teaching should lead to make better understanding and need to be continually reinforced through the learning experiences created with in the teaching process. In a creation of context for learning teachers do not act as knowledge transmitters rather they are resourceful individuals engaged in arranging necessary conditions for learners' learning. The following extract obtained from Yirdew better illustrate this:

In teaching, the thing required is the creation of suitable context of learning... an atmosphere where students are engaged in working. A teacher shoulders such responsibility. After that... as to me as much as possible based on the nature of the content I provide learners with continuous and thoughtful activities. As long as a context is established, I offer opportunity for them; I believe there is no means that hinders students learning in this case.

In the above anecdote, it is apparent that the participant considers teachers' role to be greater. In fact the role of a teacher in a context creation for learning is paramount. According to Anderson and Damarin (1996) teachers have to be engaged in facilitating and guiding activities in a skillful, knowledgeable manner and put students at the middle of the teaching process. In this case, teachers are

more concerned with helping students to develop personal understanding and guide learners to learning conceptions. With regard to teachers' role Asaye said:

Knowing experiences of students, providing them appropriate tasks, ensuring the suitability of the environment of teaching for learning is very important. When this is so, I am there to facilitate the learning in students through their own activity and thinking based on the content given to them.

This illustration seems contributing situation for students learning. However, still students miss a very important thing that they need to have it for a meaningful learning to happen. That is the power to decide what to learn in the context established as discussed above. In a situation where teaching is perceived as creating a context for learning (as in the case of some teacher participants of this study) though teachers are very important, more attention should be given to learners. Students need to decide what to learn, how to learn, why to learn and etc. Nevertheless, the participation of students in such kind of decision is not observed. This may be related to the eclectic position of the Ethiopian education system that includes ingredients of both the content and learning-oriented pedagogy in its curriculum and other aspects of learning. This composition allows and at the same time delimits the decisions and participations of teachers and students in various levels of teaching.

In stressing on the dimension of teaching as creating a context for learning, another teacher participant, Teshale, explained teaching as:

the circulation of ideas and experiences in two-directions between I and classroom students. These enable us to learn some times unexpected outcomes. Really, I strongly believe the traditionalism of giving knowledge from a source to another. It is simply reshuffling of a "container"... what I do in my classes except few occasion based on the course rationale and contents designed is I provide students with individual and group activities... they present it to class and discussions are conducted on each in detail.

In Teshale's views though, he conceived teaching as an arrangement of necessary context of learning and perform much his ideas seem to boils down to Asaye's in relation to the determination of course rational and contents to be learned. At this point an issue need to be raised is, since students at higher education are adult learners, the attempts to include their experiences have to be made rather than a teacher lists down contents to be learned by the students. However, due to his conception of teaching and beliefs he had on knowledge and the how of its formation, he engaged his students to a sort of unstructured information expecting their own understanding.

In an in-depth interview made with another teacher participant, Lakachew, besides the issue of teaching as arranging a context for learning, he emphasized on the pedagogical methods and considers the purpose of courses designed as a reference point. He suggests his excerpt as:

Teaching is the establishment of a conducive context for learning and using appropriate methods designed to encourage it... is framing out the purposes that enable you and the students as a starting point. ...amalgamating the context, methods, purposes and the participants in a humor class where every one airs out his understanding. In such a way I think learning can take place.

Lakachew's anecdote seems that provides and facilitates understanding in students' learning. On the other hand, since his approach to learning is pre-described before class it may least allows their flexibility in teaching and learning process and it may also limit individual reflections. However, his attempt in using purpose as a starting point or reference not as boundary of learning could contribute to make learning reflective. Based on reflectivity, Light and Cox (2001:53) said when students freely reflect their understanding through processes, they continue producing their reflection that make learning better. In a similar fashion, this sense of teaching and learning also must be extended to learners. They have to know and understand why particular pedagogy is employed and are

able to question their involvement in the learning process. Because the presence of common understanding on the outcomes of learning needs to be clear and serve as a base that never restrict teaching and learning.

Student participants on their part reflect their perceptions on context of pedagogy in the class. Likewise, Fetene asserts it as:

The task of teachers is to share and accept experiences, giving hints, following students' performance, providing necessary feedbacks and helping students to learn through own efforts in a facilitated context. Most of the time we learn courses under the guidance of our teachers and they help us much in learning.

Similarly another student participant, Endalew, reported:

Teaching takes place in a suitable situation established by teachers and students, where teachers serve as guiders. We learn by doing activities based on the cues given us. Specifically, in language areas it is very interesting since we perform a lot that invite us to learn.

In the above two-student participants' view, it is clearly observed that the establishment of suitable context for teaching is mandatory. Together with context formation the guiding roles of teachers and the tapping and facilitation of students' creative potential (as to the researcher) this extends the dimension of teaching to "intermediate category" that is neither pure facilitation of learning nor transmitting knowledge, rather it is the combination of the two.

In general the fact extracted from both teachers and students participants of the study on the issue on discussion reveals the profound importance of the creation of conducive context for learning. Accordingly, though attempts were made to set up such contexts it lacks comprehensiveness.

The rationales underlying these claims as incomprehensiveness is the reason that teachers use their conception of teaching as facilitating or creating a context for learning with reservation to some contents and the fact that only some teachers employed the approach. On the part of the students, the issue further extended to

course levels. This could appear as using the facilitating dimension of teaching or as it may rely on bedrock of information transmission. However, it is arguable that the facilitating nature of teaching could be practical to any course and content.

