

**POLICY BORROWING PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES
IN ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:
A CASE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBRIVATIONS

AAU - Addis Ababa University

BPR – Business Process Reengineering

EPRDF – Ethiopian Peoples Republic Democratic Front

ESDP - Education Sector Development Program

ETQA - Ethiopian Quality Assurance

HE - Higher Education

HEI - Higher Education Institution

HESC - Higher Education Strategy Center

MOE - Ministry of Education

OBE – Outcome based education

QA – Quality Assurance

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the phenomenon of policy borrowing for Ethiopian higher education from the policy makers' and policy implementers' perspectives by using a mixed method design. Experts working at HERQA, HESC and MOE, along with the management staff of HEIs were the participants of the study. Data was gathered through questionnaires from 150 purposefully selected, information-rich participants ranging in diversity. Furthermore, 9 key officials were interviewed and an FGD was held among 6 other experts. Qualitative data was categorized and thematically analyzed, while the SPSS software was used to summarize the quantitative data. Findings of the analysis revealed that the process of borrowing a QA policy was incomplete and substandard as it is lacking among others: 1) a general framework that states expected profiles of HE input, process and output 2) proper integration of the QA policy with other policies 3) appropriate ways to fulfill desired logical requirements and suitable conditions of the QA policy, and 4) an action and experience-oriented adaption system capable of winning the commitment of implementers. These are then recommended to be improved by: 1) HESC placing a general QA framework with all required details 2) HESC being a strategic center to develop appropriate strategies to integrate and synthesize policies 3) the government granting appropriate autonomy to concerned organs, making HEIs' progression system transparent and requiring accountability 4) HERQA helping HEIs identify skill gaps and trim training contents, creating common understandings through various awareness activities and creating a mentorship link between QA-experienced and junior HEIs, measuring impacts of the QA practices to keep all stakeholders informed on the outcome of their QA participation while providing support to HEIs to boost their commitments and motivation to own their internal QA system. Finally, these findings, which were identified as gaps in the borrowing process, were suggested as inspiration for further studies to be made on other borrowed policies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Breaking the ground for researching the Ethiopian educational policy borrowing practice, this study was intended to give an insight into the key aspects of the process as it is being done globally. Thus the paper started by briefly stating the central problem and providing a conceptual framework on how to address it. A review of related literatures was done on issues of policy transfer and the educational policy borrowing process including the experiences of other countries. Then, gathered data was presented, analyzed and interpreted, revealing the preliminary findings of the study on Ethiopia's policy borrowing experience pertaining to the quality assurance (QA) system. With these, the study created in-depth understanding of the country's borrowing practice by complementing and triangulating the findings of the different instruments during the interpretation process. Finally, concluding remarks on the QA borrowing process and possible practical recommendations to fill process gaps were presented to help overcome challenges of the QA system and to control the impacts of unrealized gaps in the policy formation on policy practicability.

1.1.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In some contexts, the terms 'university' and 'higher education (HE)' are used interchangeably though they do not necessarily mean the same thing. The university is a subset of the higher education set which has a more holistic meaning as it encompasses all post-secondary institutions. HE includes 'all types of studies or trainings at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities (Assié-Lumumba, 2006).

According to Blainey (2011), the Italian Catholic Church founded the West's first universities, which were preceded by the schools attached to monasteries and cathedrals. Monasteries, providing a focus for spiritual life, functioned as agricultural, economic and production centers and became major conduits of civilization (Woods, 2005). They introduced new technologies and crops, fostered the creation and preservation of literature and promoted economic growth and civilization (Woods, 2005).

Over time, owing to the scope and pace of change, society have become increasingly knowledge-based so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development. In particular, developing countries and less developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones UNESCO (1998). The gap that the European's have achieved over the developing countries with their economic and technological advancement came as a result of their expanded higher learning (Hastings, 2004).

Consequently, as one developing country, Ethiopia desired higher learning for two reasons. The first is in meeting objective conditions the country encountered after the Adwa victory such as the establishment of a central state authority and permanent urban seat of power; the arrival of foreign embassies, the development of modern economic sector and others. The second is in bridging the technological and economic gap realized following her invasion by the Italians.

According to UNESCO (1998), sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies are believed to offer new opportunities to reduce the gap separating developing and less developed countries from the industrially developed ones.

Furthermore, international co-operation and exchange are also seen as major avenues for advancing higher education throughout the world. (UNESCO, 1998).

Therefore, in collaboration with foreign countries and international organizations, Ethiopia's first modern higher education institution was heralded by the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) in 1950 (Amare, 2005; Damtew, 2003; Teshome, 1990 as cited in Africa, 2004) to abruptly become the first national university called Haile Selassie I University (Assié-Lumumba, 2006; Mulu, 2012) drawing its models from its European and North American prototypes (Saint, 2004). Therefore, it can be said that the country's HE is an outcome of international exchange or the outcome of a borrowing process.

In continued realization of the higher education sector as a source of great potential for economic, social and cultural development by the current government (EPRDF), the Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994 was issued with the premise to address the persistent problems of the previous educational system (FDRE, 1994). This policy served as a major framework for the many consecutive reforms which took place in the HEIs from the early 1990s (Getachew; Richard, 2006). The reforms were in regards to the four main aspects that the new policy identified as challenges of the past – access, equity, relevance and quality (FDRE, 1994).

The effort made to put into practice the new policy raised the number of the country's higher education institutions to 32 degree-granting public universities, and more than 90 private higher education institutions (MoE, 2005) from only two in 2001 (Mulu, 2012). But this increase in access to HE was not meant only to satisfy the nation's demand for educated human resources which occurred following the country's long term vision of becoming a middle class country by 2025 (ESDPIV, 2010), but also to help ensure UNESCO's declaration of HE for all (UNESCO, 1998). Hence, the 32 HEIs are now made distributed in the different regions of the country rather than merely being concentrated in the capital as was previously the case (ESDPIV, 2010).

Moreover, in order to make the education system fully achieve its goal in all the remaining aspects, relevance and quality, the government's effort towards increased access and equity needed to be concurrently complemented by equivalent effort towards employing well-built guiding and administrative policies developed at a national level in a way that considered the global trends. According to Ben, as guiding principles and protocols towards achieving desired rational outcomes, policies are what the success or failure of a system depends on (Ben-Peretz, 2009). And as Molla said, in this age of neoliberal globalization, education policy is no longer an exclusive affair of the nation state. Increasingly, national policy processes are intersected with and affected by global policy actors and ideas (Molla, 2013).

Hence the country, pursuing its formerly initiated borrowing act, in importing modern education, continues sharing various educational policies and practices with other countries. This is characterized by the number of global policy ideas incorporated in the guiding legal policy framework documents of the Ethiopian HE: the 1994 Ethiopian Training Policy (ETP) and the 2003/09 HE policy proclamations. All these attest to the effort made to align the HEIs with timely global HE trends in this dynamic and ever changing world. Additionally, the extent to which borrowing as one major policy making option is being practiced in the makings of Ethiopian HE policies is also indicated.

Global ideas found in major legal frameworks that guide the operation of the higher education system are: institutional autonomy, HEIs becoming income generating enterprises, privatization, decentralization, cost sharing and the establishment of an external QA agency are some common current HE global trends mentioned by various scholars (Molla, 2013; Maassen and Cloete, 2006).

Educational borrowing can be considered one by-product of today's inevitable challenge, globalization, to which Ethiopia is exposed. It involves the voluntary application of foreign educational policies, ideas and/or practices in a different

environment under different situations (borrower's jurisdiction) than they were originally conceived in (lender's jurisdiction) (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

Generally, drawing on another's better experience or learning from another's experience is meant to improve one's own practices towards development. But particularly, borrowing, if done appropriately, would save resources, would bring the borrower's pace in the globalized village to that of others and most importantly, would shift the borrower's focus to other unattended problems unique to the locality.

Unfortunately for the Ethiopian HE policies, achievement is recorded so far only on two of the four identified challenges: access and equity MoE (2010). In fact, a decline is what is observed concerning quality, which according to Materu (2007) is explained as an expected consequence of expansion efforts towards HE access. Other researchers also confirm that the aggressive expansion of HE is what resulted in decline in the Ethiopian HE quality (Saint, 2004; Amare, 2005, Teferra, 2007).

Although quality was identified as one major aspect of the reform agenda in the 1994 policy document, the government only initiated any official action towards it in 2003 by declaring the establishment of an external higher education quality control agency HERQA and a higher education strategic center HESC as FDRE (2003). This proclamation was revised in 2009 to incorporate a requirement on internal QA units under each HEI. Both the internal and external quality assurance systems are among the many identified borrowed global ideas. Furthermore, as has been expressed in ESDPIV, the guiding philosophy of the current sector development program made to involve maintaining the expansion momentum and equity for the HE system while promoting quality (ESDPIV, 2010).

Given these and other measures, quality of input, process and output are yet reported as being constrained by a number of problems in the universities by Mulu (2012). According to this researcher, 'the conditions necessary to support quality teaching and student learning are either missing or defective in the universities' Mulu (2012). This

could be the end result of numerous factors of which one is distress by the insufficient formation of the system's guiding policies which in the Ethiopian HE case is mainly borrowing.

Despite its advantages in helping a nation benefit from suitable policy options sourced globally, lack of due attention to variations in the donor's and in the recipient's motive and lack of due attention to context and capacity in utilizing a specific borrowed policy, can create unexpected complications and cause unforeseen damages to the recipient country in many aspects. Among these, decline in educational quality is one.

Messay (2008) partially explained this fact: 'if the borrowed ideas drawn from alien contexts fail to reflect existing and particular conditions at home, they activate infatuation rather than the propensity to an insightful form of thinking'. In other words, if this is the outcome of borrowed policies, they will fail to meet social or environmental needs, will discourage creativity, will negatively influence the pedagogical practice and by implication therefore, wear down the quality of education, as each of these are the different features of quality in education (MoE, 2003). Therefore, it is believed that in order to achieve quality in education, one essential provision is to ensure a nation's educational policy making process in general and its educational borrowing process in particular is conducted taking all potential affecting factors into consideration. It is an issue that needs to be evaluated as well as monitored from time to time. Consequently, this study is conducted with the objective of assessing the conclusiveness of Ethiopia's current educational borrowing process all important factors in light of the McDonald's and Tufue-Dology's four stage educational policy borrowing model.

The main purpose for this assessment is to show how 'the way the quality assurance policy idea was borrowed'' is affecting HE quality in Ethiopia. In doing this, attempts will be made to answer basic questions of the study by identifying the various global ideas borrowed pertaining to quality, illustrating whole actual borrowing process

through which the policy was placed and expose potential gaps within it that creates the situation for encountered constraints.

Besides, even though the thrust of this study is to point out gaps in the educational policy borrowing process, and present them to concerned authorities and professionals, it is also intended to indirectly contribute to the effort already exerted by government towards securing quality in the Ethiopian education system as well as to motivate fellow researchers to work on the area further. For this reason, among the various borrowed policy ideas in the Ethiopian HE policy document, the proclamation that established the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency is considered as a means to demonstrate the actual policy borrowing process.

1.2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's very technologically advanced world, education is a key instrument by which an individual and a nation can get the most out of what is good in the world. And educating the youth is one important task of a government in building up a nation with competitive manpower that can shoulder the duties and responsibilities of the society in such a way that both individual, and national development, is ensured.

This can be done in many ways guided by various policies as well as procedures made by politicians, bureaucrats or professionals at national levels. These policies and procedures, if are truly representative of the social, economic, political and other needs of the society, will make the entire educational process a success. Otherwise, failing the entire process they themselves will die sooner or later. Hence, attention must be given to the factors that need cautious considerations in the way they are innovated or imitated (Benson & Jordan, 2011).

In the process of policy making, it is one option to imitate another's' successful experiences. This can be done by looking for what lessons can be learned from the implementation and it can be done by transferring a part of the idea or by transferring

the whole idea to avoid reinventing the wheel. If done appropriately, the researcher believes countries like Ethiopia could benefit more by not starting all over again as resources would be saved, as the country's pace in the globalized village would be sped up to catch up with others and most importantly, as the country's focus would shift to other unattended problems unique to the locality.

Scholars like Sadler promote these benefits of the practice while warning about the dangers of its careless exercise. "The practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the workings of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own" (Sadler, 1900, as cited in McDonald, 2012). "There was benefit in mapping the ideas of other nations for facilitating the development of policy, implementation and specific approaches to solving problems in another country" said (King, 1968 as cited in McDonald, 2012). Additionally, Crossley (2009) questions the uncritical adoption of Western thought and models into other countries while (Ozga, Seddon and Steiner-Khamsi, as cited in McDonald, 2012) note that it is the local context that adapts to the new ideas and Lingarda warns against blind borrowing and lack of borrowing learning (Lingarda, 2010, as cited in, McDonald, 2012).

As indicated below, though various researchers judged a failure in general 'the making of Ethiopian education policies' which mainly includes the practice of borrowing especially at the HE level, and 'the outcomes of borrowed policies' in particular, the purpose of this research was not to condemn the benefits of educational borrowing practices. Rather it is to advocate change in the system based on the actual needs of the society with recognition of the importance of an informed engagement and context in the borrowing practice. When this is done, there will be solid ground for all actions taken to bring answers to the country's needs.

'Actors to make educational policies in Ethiopia are not listening to public voice or are not devising ways to find solutions of their own initiatives. Rather they go on implementing unwelcome and unaccepted policies. Added to that, educational policies in Ethiopia are used as political instrument of ruling elite's

with prime aims of cultivating alien ideologies designed for short lived goals. Policy making has not incorporated stakeholders in the policy-making structure so far' (Seleshi, 2001).

'Since the learning process focused on inculcating the normativeness of the West, in addition to being irrelevant to Ethiopian conditions, it induced copyism and imitateness. Nowhere was the system inspired by the goal of creating persons capable of interpreting, enriching, and adapting their heritage to new needs and changing conditions' (Messay, 2008)

As stated above the country's policy making practice and the learning process that these policies lead has been criticized for putting aside the actual needs of the people, forbidding stakeholder's participation, involving inappropriate contextualization and employing policies as quick fixes rather than long lasting solutions.