Some lessons were gained from both teachers and student participants' in-depth interviews. Among these, teachers believe the effect of their conception of teaching on their classroom activity either to emphasis on the content or to facilitate learning through creating conducive circumstances for students. The greater expectation of students from teachers and their reliance on them in experience and in how to learn could affect their decision-making potential. And it was perhaps, this that influenced both students' and teachers' understanding of learning.

In the next part of this chapter, the analysis of data associated with perceptions of students' and teachers' on learning is presented.

4.3. Perceptions of Teachers and Students on Learning

The objective of this study also includes understanding of the basic conceptions of learning teachers and students possess. Based on the in-depth interviews conducted an attempt was made to examine the conception of participants categorizing the themes into two sub-themes.

4.3.1. Acquisition of Knowledge from a Source

In the interview held with the study participants, it is witnessed that the conception of learning varies. Accordingly, of the teacher participants Bewketu states his view on learning as it

...is knowing the contents taught based on the objectives of the course and employing it in their practical life. This enable them to solve personal and communal problems... students need to demonstrate theory learnt in to practice... if not it is not learning... what I do is encouraging students to know concepts, acquire knowledge... that help them in their future professional career. To

do that... materials need to be presented to students in an organized and comprehensive way. In most cases, students also want you to get through the material and I did it.

As to this participant, learning is conceptualized based on the “what” of learning than the “how” aspect though they are parts of the same phenomenon. He addressed the content and strongly performs his lecture to enhance students’ knowledge. As he reported, his students mostly expect from him ready-made information to boost up their knowledge. But this could emerge from his beliefs as how to create learning in students, since he could have made the other way round.

Hizetu, another teacher expresses his conception saying:

Learning is a process students go through when they come to know something new... Just expanding their thought, or gain skills what ever it might be that... their learning is about ...

According to Hizetu’s expression in order to bring learning, students must pass through process and arrive at something new. As to his conception, he is looking for new knowledge found in a source and this perhaps indicates the overlooking of students’ rich experiences though passing through process could be vital in the learning process. In areas of teaching scholars such as Nichols and Brown (1996) signify the importance of experiences in the construction of knowledge and serve as the vehicle to carryout the teaching and learning process.

Some student participants also share the notion of conceptualizing learning as gaining of knowledge. For instance, Messelech asserts it as:

Knowing something unknown, acquiring knowledge desired, being altered by the knowledge and become ready for work. It is for this reason that training institutions are established and teachers are training us... this never means that I came to this institution without any knowledge. In the society there is a rich knowledge.... but, I joined college to be qualified for work through training.

Similarly, Essubalew forwarded his conception.

What I expect from my teachers is knowledge to improve my life and contribute for society ... because change is impossible with out knowledge.

The students' view is seemed underpinned by the conception of gaining knowledge through organized body of information presented for students in the course of their training. However, Messelech did not hesitate to disclose the presence of rich experience in the society. But she seems reluctant to emphasize on it to build a meaningful learning since she is expecting much from her teachers in the form of training. Literature such as Geredler (1997) expounds knowledge as transformative and reproductive. He described the former as meaning creation based on intensive mental engagement. Basically, it is based on prior experiences. Transformative knowledge does not reject local experiences as long as it is aimed at building the thinking capacity of learners. On the other hand, the later described as duplication of information without thoughtful actions. It is a mere delivery of pre-organized body of experience with little or no input from students. The system requires students to handle the organized body of information.

In descriptions and discussion made above, the researcher learnt that both teachers and student participants perceive learning as reproducing knowledge based on bounded content in the course. Such argument has emerged from the conception of teachers about learning as going through organized contents; comprehensive presentations of teachers with limited students' participation and the conception of learning as storage of knowledge for later professional career. In both conceptions one thing that is clearly magnified is, the pointing of the participants to a source of knowledge elsewhere. That is, teachers to contents and students to teachers. In a pre-organized content, students are expected to receive an established understanding of subject matter from their teachers to be able to use the knowledge and understanding in the future. In this case, teachers are the main

characters who tried to get students understand and contribute much effort to make it happen. They are in charge to impart knowledge, insight and thinking. To do all these, they structure, explain, give examples and often drag answers out of students to evaluate their acquaintance with the lesson so as to ensure that they can reproduce the knowledge. Educators in the area call this type of understanding of learning rote or surface learning (Arends, 1994; Geredler, 1997; Cohen et al, 1993).

According to these educators surface learning tend to use surface level of processing information such as memorizing the content with little reflection on the process of learning. Students occupied in such type of learning are less likely to use meaning formation process through transformation of information. The conception also related with the huge accumulation of knowledge one upon other in quantitative form and students remain with unconnected information. When students and teachers led with surface learning conceptions they tend to emphasize on factual details that demands mere understanding. This in turn could affect the practice of the knowledge obtained that student participants are aspiring for after their graduations.

During the in depth interview sessions, there are also participants who perceive learning from another dimension. And the dimension is presented in the next section.

4.3.2. Bringing a Difference

This conception of learning is discussed from the point view of some participants opposite to the conception presented above. Learning here is approached as helping the building of ones own thinking potential, enhancing courage to work and enabling students to view the world around in their own perspectives. This is stressed by educators working in the area of pedagogy such as Cunningham and Duffy (1996) and Anderson and Damarin (1996).

It is believed that teachers' conceptions affect the teaching /learning strategies; activities performed; their expectations; relationships with students, trust they possess on students' learning and level of students' participation. Some of the teachers and students view of the study reflect these.