Unfortunately, in the case of Ethiopia, there is no previous work to use as a particular reference or guide as to how much the educational policy borrowing process has improved since it was started, neither can any lessons learned from real challenges faced nor can what is remained to work on, be known. Unluckily, despite its importance, sufficient exploration has so far not been done to exceptionally witness appropriateness of the process that the country is currently following in the educational policy borrowing practice. On top of the longer time elapsed from the day it was conducted, former research works considered the whole policy making process in the country rather than a particular focus on policy making through the borrowing process. Hence, as an attempt to create clear awareness of the current educational policy borrowing process and gaps it had in borrowing the QA policy, if any, this study will keep focused on the following basic questions:

- 1) What characterizes policy borrowing in the Ethiopian HEIs pertaining to quality?
- 2) What steps are followed in the borrowing process?
- 3) What are the challenges to the successful implementations of borrowed policies pertaining to quality?

1.3.CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Though Philips and Ochs (2004) described the task of analyzing the complex processes involved in educational borrowing as difficult, this paper aimed to do the job of making concerned parties aware on how missed or neglected factors in a policy borrowing process and their reflection on observed implementation challenges of borrowed policies become quality compromising factors.

This study assessed the current policy borrowing process in Ethiopia, as applied for the policy basis the establishment of the QA agency, HERQA, in light of the four stage model that McDonald's and Tuffue-Dology's revised in 2012; identified challenges faced by both HERQA and HEIs in implementation, taking standards placed by the agency into consideration; and based on the outcomes of these two, possible areas that lack appropriate considerations during the borrowing/transferring process were discovered as process gaps.

As Rose defined it, a model is a generic description of how a program works. The purpose of making a model is to describe a program in terms sufficiently general for it to be portable across national boundaries, yet sufficiently concrete so that policymakers in the country importing a model will be able to relate each of its parts to activities with which they are familiar. (Rose, 2005)

Hence, for the purpose of this study, additional key perspectives identified by other various scholars were taken into account on top of the major process stages and their respective factors mentioned by McDonald and Tuffue in their four stage model. This includes Philips, Ochs, Massey, and Rose. This helped to align the results with an updated global understanding of wholesome good borrowing elements as well as to describe each borrowing process stage in detail.

This four stage model was preferred to be used in this particular work for several reasons. Firstly, it is suitable in examining those foreign practices and policies that a country has voluntarily received. Secondly, the model was conceived to serve as a guide

in examining educational practices and policies both in the 'home' and 'source' countries. In addition, the model conceptualizes a completed process, from initial attraction, on the part of policy receivers to an instance of practice elsewhere, and what caused such an attraction, to its implementation and 'internalization' in the borrower's context.

The four stages conceptualized as a framework in this particular study are stated below.

1. Examination of the impulses for change (Attraction)

Firstly, identification of the existence of real societal or national needs must be done that could potentially spark the need to look elsewhere. It is to be followed by the identification of possible foreign 'way outs' to meet the demand with a justification for the matching of local objectives with that of the sought policy. This will give clear answers to questions such as, why the policy was introduced in the first place at the exporter's jurisdiction and why it is needed in the recipient jurisdiction.

2. Agreement to proceed with an emphasis upon implementation feasibility (Decision making)

Under this stage, decision makers should determine the transfers of a policy by first, meticulously examining, from the **exporter jurisdiction**: a) the suitable conditions under which it operates; b) its potential features that could lead to undesired or irrelevant goals to the recipient; and c) its features that can possibly be replicated, imitated or substituted by other features in the importer jurisdiction like followed standards and procedures; and secondly, from the **recipient jurisdiction**: a) proper identification of who gets involved in the process, what needs to be borrowed, and when; b) the feasibility of its implementation (path dependency, restrictiveness of existing structures, resource capacity...etc); and c) its smooth interaction/synthesis with other policies and practices.

3. Preparation implementation

This stage is all about planning the logical requirements of implementation and planning for suitable conditions of the policy. The former involves placement of a

general framework with detailed profile to the input, process and output; placement of required standards and procedures; and developing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The latter involves a) planning for professional development b) planning on how to circumvent contextual gaps (economic, social and political) c) planning on who would do what, how and on what scale d) foreseeing possible challenges and planning on how to give solutions; make required structural changes; provide policy actors with required level of authority; and ensure transparency.

4. Implementation and monitoring

At this final stage a) convert all the theoretical plan into practice b) evaluate the whole implementation practice and monitor the challenges c) based on the outcome of the evaluation work on remedial actions d) follow-up on remedial actions e) assess policy actors understanding and ownership of the policy idea f) measure achievement and impacts of the policy g) aware stakeholders on achievement outcomes h) take appropriate actions based on the outcome (reward or measure) i) encourage research and creativity through reward mechanism and j) work on how to contextualize with the cultural, economic, political social and administrative conditions of the recipient country and perform. (McDonald, 2012)

In addition to examining the borrowing process in light of this four stage model, the study attempted to assess the standardized practice of the borrowed QA policy by using the QA standards and procedures set by HERQA to help identify the practical implementation challenges. This then helped to trace back some gaps in the policy formation process. The schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the study is presented below in Fig 1.1.

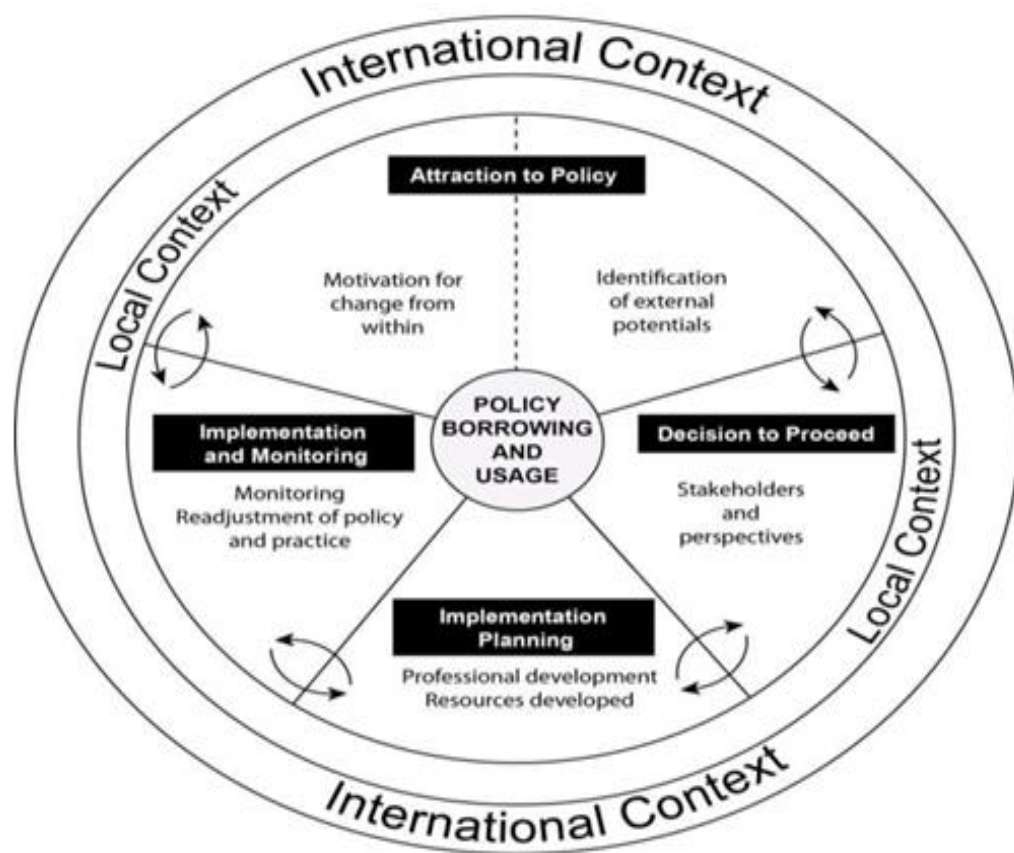


Figure 1 Pictorial representation of the conceptual framework

With this detailed list of activities under each stage of the latest model, even if this study need not necessarily involve producing guidelines for the “one best way” to transfer every policy, it will at least provide sufficient information on all important aspects that could lead to devising a comprehensive framework for the process so that the way adoption is made in the country could increase the benefits, discourage the undesired effects of borrowed policies and then improve the overall quality of education system’s outcome.

1.4.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general and specific objectives are presented below.

1.4.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

In assessing the current Ethiopian educational borrowing process the overall objective of this research is to shed light on practices and challenges of policy borrowing in Ethiopian HEIs.

1.4.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

As specific objectives, this research was carried out to:

- identify borrowed policy ideas in the Ethiopian HE policy pertaining to quality
- determine if it's borrowing process incorporated all the stages of the four stage model as well as respective key determinant factors in each of the stages
- identify gaps in the policy borrowing process and
- identify implementation challenges following policy borrowing

1.5.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because it adds both theoretical and practical knowledge to the available literature on how Ethiopia borrows policies and implements them in HEIs to achieve the goals of the institutions and then that of the nation in a given environmental context. This study is believed to bridge the research gap in the area of policy borrowing in higher education in the Ethiopian context.

This study has practical contributions, as it gave pertinent and timely information concerning the existing educational policy borrowing process and the practical challenges. This will help policy makers realize the missing gaps in their current effort to make the best out of those policies they transfer in which will in turn have a chain effect on educational quality.

Besides, this particular period being the ending time of the final implementation plan of the 1994 policy (MoE, 2010), this results of the study may help policy makers visualize

possible improvements that need to be in the coming sector development plan concerning to observed gaps in the existing borrowing process.

Furthermore, motivating fellow researchers for further works on the area and providing policy makers and other concerned parties with useful inputs, it will encourage creative local policy ideas and/or the transfer of well-tested and examined foreign policies as long lasting solutions as opposed to quick-fix policies.

In general, end results of this research definitely provided useful information to concerned parties in knowing where current practice stand as compared to the best in theory, which is believed to pave the way to explore alternate means of better doing future policy exchanges across borders.

There are several beneficiaries of this study, identified as such because they are the parties where the borrowed policies will ultimately be exercised. The direct beneficiaries are policy makers (HESC and MoE) and policy implementers (HEIs and HERQA), while the government and students are the indirect beneficiaries. They will benefit from the study, because with the results, they can get clear direction where to focus on in policy borrowing, how to carry out a policy transfer or borrowing, and how to have and maintain high success rates of the borrowed policies. Furthermore, they are provided with some optional ideas to minimize the implementation challenges, adding to the effort exerted in ensuring quality in education. Hence, copies of the final work of this study will be given to respective institutions – HERQA, HESC and MoE – for appropriate action to be taken within their respective scopes.

1.6.SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The practical assessment of this study did not involve every borrowed educational policy. Rather, assuming similar practice for all policy borrowings made thus far, the process focused only on one of the borrowed policies, i.e., the one through which the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance agency was established.

The way the policy was selected and implemented was brought in together with challenges faced upon its implementation. This was done in order to illustrate real manifestations of existing gaps in the borrowing process.

Moreover, taking time, cost and access constraints into consideration, the study examined policy outcomes only on 4 of the 17 available audited public HEIs while all 5 audited private HEIs were considered.

1.7.LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The challenging limitations of this study were: the difficulty to get timely responses to the questionnaires; the absence of adequate senior experts who participated in developing the policy under study; and the unavailability of recorded data on previous and current borrowing practices. Without an appropriate amount of this secondary data, it was difficult to make proper and reliable analysis in realizing improvement in existing process gaps.

The difficulty to get timely response especially from two of the selected HEIs (Hawassa University and Mekele University) reduced the sample size from 176 to 150. Moreover, financial constraints and shortage of time forced the researcher to minimize scope and reduce sample size which lessened richness of the outcome and in turn affects the generality of the findings into the whole borrowing practice.

1.8.ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction, which includes the background of the study; the statement of the problem; objectives, the significance, the scope, the limitations and the organization of the study along with operational definitions to some vague terms. Relevant related literatures to the topic are incorporated in the second chapter, while the third chapter puts forward the research methodology. In the fourth chapter, data presentation and analysis in conjunction with

interpretations of the outcomes are presented. Finally, the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study are treated in the fifth chapter.

1.9. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Accreditation – is a process of self-study and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize an institution and/or its programs for quality standards and need for quality improvement (Materu, 2007).

Quality Audit – is a process of review of an institution or program to determine if its curriculum, staff, and infrastructure meet its stated aims and objectives. It is an evaluation of an institution or its programs in relation to its own mission, goals, and stated standards (Materu, 2007).

Educational policies – are the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems (Ben-Peretz, 2009).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) – for this particular study, HEIs are tertiary institutions whose legal mandates allow them to award degrees and above-degree certifications, and which have an institutional rank of either University or University College.

Policy borrowing – for this study, policy borrowing involves the application of foreign educational policies, ideas and/or practices in a different environment under different situations (borrower's jurisdiction) than they were originally conceived in based on either the borrower's voluntarily proposal, or induced through influence.

Quality – For the purpose of this study, quality is defined as “fitness for purpose”. (Materu, 2007)

Quality assurance – is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced (Materu, 2007).

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITREATURE REVIEW

At this point in time, education is one globally transportable economic phenomenon, without which countries find it increasingly difficult to benefit from the knowledge-based global economy more and better (Teshome, 2005). Hence, the benefits of knowledge and of the experiences of others are often being adopted by people around the world and educational policies and ideas are increasingly exported to many nations (McDonald, 2012). Although this export could be carried out in a simple process, it can be troublesome if several factors – variations in the donor and recipient motives, variations in contexts and variations in capacity to utilize the learning – are not given adequate consideration. Educational policy borrowing is prevalent; but without careful attention to the key ideas of contextualization and ownership its value is less likely to be achieved (McDonald, 2012).