Yirdew one of the teacher participants asserts:

When we say learning, we are practicing a change. A change brought as a result of our thinking, our engagement in learning activities and the status of our problem solving capacity. These are what students should also practice in colleges. They need to develop skills and attitudes that help them to progress to such conditions. Thus, learning is a process to arrive at a better understanding... where teachers are active negotiating agents in establishing appropriate relationships and in encouraging sense of independence in students during learning.

As it can be noted from his assertion Yirdew viewed learning in what he calls it an engagement in learning activities. With regard to these learning activities he said:

When students come to college they may consider themselves as know nothing. But I should help them in some ways convincing that it is possible for them to know and do it also. In such ways they become independent learners and later competent practitioners. This can be better understood from our own experiences when we were a student from that limited conception we brought gradual changes and still going on... students become aware of their progress through time and conceive the importance of ones own input in learning...I am encouraging my students and they are participating in learning...

In the process of bringing a difference in students' conception of learning, it is possible to see the role of the teacher from Yirdew's statements. As he explained it requires working with students but not learning for students. It is also expecting more while students' thinking ability improved through time and strives to find various ways to reach at decisions. In relation to this, Bentley (1998) states students' engagement in critical-thinking through critical teachers who would have a potential to approach problems flexibly.

Another teacher participant, Teshale, also assures his facilitation of students learning through his continuous support. He states learning from his conception as:

the get to wards a development and to bring an anticipated difference... whether personally (in skill, attitude and knowledge), locally and country levels... that realized when students learn being active individuals...I am serving as a facilitator establishing close relationship, based on mutual understanding with my students. I think I am proceeding in a good manner.

The conceptions obtained from Yirdew and Teshale could therefore, be good indicators of their intention as how to have a meaningful learning. That is, primarily by building relationships that serve as a base to share experiences through students' commitment in learning activities perceiving learning as a process. They argued the necessity of students to pass through processes of learning to develop necessary skills, attitudes and construct their own knowledge.

In the interview conducted with, Asaye, one of the teacher participants he also share the conceptions suggested by aforementioned two participants. First, he emphasized on the close relationships he established with his students considering it as the basis for learning. Second, he puts the importance of independent activity of learning guided by his close assistance assuming that learners are able to demonstrate a required change in a given period of time. His excerpt best explains this:

...learning emanates from creating close relationships and sharing experiences among learners, between you and your learners. Because no relation means no learning and you can't help your learners. When you make your relationships 'ok' with your learners, your facilitation become fruitful and learners are motivated to continue learning their own. These are what I am currently using and suited for me.

In his pedagogical process, as Asaye reported relationships have helped him to align his facilitating role with students' learning needs. Students' needs therefore,

is developed and enhanced through better understanding of the participants in the environment of the process. This understanding is based on the development of relationships with students on a personal basis both as individuals and as a group. The personal aspect of knowing a student according to Asaye could help individuals strive to learn for understanding while the group based further contributes to enable sharing of experiences.

More specifically, Asaye argued in his interview showing that a conducive environment for learning is established when relationships based on sense of trust is created. When students trust teachers, they assume teachers as helper and recognize their contributions.

From Asaye's argument, it is possible to infer the importance of creating suitable environment with students that further leads to trustfulness. Besides, based on the trust established challenging the ideas of students could change their approach to learning. Therefore, when students practice their teacher's pedagogy, it needs to be a motivating process for learning. Then in later periods students may lead to develop a sense of independence in learning. However, both teachers and students need to have a joint trust in accepting shared responsibilities in learning for the reason it is the construction of knowledge rather than transmission.

According to Sotto (1994) in the construction of their own understanding students need to exercise and produce their views freely. But this does not mean that their suggestions, ideas and inputs are never subjected to academic challenges. All the students' inputs must therefore be consistently addressed from different perspectives. Hence, in such processes students begin to develop a trust that has its own basis in maintaining and developing one's self-esteem through out the exploration of the issues being addressed. All the conceptions of teachers could be realized not only in their active performance but the beliefs and conception of students may also determine the learning. Therefore, perceptions of some student participants were also presented hereunder.

Yibeltal, one of the most expressive student participants states his perception of learning:

...is thoughtful flow of ideas between students and the teachers in the form of providing cues, discussion, question, suggestion, feedbacks and etc. Based on these, we learn a lot from each other.

In such conditions teachers and students have their own-shared responsibility that both of them contribute to the learning. Likewise, Yibeltal expressed the role of students and teachers. According to his excerpt:

Some of our teachers give us highlights on the lesson; they initiate us, respect our views in participation and make us to think on the issue. In our part we (students) participate inculcating our personal experiences. In most cases, since we learn in the form of individual and group activities, we gained a lot. For instance, since second year I could present my duties with out any fear and give ideas on questions raised. I have developed a sense of respect for individual views... we learn from each other with students in the relationship established.

The above statements are good indicators of the way through which differences brought up in the learning process of Yibeltal and his colleagues class. The facilitation that starts with the provision of cues by the teacher goes via processes of learning and enables him to develop a number of important things he mentioned.

The collegial relation among students and personal efforts in learning with understanding far enriches the development of students' capability. It also helps in changing the ways in which students think about the social environments and initiate them to play their roles.