2.1.THE CONCEPT OF POLICY BORROWING

The history of educational policy borrowing dates back to the 20th century with Sadler's paper entitled as 'How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?'. However, it still receives significant recognition by many in relation to 'globalization' and the 'global learning society' having other synonyms as: 'policy-transfer', 'lesson-drawing', 'copying', 'appropriation', 'importation' and 'mimesis' (McDonald, 2012).

Educational borrowing has been described as "a process in which ideas and change are borrowed from another context by local authorities/agencies, regions, and nations" (McDonald, 2012). Another definition has been, "It involves the lifting of educational policy or practice from one context to another and assumes that one country initiates

interest in, or cross-national attraction to, foreign educational practices and policies” (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

Therefore, educational borrowing can be seen as a process that involves at least two different parties in two different contexts, where one gets attracted towards the other’s experience with the intent to make use of the policy or practice of the other in its own context.

2.2.RATIONALES FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY BORROWING

There are a wide range of reasons educational borrowing has been practiced. They include dissatisfaction among policy makers, public disquiet, perceptions of previous policy failure, political competition, the need to legitimize particular policy actions, intrinsic programmatic benefits, ideological proximity between governments, and uncertainty as the motivation for this activity or expressed desire to improve reform and/or innovate policies and systems.

According to Philips and Ochs, these range of potential factors can be classified as either impulses or externalizing potentials. Those factors listed under impulses (to look elsewhere) are systemic collapse, negative external evaluation, novel configurations as well as political change. Those listed under externalizing potentials are guiding philosophy, goals, strategies, enabling structures, processes and techniques (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

Moreover, there are multiple actors involved in the policy transfer practice. They include, inter alia, elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, policy entrepreneurs/experts, supranational organizations, the pressure groups and non- state expert’s transitional advocacy networks/ philanthropic institutions and epistemic communities (Jorda & Benson, 2011).

2.3.DEGREE OF POLICY BORROWING

Educational policy borrowing does not necessarily mean that the entire policy is borrowed. As described by David Benson and Andrew Jordan, quoting Dolowitz and Marsh, in theory, a number of things can be listed as elements of a policy possible to be transferred partly from one jurisdiction to another. They are policy goals, structure and content, policy instruments or administrative techniques, institutions, ideology, ideas, attitudes and concepts, and negative lessons (Benson & Jordan, 2011). This partial transfer can be made due to the difference in perception (on policy content and/or objective) among various nations (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

It is possible to measure the extent of partiality. To measure the extent of partiality, Rose developed a continuum which indicated the various levels at which the transfer takes place. It includes: a) photocopying, which more or less involves endorsing whole a program already in effect in another jurisdiction; b) adaptation, which requires the borrower to make adjustments to the policy or program to overcome contextual differences; c) hybridization, which involves combining the elements of programs from two different places; d) synthesis, which in contrast to hybridization, involves drawing lessons on elements of different programs and combining them to produce a new program; e) disciplined inspiration is providing inspiration from a lesson drawn for programs in one context by providing ideas for solving particular problems in alternative contexts; and f) selective imitation, which is the adoption of attractive, but not necessarily essential, imitation parts of other programs while leaving out awkward but essential bits (Rose, 2005).

2.4.WAYS OF DOING A POLICY BORROWING

There are different motivations for borrowing a policy. According to David and Andrew's explanation given in quoting Blumer, countries may transfer in a foreign policy based on either their own purposeful choice, on some enforcement of others or a

mix of the two (Benson & Jordan, 2011). Dowlitz and Mash also highlighted in their continuum, the differences between coercion and voluntary adoption: 1) Coercion – a situation that could result from totalitarian or authoritarian rule; 2) Mix of coercion and voluntary transfer – a situation that comes in the international regime on the basis of international agreements implemented; and 3) own choice – at the other end of the spectrum, this is a totally voluntary action and is a situation where it is possible for a country to be a “rational shopper” (Westney, 1987 as cited in Page, 2000). Likewise, Phillips and Ochs developed a general classification to all the possible ways of performing educational transfer in their continuum as shown below:

Imposed	Required under Constraint	Negotiated under Constraint	Borrowed purposefully	Introduced through influence

Figure 2 A continuum of educational transfer

1. Totalitarian/authoritarian rule
2. Defeated/occupied countries
3. Required by bilateral and multilateral agreements
4. Intentional copying of policy/practice observed elsewhere
5. General influence of educational ideas/methods (Phillips & Ochs, 2004)

According to Westney, countries that implement the mixed kind domestically do not see themselves as being coerced (as cited in Page, 2000); although, as a condition for receiving a grant or a loan, developing countries are usually forced to adopt practices identified as ‘good practice’ (Hopkins, 1997 as cited in Page, 2000). Hence, as a study based on the experience of one developing country, Ethiopia, this study considers those education policies that were either borrowed on purpose and/or introduced through influence as one – a voluntary kind.

There are a variety of ways a voluntary cross-border exchange of educational ideas and/or educational policies takes place. These include in-country training, student education in a foreign country, distance education programs, educational study tours,

policy adoption, exchange programs, establishment of educational institutions across borders and so on (McDonald, 2012).

2.5.FACTORS IN SUCCESSFUL POLICY BORROWING

As mentioned earlier there is a difference among the various transfer parties in the way they perceive and interpret policy features depending on its content and their particular interest in it (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Hence, there can be no one common standing set of specific criteria that could filter out one best policy for each party to meet its distinctive desire and could qualify a specific policy for cross-border transfer. But this does not forbid the realization of those factors that made possible the setting of a party-specific set of filtering criteria as well as a policy transfer. Factors set out by Rose are: “fungibility” of the policy, less context dependency of the policy; substitutability of service delivery organizations; availability of similar resources required to develop the policy; simplicity of the mechanisms by which the policy works (the “cause and effect structure of a policy”); small scale of change the policy produces; existence of interdependence areas between importer and exporter jurisdictions where the values of policy makers are relatively consensual are some common aspects to be considered by the different parties (Rose, 1993, as cited in , Page, 2000).

Another factor required for a successful policy transfer is timing. Since transfer is not necessarily based on a one-shot act, it may take place over a more extended time period involving more than one activity. The shorter the time period, the more likely its outcome (transferred policies) will appear as an alien import; but over a longer time period, outcomes become domesticated as the relationship between established institutions and policies shapes their development Page (2000). Hence, receiving parties need to ascertain to have all the time that the policy may require in order for it to give what it is expected to. Alternatively, the time aspect can be seen differently, as doing a transfer at times when societal, national or global demands for that specific policy are at their peak. This could contribute to its successful accomplishment (Benson, 2013) .

Therefore it is beneficial for the recipient party to identify such a time before the actual transfer occurs.

2.6.APPROACHES TO EDUCATIONAL POLICY BORROWING

Previously mentioned and other contributing factors to the successful policy transfer were organized into four consecutive stages as factors that needs to be considered before, during and after the actual transfer practice. Then a model was developed for the whole process first by Philips and Ochs in 2004, which was then later revised by McDonald and Tufe-Dology in 2012. Another different type detailed model was also developed by Rose in 2005. The two models are presented below in brief to highlight details of the borrowing process.