There were two students that could be an example for this. The first is Fetene who suggests the progress of his performances that flourished from skills developed in the understanding made with in the context of his language courses. He states it as:

I have a desire to work in the area of art, particularly in drama, film and writing fictions in Afan Oromo. To ensure these, I joined its department where I could develop important skills and knowledge thorough practice. Being with my colleagues I produced a film entitled as "Dumesa Beri" (የገገት ደመና) and it was a nice work. I expect, I would successfully realize my visio n.

The second student is Endegenä from the same department with Fetene, who had a desire to produce different creative writings and had contributed to his primary school. His statement is:

When I was in grade six I used to prepare different creative writings and present it to school community at various occasions. But my effort was not long lasted due to personal issues. After I joined this college I was very surprised with my those days' efforts... from now on...it is the time to recapture my initiation due to some understandings I gained from my language courses.

From the above two explanations one can understand the power of learning with understanding to enhance ones own creativity. These students seem ready to penetrate to the real environment where further knowledge construction and skill development could happen. In line to this Steinberg and Kincheloe (1993) said, as students began experiencing criticality, they tend to understand the social construction of the world and practice creativity.

Abdul, another student shared this conception of learning and forwarded his view comparing teachers' presentations with learning in the active engagement of students. He said:

When some teachers present us covering processes of a lesson we are forced to cram and memorize it, (raising the Chinese proverbs)... it is susceptible to be forgotten soon... There are also teachers who make us learn by bringing different experiences from books and initiate us to show our efforts (የራሳችን ጥረት አንድናሳይ የሚያደርጉን...) then, you never forget the concept since you thought much over it and went through all the processes by yourself.

In the process of learning according to this participant, one can think of the roles of teachers and students. In relation to this, Abdul suggests the following:

Some of our teachers engage us in individual and group tasks. In other times they raise an issue and make us to discuss on it where students debate much... in such conditions we learn much. For example how to construct own view, how to present, how to suggest and the content itself become simplified since we hear every student's view and our teachers too. Because, every body has his/her own understanding to forward.

The statements made by students are telling the same conception of learning mentioned by teachers with different statements and include the clear roles of teachers and learners in the learning process. Like teachers, students feel that learning with active students' participation under the guidance of teachers better enhances the understanding and construction of knowledge. Furthermore, it is useful to internalize the concepts and advance up students' expertise.

Addressing the facilitating role of teachers and students' participation in pedagogy results in a meaningful learning (Kafai and Resnick, 1996). Though this would shed a bright light on the qualities of the process from students' explanation, it was understood that the practice of the process based learning to bring deference seems limited to only some teachers.

Generally, from the conception of learning as bringing a difference lessons can be learnt. Among these, learning is the result of relationship established between teachers and students and among students where it is considered as a rigorous and interactive process. In such course of actions both teachers and students contribute their facilitating and active roles of processing of information respectively. As the students pass through processes, the development of their expertise and criticality enhanced. Moreover, such learning enables students to understand social environment and encourage them to independently manipulate it.

4.3.3. Interactive Versus Semi-Interactive Classrooms

The in-depth interview and classroom observations made helped me to understand the situations of interactive and semi-interactive classrooms on teaching and learning. The concept of interactiveness used refers to the communicative environment observed in some classes while the semi-interactive is to the limited interaction employed by some other teachers. Classroom interaction and learning are inseparable. To this end, Geredler (1997) asserts interaction in learning classroom is very important to pull out students' perspective on a case.

From this one can understand that no teaching and learning process without interaction of individuals or groups. Therefore, interactive environment and interaction are very helpful for learning to occur. Likewise, all the interviewed teacher participants agreed with it. Some of their suggestions on the importance of interaction and an attempt made to create interactive conditions in their classes were considered. The teachers believe that their interaction with students not only provided suitable situation for learning but also have motivational consequences. The teachers also explained that as a result of interaction students' approaches to learning also influenced and become attractive in interacting with individual characteristics and the pedagogic context. The following two excerpts would be examples of the sources of my understanding. Teshale, a teacher participant said:

From the very beginning, I established good academic relationships with my students and we discussed how to proceed with the course. The communication among students and with me is very good...the presence of a series of activities and presentation on individual and group basis enhanced our communication and relationships. I believe that our mutual understating and communications brought changes on students' learning activities...

Lakachew, who demands students' view in learning on his part suggests:

I encourage communicative situations in my classes by exchanging views with students. You know when students reserve themselves from participation; I do not feel comfort... Thus, I appoint my students in tasks and hear their ideas and make them comment each other. I believe that these contribute much to their learning.

During classroom observation, Teshale's class seems good in students' participation and interactions. As he asserted above he emphasized on students' reflection through discussions on individual and group activities. The participation of the class in the discussion took the form of questioning, suggestion and comments. In line with these, group members and the class reflected their ideas and finally the teacher summarized the process. Similarly, Lakachew's classroom environment appears to be attractive in that his language students were engaged in group discussions and reflections.

Based on these observations, what the researcher understood was the attempt to use learning-oriented approach practiced by the teachers is encouraging. However, the process of students' discussion simply focused on the shallow concept of the contents. Therefore, it seems suffering from shortage of criticality and association to real life situations.

The situation of classroom teacher-student interactions did not follow similar process through out the observations made in classes of different teachers. The process of interaction in Bewketu's and Hizetu's class is reasonably different from the above. Both of them had a year experience, in teaching and very much bother about the content of teaching to enrich the objectives of their courses. They almost in similar fashion explained the importance of interaction of students with teachers and with the pedagogical environment.

In both of the classroom observations, the teachers were engaged in lecturing the content to students. At intervals they invited students to respond to questions that demand short answers. The teachers dominate almost all the time by presentation

and very few students raised questions at the end basically for clarification. From these pedagogic approaches, the researcher could extract a meaning that the teachers did 'interact' with students, but primarily to ensure that the students had 'understood' what they had told them. That is why the researcher viewed the interaction as 'semi-interaction'. In relations to this Arends (1997) said that in a pedagogical process where students and the environment interaction limited, teachers' experiences dominate the system through one-way communication. In such cases, it is obvious that students' input to the process is minimized. However, contrary to this issue literature such as Silberman (1996) and Ballantine (1993) recommend meaningful learning based on students active participation and reflections in a context and generate knowledge.

4.3.4. Motivation: Important but Faintly Existent

With regard to the contribution of motivation in learning, participants generally reported the importance of motivation as a means of energizing students in learning. They explained the purpose of motivation specifically in relation to participation in a class, commitment in the process of learning and to arrive at objectives anticipated.

In explaining the importance of motivation, Belina, teacher participant said:

... in teaching and learning the importance of motivation is clear. Even, individuals went to college when initiated, unless there are a lot of places to be gone... every class performance requires motivation. I do not think learning without it...

Another teacher participant, Yirdew, further suggests:

Teaching and learning process is not like other activities... it needs the commitment of teachers and students. It is a mental activity, thus, interaction and motivation of participants determines the how of the process... I believe that a student who performs in a motivated mode could achieve better.

According to these participants the value of motivation never limited to a particular stage in the process of teaching and learning rather it is extended from the outset to the realization of ones own purposes including the determination of the how of the process. Student participants also share almost in similar mode the position of teachers. Accounts of two participants that were used as a base of my understanding are stated. Yebeltal suggests:

In situations where there is no motivation, I think also no suitable conditions for learning. In such cases, learning is impossible.

Fetene on his part explained:

Motivation is an important issue both for teachers and students... especially when teachers are well motivated; students use them as a model. Our action research teacher, for instance nicely handled us and every student participate in his class more than others. As a result good relationship was established and the learning process is going on in a good way.

The students argued that motivation is a crucial issue since it serves as a conducive condition for learning. From the argument, it is possible to understand the impact of teachers' teaching approach on students' motivation which can be deduced from the students' motivation and participation due to the teaching strategy of the teacher of the course 'action research'. According to the participant, the teacher has handled the students to contribute their own view and consequently, his classes become collegial and every student participated in the leaning process. This was supported by Parker (1997:31) stating as reflective teaching is helpful to improve practice and to initiate students rather than collecting knowledge and foster the rationality and autonomy of the teachers.

Though the importance of motivation is recognized by literatures for example Ross and Rae (1998), Myers (1998) and these study participants, data obtained through in-depth interview and observations revealed the status of students' motivation as weakly existing. Belina, a teacher participant suggests:

...except few, the students are not motivated in the teaching and learning process. They focus on future benefits (graduation and...) but do not have deep rooted motivation. These may make teachers not to support them strongly; it also affects purposes set and could lead to unproductive situation.

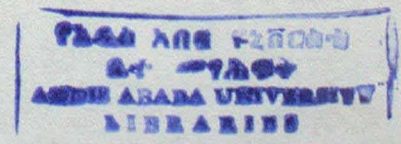
In relation to this view, Bewketu also said that students' are not enthusiastic; as a result he employed different motivating strategies such as encouraging reflecting their ideas and providing questions for participation that may make them alert in the class during the teaching and learning process. His view is:

Students' motivation is not as I need, it is very problematic; you encounter great variations, but you need to address at least most of the students.

During the observations made in four classes, in two of them though students were engaged in group activities and presentations, the pillars of the activities seem to be driven by limited number of students whereas some students were observed being puzzled in the situation.

In the other two classes, the students were oriented to listen to their teachers. They were passive recipients of the information. The teachers posed simple questions that few students responded at a spot while most of them seemed confused and unmotivated.

In the above anecdotes, it is clearly understood that the speakers explained that motivation of students' is very low, which the observation also confirmed. This could be due to the absence of reflective teaching and learning in two of the classes. Parker (1997:34) said unreflective teaching is the enemy of students' motivation to learn. The teachers saw the motivation of the students as their responsibility to stimulate them by demonstrating their own enthusiasm for the subject. But in the case of the 'action research' teacher he emphasized on the importance of students' motivation by engaging them in serious learning tasks and



provision of encouragement, as a result the class motivated to learn according to Fetene's suggestion.

4.4. Issues of Quality

The objective of this study also includes understanding teachers' and students' conceptions of quality pedagogy. Quality teaching and learning is very important to produce competent and qualified individuals who could solve encountering problems. The analysis presented in this section, therefore, tries to show students and teachers perception concerning the quality of pedagogy. In this attempt, for the sake of understanding the issue is categorized in to two sub-themes.

4.4.1. Purpose-Oriented Quality

In the in-depth interviews held with teachers, most of them explained that quality is important when measured by its purpose attained. In his view Hizetu said:

Teaching and learning is carried on for a purpose, related with personal, institutional, societal and what have you... based on the available in puts. When students are educated, engaged to their professional activity and perform successfully, I think the teaching and learning process has produced quality required.

Similar to the above conception, another participant, Bewketu, emphasized on the objectives attained as a result of the teaching and learning. His statement is:

To me quality teaching and learning is the attainment of objectives designed through students' achievement and teachers' performance. The ability of graduates to practice the learned materials also matters... if graduates fail to work effectively the quality will be questioned...