2.6.1. MODEL ONE

In an attempt to explain how a policy borrowing process should proceed minimizing its negative impact, (Phillips & Ochs, 2004) developed a four stage model which helps in understanding and interpreting a policy borrowing process from the initial stage till its adaptation to the locality.

This model was then revised in 2012 by Lex McDonald and Tufue-Dology, whom maintained the four stages but with different designations after realizing further aspects. The revision incorporated a potential for interaction between each of the adjacent phases that allow revision, negotiation and adaptation in the transfer at any stage of the process. In addition, the new model took into account both the local and international contextual elements.

Since no two situations under different governments can be exactly the same, a successful policy in one jurisdiction requires modification either in itself or on other factors in order to operate in a similar manner under the different context. And the extent of this modification could be as far as changing the original policy objective.

Moreover, the concept of ‘strategic transfer’ is also, which states the need for knowledge, ideas and skills associated with such policy adoptions to be transferred strategically through the transfer of training technology to the ‘grass-roots’ workers if they are required and expected to own the new policy. Scholars specifically indicate the addition of a requirement for professional development and resource management at stage three, depicting the importance of its inclusion in the plan, otherwise there is a risk that implementation of ideas will not occur. Successful transfer training implies ownership of the means to implement the ideas in the relevant context (McDonald, 2012). Figure 3 below shows the diagrammatical representation of this model.

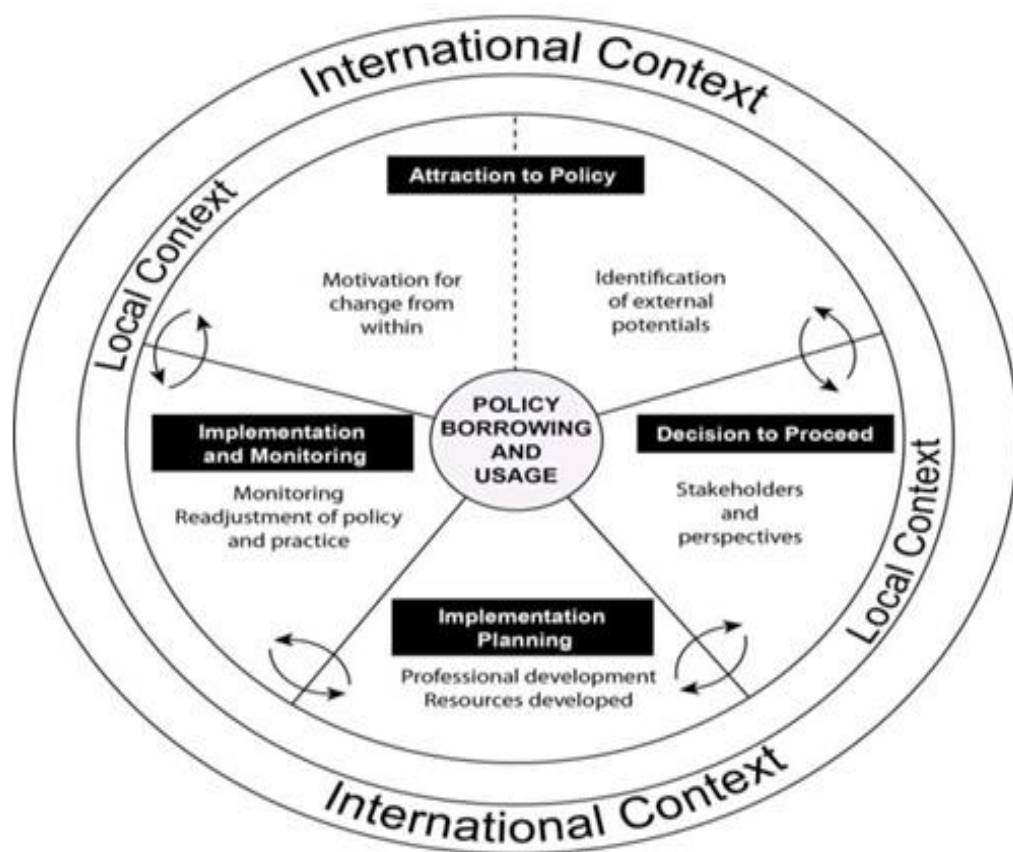


Figure 3 Educational policy borrowing systems development

In general, both the importer and exporter should assume their responsibilities in examining determinant factors of each stage to maintain their objective. The four main stages of this model are:

1. Cross-national attraction (revised as Examination of the impulses for change)
2. Decision-making (revised as Agreement to proceed with an emphasis upon implementation feasibility)
3. Implementation (revised as Preparation implementation) and
4. Internalization/indigenization (revised as Implementation and monitoring)

(Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

2.6.2. MODEL TWO

According to David, Rose attempted to model the process of policy borrowing/ lesson drawing through a ‘ten step’ procedure that practitioners can actively engage in (Rose 2005, as cited in Benson, 2013). The template describes a systematic, step-wise process involving specific stages needed ‘to determine to what extent policies in operation abroad could and should be applied at home’ (Benson, 2013). These steps are: 1) Learn the key concepts: what a policy is, and what a lesson is and is not; 2) Catch the attention of policymakers; 3) Scan alternatives and decide where to look for lessons 4) Learn by going abroad; 5) Extract from what is observed, a generalized model of how a foreign policy works in a different context; 6) Turn the model into a lesson that fits with a new national context; 7) Decide whether the lesson should be adopted; 8) Decide whether the lesson can be applied; 9) Simplify the means and ends of a lesson to increase its chances of success; and 10) Evaluate a lesson’s outcome prospectively and, if it is adopted, as it evolves over time.’

These 10 steps were further grouped into four broad components or developmental stages that the actual physical process of policy transfer involves. Under the first stage, where the linear process starts, are: policy conceptualization and generation or promotion of a policy need for lesson-drawing amongst policymakers. Under the second

stage, the steps where the proponents must actively seek out policy prescriptions abroad that potentially fit the problem are listed. Stage 3 involves the building of a ‘generalized model’ and modification to this model for it to fit with/in specific national contexts. Finally, the fourth stage is concerned with adopting the lesson in a form that ensures its success (Benson, 2013).

2.7.COUNTRIES EXPERIENCE OF THE FOUR STAGE POLICY BORROWING MODEL

With intent to demonstrate the importance of considered factors in model one in applicability and suitability for the purpose similar to that of this particular work, educational borrowing experiences of two countries presented in this section.

JAPAN

The first experience stated here is that of Japan’s as reviewed in light of the four stages of the model and as narrated by Masako Shibata. According to him, there were two major educational reforms in Japan's modern education history: the establishment of the national education system known as ‘Meiji restoration’ and the comprehensive transformation of education ideas and the education system under the Allied occupation.

Attraction

The two reforms were traced to be engineered by a guiding philosophy, ‘educational development is national progresses’, and by a clear goal set out by major actors in educational policy-making. These reforms were found to have their roots in foreign education patterns Japan became attracted to because of:

- 1) The notion of progress, which was the need to make Japan modern for the Meiji reform and the need to make Japan democratic for the occupation reform; and
- 2) The strong nationalist impetus, with the ultimate aim of restoration as triggered by a strong sense of national dishonor (i.e. caused by the arrival of the US battle

ships in Japanese waters in the 1603-1867), the self-imposition of social and political modernization and the inspiration by sense of individualism and social equality. On top of these, the massive gap in technological advancement compared to that of the American's and other western countries also played a great inspirational role.

Decision making

To close knowledge gaps it identified when comparing itself to the invading nations, Japan started a complex process of externalization and internalization of education ideas and systems, deliberately pursuing a specific notion of progress. In doing this, the country barely followed any specific education model, but made a fairly random absorption of various foreign patterns after investigating/observing American and western political, economic, social and educational systems and the way these systems functioned in industrialized societies.

Their investigation into foreign education systems made them realize that nothing was more important than schools for improving social conditions and uprooting social evils. They discovered that a sound national foundation depended on education, and that their people were no different than those of their intruder's except for their lack of education. They also learnt that things outside the school mattered and governed things inside. Hence, Japan determined to adopt foreign educational patterns, all the while maintaining clear governmental goals. These goals were: a stable government, a powerful military, high industrialized development, and at the foundation of everything, a well-educated people. These goals went hand-in-hand with the country's ultimate goal of national defense in all military, political and cultural aspects.

Planning and implementation

In light of these specific objectives, the country then identified the transferable paradigms of the various foreign systems. Of these, the widespread school attendance, the generous public funding of the school administration, the absence of a uniform

national education system, the autonomous power of each federal state and the independent minds of the people, are some of the paradigms learnt and taken from the Americans. The host of materials and the various construction machineries that equipped Western educational institutions, the centralized administration and those specialized institutions, like nursing schools, military school, and schools attached to factories, are some of the things they learnt and borrowed from the other Western nations.

Implementation and adaption

In taking these lessons, the Japanese established their first national education system, with a highly centralized administrative structure making education compulsory for all and charging a small fee in most of the districts. Not long after, a new law that limited the state's intervention in school administration was announced, and power was transferred to the school boards.

In addition, the elite were deliberately equipped with Western and US learning to attain not only the knowledge of their Western counterparts, but also to enjoy their sense of equality and independence. A good command of Western languages also became a prerequisite for the elite and English was set as the medium of instruction for science and philosophy.

Moreover, their system of HE was established by the random adoption of various systems and practices of the foreigners, though the basic frame was taken from Germany. The government invited a large number of foreign experts (teachers and university administrators), deliberately paying extremely high salaries (as compared to those of Japanese professors and even some of the ministers), for the sake of westernizing Japan. The state further made investments in offering scholarships for both Japanese students and professors to study abroad.

Japan's admiration for the west remained strong until Japan gained a political and academic sense of 'national pride'. Upon the eventual return of Japanese students from

abroad, they were required to serve the government for twice the length of the period they had been out of the country. Hence, many of the returnees became instructors, and this enabled the country to acquire a sufficient number of professors who had attained Western knowledge and could teach in Japanese. Therefore, many of the expatriates were dismissed and the medium of instruction became Japanese (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

SOUTH AFRICA

The second experience summarized and presented here, as written by Jonathan D. Jansen, is South Africa's educational borrowing experience pertaining to the outcome based education (OBE) policy.

According to Jonathan, the third world countries on the margins of the global economy faced a stark choice in the current global arena. This was continued marginalization under the terms of a rampant global economy or conscious incorporation within this global order so as to maximize economic gains. Consequently, as part of the third, every education and economic policy of the post apartheid South African government indicated firmly that it had chosen the second option. This was seen in the country's huge investments, technology-driven change and public policy positions that sought and encouraged western investment.

From the outset, the post apartheid South African state indicated that it would make a place for itself in the arena of global policies and economics, using any global education models it considered successful as a framework of reference. The adoption of outcome-based education as the underpinning theory of the new curriculum (2005) presents one case study of policy borrowing under these global terms that set the operating framework for the South African political economy.

OBE is an educational reform model that focuses a school's entire programs and instructional efforts around clearly defined products all students are expected to demonstrate when leaving school. It is a student-centered learning method that focuses

on empirically measuring student performance. On the other hand, education under the former apartheid regime was characterized by the use of the curriculum as a means to promote social inequality, racial segregation and differentiation on the basis of perception of ability. The curriculum stressed rote learning by passive learners driven by examinations.

Attraction and decision making

The attraction to the foreign OBE system was caused by the dramatic political change from apartheid to a new democracy in the early 1990s. The focus of this attraction was the symbolic major need of the government to align national policy orientation with global policy trends, and there were also powerful moral arguments for something other than the obnoxious system of apartheid education that drove the decision-making process. Something had to be done urgently not only to symbolize the shift from the past but also to show alignment with the future, i.e., a future based on competitiveness within the global economy.

In this context, a large number of donor agencies lined up at the country's door and its department of education offering assistance and sold both credibility and confidence for the decision to choose OBE (of the Australian version) as the model of choice for transforming apartheid education. The African National Congress (ANC), which had considerable political weight, was the main promoter of the OBE policy and it relied heavily on key consultants and international experts. As a result, other policy options were no longer in the running and the emphasis was on getting the OBE in motion and working out the details later. Therefore, the decision to follow OBE was reached as a quick-fix not simply to ensure international position, but rather to swiftly deal with the apartheid past.

Initially, the priority of the needed policy was to demonstrate that it reflected modern and democratic values and was globally competitive. OBE was acceptable then in a generic sense because it purported to do both. Promoting new policy initiatives by

touting them as ‘proven elsewhere’ was one way to ensure their acceptance. And this was the case with the OBE policy. But lessons learned elsewhere might end up needing reforms in a controversial and contested education and training initiative. It is also worth noting that this style of international reporting was not done solely to present the specific context of the new South Africa. Hence, though the OBE objective at the national level tended to be driven by economic concerns, in reality, it was only about equity, access and redress when it came down to the classroom level.

Planning and implementation

Since the nation’s OBE policy formation was being driven largely by political symbolism rather than real change, none of the activities turned out were enough to ensure deep sustainable changes in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the entire system was woefully underprepared for the complexities involved in this new approach to education. For instance, there was an inadequate situational and inadequate material basis for implementation; teachers’ former qualifications did not match the standards and requirements of the new system; there was weak in-service training provided; and there was no or little in-classroom and in-school support to OBE implementation.

Consequently, implementation of OBE in South Africa failed and left an indelible mark on the national education system. Though a policy fails to be implemented, its education system is not left unaffected, rather such policies leave their imprint on education systems, often adding another layer of sedimentation to deeply grounded practices and beliefs, making the success of future reforms even more difficult.

Had it been then backed by proper objectives and adequate resources that considered the actual national context, OBE would have had several positive impacts. Not only would it have stimulated the country’s economic growth rate but it would also have conserved the country’s resources and might have helped to bring the country to a higher level than it is at now.