According to most of the interviewed teachers, pedagogy has a required quality when anticipated course objectives are achieved and the trainees were able to perform the tasks they were assigned to.



In an in-depth interviews made with students, most of them associate quality with teachers' knowledge delivery, coverage of the content of courses, achievements and knowledge. That is the competency of a teacher to convey his knowledge in a way that students fetch from him and the overall coverage of courses designed for a program. Based on these the achievements of students via the process of examinations and their knowledge gained took the first order of priority. This understanding was made from the following excerpts of Aster:

I came to this college to acquire knowledge... that enables me to work in a society... quality teaching and learning is through provision of designed contents and knowledge by the teacher. Then, my achievement (good results) and my implementation justifies...

Nasir's accounts stated as:

Teachers' competency, his knowledge transmission and... ability of students to practice the materials learned determines quality teaching and learning... such teachers helped me to deserve good knowledge and grades in some subjects.

From the above teachers and student participants' anecdotes, the conceptions of quality teaching and learning focuses on the out come. That is the achievement of students in the subject area. In the arguments made, there are also situations where the graduates employability and ability to perform activities in their profession suggested for quality implication. This could mean that competency of graduates in a field of work, and level of employer satisfaction is determined by the process of teaching and learning through which graduates pass. Therefore, the how of students learning; how they were evaluated? And other important processes in the training institution need a considerable attention equal to the output. Brown (1997) said that through processing of information in learning at higher education results in real learning based on series of knowledge construction.

In the issues of quality like the output, concern was given to the input and process through which outcome must pass (Loder, 1998). Therefore, the researcher draws

the lesson that says over emphasizing on the purpose aspect of quality perhaps leads to the undermining of inputs and particularly that of the process aspect which could shed dark light on the quality of teaching and learning.

4.4.2. The Crippled Transformative Quality

According to some of the in-depth interviews made, there were attempts of the transformation of teaching and learning process. Based on the pedagogical process some participants suggest their conceptions. Among the teacher participants, Asaye said:

...quality teaching and learning happens in conditions where students and teachers go through processes of learning contributing their own roles in a stimulated situation using materials needed. If not, whatever effort we make the teaching and learning process cannot be as a required quality.

During his interview, Asaye reported that, in order to make the learning process interactive, I provided a chain of individual and group based task to students and follow their presentations. In such activities and their participation in classes, students were assessed out of 75% and the left 25% with final examination. According to Asaye, though group activities have their own roles in learning, the domination of few students in a group and the will of active students to work together influence it. He said, I tried to assign students in different groups in different activities but since their interests should be considered, it is difficult to impose them. This is because when students' interest is impressed in learning, it affects their initiation and performances.

Yirdew, another teacher participant has explained his conception of quality pedagogy based on his former university experiences when he was student and his current understanding.

According to his view, when he was in university, he learnt in the process mainly based on competition to deserve good points, to get ranks, rewards and some

others strive to graduate alone. As to him, these are external motivators and what we all experienced since primary education and still they are with us and with students. Such habits were not eradicated and these approaches of teaching and learning in our country, I think repressed the development of creative potential of students. As a result, students give the attention to the materialistic issues of learning. In his view he raised as evidence, the current number of educated individuals in the country of which no creativity except appreciating and adopting other world's activity. In actual sense, educated people are powers of change and creativity. With regard to the malfunction of creative potential of students Bentley (1998) stated that learning without conceptualization and understanding affects students' views of their world and hamper reflective thinking. Therefore, according to Yirdew's conception of quality pedagogy to solve such kinds of problems he said:

Including important materials, the process of teaching and learning need to be conducive, student-oriented, based on internal motivation of students and employing appropriate assessment methods and... when these practiced there is no reason to lack quality.

He reported that, he was trying to make his classes a learning classroom by providing students with different activities. But most of the students are not motivated to participate. Hoping their improvement, when he assigned them in groups and made them to discuss and present to class, the unmotivated students also observed being influenced by the motivated ones. This has also its own impact on learning since we are guided by continuous assessment, in which students were assessed in group activities and few individual tasks out of 75% and the left 25% with final examination.

According to these participants it seems that the process of learning need to be stressed and each student must pass through the process by individual efforts. To achieve this, students have to be internally motivated than by external pressures.

Ross and Rae (1998) said internally motivated students possess a confidence to confront challenging activities and develop a skill to solve problems.

A lot of points can be drawn from the conception of Yirdew. The major ones are, the competition of students based on mere memorization being motivated by external motivators without internal understanding blocks students' critical-thinking. The suitability of learning-oriented approach was clearly viewed to possess better pedagogic process when teachers hold its understanding and practice with commitment. The domination of active students in group activities that accounts 75% of their assessment with only few individual tasks makes him suspect the process of students learning.

Focusing on the process of learning some students also shared the ideas of the abovementioned teachers emphasizing on the students' and teachers' role, interaction and motivation. According to three teachers (Teshale, Yirdew, and Belina), these students are active participants and good performers in their classes. During the in-depth interview held with Yibetal he believed:

...quality teaching and learning is that incorporates the contribution of teachers and students, that passes through assessment of individual students that possesses good communication of students and teachers and that help us to achieve our goals.

In his interview Yebetal suggested that, in our class some teachers engage us in various activities and presentations: when I perform those tasks and present it, I developed for example skills of talking, arguing and how to structure an idea. These teachers present questions and demand our reflection hence students are 'forced' to think and talk. However, he also forwarded that there are some other teachers who present content themselves and require students to listen and take notes.

Almost in a similar fashion, Abdul, the second student reported that a teaching and learning process has quality in the presence of:

A capable, motivated and communicative teacher... and motivated and interested students contact in learning situation. Students and teachers then establish good relationships... and communicate through these goals and realize it.

He reported, as there are some interactive, competent and motivated teachers, also there are the opposite. The case is also true in students that most of them are not motivated in teaching and learning process. In classes where teachers create attractive situations I eagerly wait for the period and there are also students who are motivated and participate in the learning process. The teachers request students to argue against an idea, to give suggestion and ask questions. Therefore, through these all I believe that we learnt much.

The above two views of participants could tell us two important points. First, the presence of unmotivated, semi-interactive and less student participation in class where students were asked to cope up through memorization that sees the process of teaching and learning as restricted to more of one way communication. The monolithic flow of information in pedagogic process was strongly criticized by scholars such as Sotto (1994), Tagg and Barr (1999) due to surface exposure of students to the curriculum. And the second is the presence of interactive environment as a result of motivation and students participation. It is witnessed to be conducive for learning. Cunningham and Duffy (1996); Ballantine (1993) and Silberman (1996) stated that the presence of interactive environment in a teaching/learning process lead to understanding and concept formation.

In general, from these participants' accounts, it is possible to describe meanings like the awareness of students about the importance of learning with transforming their life experiences by enhancing and empowering them. Nevertheless, the practice of transformative learning is limited to some teachers and classroom environments such as the unmotivated behavior of students also influence the practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to study teachers' and students understanding of teaching, learning and its quality in the context of higher education by taking Rift Valley University College as a case. The study attempted to explore and understand the nature of pedagogy and its processes.

Qualitative case study was, thus, the design employed to achieve the objectives of this study. Teachers who are teaching in Rift Valley University College and students of the institution were participants of this study. The data used were generated from participants by using in-depth interviews and classroom observations to understand how these crucial stakeholders perceive pedagogy and its quality in the institution.

The data generated by the in-depth interviews and classroom observations were reduced, categorized and interpreted thematically with the intention of describing the conceptions of teachers and students about the issue under study. In order to take care of the validity of the data thick descriptions and discrepant information were presented. Accordingly, both teachers and students have their own conception of teaching, learning and quality pedagogy. Therefore, the following summaries of the findings of the investigation present the conceptions of teachers and students on teaching, learning, motivation and quality issues together.

Teachers' conception of teaching varies. Some of them (Bewuketu, Teshager and Hizetu) believe that it is a concise delivery of content to students by inviting them to react sometimes in the process. And this conception is also shared by most of the students. These teachers and students perceive learning as recitation of

concepts, principles and other subject area contents. However, tasks and assignments are perceived as students' contributions thought it lacks criticality.

Some other teachers (Asaye, Yirdew, Teshale and Lakachew) conceive teaching as making a learning environment suitable and flexible in which students could freely interact. Nevertheless, the conception is incomprehensive since the teachers practice it in limited contents of courses. Furthermore, as adult learners, students' experiences on what and how to learn is not regarded rather they simply made to learn what was prepared by their teachers. Most of the students also perceive teaching in similar fashion with the teachers. These teachers and students understand learning as creating personal understanding of a concept through a content and working with for a change. They believe that this would be attained through the establishment of close relationships and trustfulness between teachers and students in the environment of learning.

The participants of the study believe that the interaction among students, between students and teachers and with the learning environment has paramount importance. However, the classroom interactions were found to be two distinct things. The first is the attempt to employ learning-oriented pedagogy through engagement of students in discussion where they produced their own reflection though the reflection of students did not extend its horizon beyond contents. That means it is suffering from criticality and association to real life situations. In the second type of interaction, students were given a chance to interact with teachers only to air out their doubt and responding to questions that demand short answers.

All the teachers and students accepted the importance of motivation. However, students' motivation in the pedagogic process was limited to very few of them, hence it is illexistent. The issue is attributed to the how of teachers' process of teaching and students' personal motive in learning. However, teachers seem motivated in their teaching processes.

With regard to quality of teaching and learning both teachers and students understand in different ways. Some of the teachers and most of the students perceive quality pedagogy from its output aspects. They conceptualize quality teaching and learning giving more attention to the purpose it attains. Though consideration of outcome is one aspect of quality it could lead to giving least emphasis to the input and process aspects of quality. This may in turn the development of students' reflective thinking and creativity that is brought up in the learning process. On the other hand, some other teachers and few students perceive quality pedagogy based on the concept formation by students that enable them for more understanding and successful achievements of purposes.

In this study it is learnt that the conceptions of teaching and learning differs from teachers to teachers and from students to students which could be justified theoretically as well as practically. This would be a challenging issue to carryout the pedagogic processes in a uniform and standardized level in private higher education institutions. The teaching and learning process in the country at all levels, however, stated to be in line with the learning-oriented approach (TGE, 1994; ESDP II, 2002). Besides, the reflectivity and criticality of teaching and learning at higher education level also need to be addressed (Evans and Abbot, 1998:70).