Adaption

During the latter stage when the country's government structures started to settle and policies began to be drawn up through consultation to reflect the internal or local demands, it became difficult to distinguish purely imported OBE ideas from true appropriation of the concepts. This raised the issue of relevance and applicability of international aspects of reforms. Those who were charged with implementing OBE began to identify its deficiencies and once again used borrowing to replace its dominant labor-driven direction with more formal education approaches, structures and frameworks by considering the experiences of various countries. The country's policy making clearly shifted to understanding and defining a 'South African OBE'. The result was an amalgam of international ideas and a truly hybrid version of a home-grown South African OBE. (Phillips & Ochs, 2004)

In general, both countries' experience proves the importance of properly considering each factor mentioned in the four stage model for a successful borrowing policy to take place. Most importantly, they strongly depict the emphasis needed to be given to domestic objectives and situations. In addition, they indicate how borrowed ideas in any locality need to keep changing and progressing over time along with the needs and reforms in the locality, as the situation they are in provides them with different interpretations and meanings to the extent that their foreign origin vanishes.

2.8.EFFECTS OF BORROWING ON THE RECIPIENT COUNTRIES

As previously mentioned, many scholars have pointed out the dangers of policy transfer and by extension, educational borrowing, as it is one kind of a policy transfer practice. Borrowing, at any stage, may impact the development of educational policy in the interested country (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Messay's expression, in this regard, is quoted as, "Since the dominant culture (exporters') wants to mold the recipient culture in its own image, the former cannot do so without dissolving the latter's identity, pride

and autonomy” (Messay, 2008). This clearly indicates that borrowing does not simply pour new ideas into the recipient culture, but can undermine existing beliefs and values; can lead to disorientation, a conflict of values, a negative view of one’s legacy, and can impose a sense of inferiority.

Many such observed facts are expressed by various researchers and writers as the damages caused by educational policy borrowing practices mainly to developing countries including all African nations (Messay, 2008; Mazonde, 2001; Page, 2000). This implies the need to make a continuous assessment of the way the borrowing is done. Such an assessment will help either to ascertain the suitability of the adopted policies to the actual demand and turn it into a real success or will help to build up the borrower’s own capacity to innovate policies based on the lessons taken out of those that are practiced elsewhere, as policy ideas are not novel as David said (Benson, 2013).

2.9. EDUCATIONAL POLICY BORROWING IN AFRICA

Without a doubt, policy transfer in Africa was a coercive kind during the colonial period, involving the colonial European countries and those African countries in their colony. Policies were simply imposed as a means to disseminate the colonizer’s agenda and reflected only westernization. But even then, the transfer was not a straight copy but rather an interpretation of the Western approach, although in a way that lacked integration with the prevailing social, economic, and political institutions.

In any case, even the guiding policies to modern education of that time denied the rights of the African pupils on their own land by giving limited access to a few, chosen with great care and only from the chief’s families, civil servants in the colonial administration and employees of European trading companies as well as business houses (Mazonde, 2001).

In addition, educational contents were pronounced with European bias yet reflected in the medium of instruction as well as the curricula which had no realization to the actual

societal demand and context as well as preserving local history, heritage and culture as has to be the case in the objective of modern education (Mazonde, 2001).

Though the impacts of those policies are/were still felt much more, educational development in Africa in the late colonial and post-colonial period has been characterized by massive expansion at all levels, provision for technical and professional instruction and some Africanization of the curricula. (Mazonde, 2001)

Simultaneously, the policy transfer changes its form to semi-coercive and voluntary kind. The former comes through donors and supra national organizations in a way that their agenda is still hidden in the package in the form of agreed international conditions. As Kwama said, with the one-size-fits-all approach of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, African governments are persuaded and sometimes coerced into copying Western patterns of liberalization and state restructuring, with loans, aid and favorable trading agreements being contingent upon such reforms (Kwama 2008) as cited in (Massey, 2009).

Surviving this and other similar dominating features of the new colony, globalization and its trends, Africans are left with a lot to do in the area to decolonize all aspects of education from the former imprints, and give a chance to Africanization to come to the global standard where it can prove its better suitability to the continents development.

The reality in Ethiopian is no different from the experiences of other African countries under the enforcement of the globalization era, though the country has faced no official Western colonization.

2.10. EDUCATIONAL POLICY BORROWING FOR ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Tertiary education is fundamental to economic and political development, and crucial to competitiveness in an increasingly globalized knowledge society (Materu, 2007). Recent research findings also indicate that expanding tertiary education in general, may

promote faster technological catch-up and improve a country's ability to maximize its economic output (Bloom, Canning, and Chan 2006). Ethiopia is one place where HE plays a critical capacity-building and professional training role in support of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Materu, 2007). The Ethiopian government's effort in the expansion of education in general and higher education in particular, can be said to be a reflection of an increasing recognition of the role higher education plays in the economic and social transformation of the country. According to Mulu and Teshome, the government's effort in expanding HE is a direct result and response (in building the capacity and in training professionals) to anticipated demand of the growing economy and the push from the expanding lower levels (TVET, Secondary and Primary education) that require large numbers of teachers, leaders and educational experts (Mulu, 2012; Teshome, 2007).

Along with the quick expansion to their accessibility and the requirement on them to follow global trends, Ethiopian HEIs are facing a rapidly changing policy environment. This can be characterized by the various successive national level changes in the policy directions for higher education. The shift from 60:40 to 70:30 in the graduate professional mix ratio of the engineering and the natural sciences and in the humanities and social sciences was one such reform. Others include the HEIs engagement in the implementation of BPR, to make their training programs efficient and effective; cost sharing; institutional autonomy; the HEIs' requirement to become research-based institutes; and the establishment of a legal and regulatory basis for formal quality assurance and strategic centers (Ethiopia, 1994; FDRE, 2003; FDRE, 2009).

In all these, the pressures from international donor agencies such as the World Bank, consultants and many forums outside the Ministry of Education, as well as other stakeholders, are not factors to be neglected. These, as Amare (2005) and Molla (2013) said, have contributed to the increased government interest in expanding and in increased government interest in policy or reform ideas.

Consequently, many of the guiding policies that characterize the Ethiopian higher education institutions are borrowed international ideas initiated through supra international organizations (Molla, 2013). And they are in the country’s HE policy document, witnessing the existence of the practice of educational policy-borrowing in the country’s present time policy-making proceedings.

Table 1 Borrowed global ideas in the Ethiopian HE policy document

Borrowed Global idea	Referred Policy Document		
	ETP 1994	HE Proclamation 351/2003	HE Proclamation 650/2009
HEIs decentralized management	√	√	
HEIs autonomy to internal Administration	√	√	√
HEIs autonomy to design and implementation of education programs	√		√
HEIs become research-oriented	√		
HEIs become self- income generating enterprise	√	√	√
Medium of instruction	√	√	√
Cost sharing	√	√	√
Privatization	√	√	
Active learning		√	√
External QA system (HERQA)		√	
Internal QA system			√
HESC		√	

(Ethiopia, 1994; FDRE, 2003; FDRE, 2009)

The table above summarizes the global ideas found in major legal frameworks that guide the operation of the Ethiopian higher education system. These policy ideas are discussed by various scholars as common current HE global trends (Molla, 2013; Maassen & Cloete, 2006).

This shows that to some extent Ethiopia is experiencing a kind of semi-coercive borrowing actions in the HE level. Of