The variation of teachers' conception of teaching, learning and its practice has also strong influence on the quality of pedagogy since practice is based on the beliefs individuals possess (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 1998:17). Teachers who possess the concept of content-oriented pedagogy show a tendency to emphasize on the delivery of knowledge to students in a one-way communication demanding students to give them back what was delivered to them. In such practices since students strive to cope up with the chunks of information disseminated, they may fail to internalize the concepts and use in their practical life efficiently as a result the concept is liable to be forgotten immediately after examinations.

Teachers with conception of the learning-oriented pedagogy on the other hand, practice the facilitation of suitable conditions for learning where students freely perform tasks, conduct discussions, interact with the environment and reflect their understanding in a critical manner. The possession of these conceptions does not influence practice alone it also affects students' and teachers' motivation in the process of teaching and learning. Generally, the conception of teaching and learning mostly emphasized by the teachers and students respectively seem to be related with content-oriented pedagogy though there are attempts of the learning-oriented one.

In the learning environment in most cases the students do not exhibit favorable intrinsic motivation. Had they possessed it, they would have participated in the learning processes and the classroom interaction would have not been limited to very few students. With regard to the quality of pedagogy that was seen in relation to the theoretical assumption of the study, though there is a minute attempt of learning-oriented pedagogic scenario, almost all of the processes are found to be challenged and incomputable. Its incompatibility includes the area of conception of pedagogy, its processes and students motivation in the instructional processes.

5.2. Implications of the Study

The results of this study showed that both teachers and students possess distinct conceptions of teaching and learning. They also viewed quality pedagogy differently and their perception affects their ways of teaching and leaning. Though, they are viewing same thing differently, if it had been viewing same thing for learning with understanding that involves reflective and critical-thinking, the difference would have been encouraged. However, mere adoption of the conceptions of different philosophical thoughts will not bring improvement. Therefore, the present study is believed to have the following implications.

- Teachers' approaches of knowledge delivery, teacher-students interactions and teachers' strategy to motivate students seem to associate teaching with imbue of an idea. Thus, to make teaching an emancipatory process and that promote learners to actively participate in knowledge processing; teachers need to work on pulling out students' reflective potential creating an interactive learning environment.
- The expectation of students to obtain knowledge from a source (a teacher) and their limited intrinsic initiation to learn seem to have a deleterious effect on meaningful learning. Hence, to produce real learning, awareness on the importance of personal contribution need to be made and practiced that in turn could help as creating suitable condition to enhance students' motivation to learn.
- The over emphasis of teachers and students on the output aspect of quality pedagogy than the 'heart' (the process), adoption of various conceptions of teaching and learning without serious engagement in pedagogic activities and incomprehensiveness of the attempts of learning-oriented approach seem affecting the quality of pedagogy to a greater extent. Therefore, the process through which the output must pass through and engagements of students to learning activities need to be emphasized by the academics. In addition, the attempts of learning approach observed by few teachers required to be strengthened and widened to others in the institution.

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APPENDIX A
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHER PROFFESIONAL
DEVELOPEMENT STUDIES

"Pedagogy in Private Higher Education of Ethiopia: The Case of Rift Valley
University College"

Interview Protocol for Teacher and student Participants

First, I would like to express my appreciation and gratefulness to be a volunteer to participate in my research. My topic is pedagogy in private higher education institution of Ethiopia. In this study, I am looking to understand teachers' and students' views on teaching and learning. How teachers and students understand teaching, learning and quality education? In addition, to examine teachers' and students' motivation classroom observation will be made. Therefore, data for the study will be colleted through intervjews and observations.

The discussion that we are going to have will be secured. I will not use your real names in writing the study rather I will use pseudo names. There are no risks and discomforts, which come along by participating in this study. However, the information that you will give me can be helpful for my research study and might contribute for the well-being or understanding of the overall pedagogic process.

Introduction

This interview guide is accessible to engender significant data regarding teachers and students' understanding of the pedagogical process in Rift-valley University College. In producing data for research purpose it is my conviction and pledge that due consideration must be given to the ethical issues. Accordingly, prior to the actual interview the following ethical considerations were raised and discussed with research participants.

- Participation in the study is on voluntary basis: participants have the authority to permit or refuse the collection of data in any form,
- Full right is deserved to with draw at any time; to change ideas or to edit recorded materials,
- Information to be gathered and the overall interpretation to be made belong to participants and the researcher respectively,
- The confidentiality and anonymity of information will be strongly maintained. Hence, Pseudo names shall be used in the study.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Teachers

1. How do you notice what teaching and learning is?
2. How do you express the roles of your students in the teaching/learning process?
3. How do you reflect on classroom interactions between you and your students?
4. What are your roles in the instructional process?
5. How do you carry out teaching? Why?
6. How do you observe your students' motivation in the instructional course of action? Why?
7. What mechanism do you use to motivate your students?
8. How do you characterize quality pedagogical process?
9. Do you consider students' interests in the teaching process? How?
10. What kind of teaching approach do you employ in your instructional process?
11. How do you describe good teaching and learning in general? Why?
12. How do you assess students learning in your course/s?
13. How do you perceive the pedagogical environment of the institution totally?

THANK YOU FOR YOR COOPERATION

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for Students

1. How do you recognize learning?
2. What are your roles in the learning process?
3. How do you consider students' classroom interaction with teachers?
4. How do you explain the roles of your teachers?
5. Are students motivated in the learning process? Why? How?
6. Why do you join higher education institution?
7. How do you state quality pedagogical practice?
8. How do you describe good learning?
9. How do teachers assess students' performances?
10. How do you describe the teaching/learning atmosphere of the institution broadly?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION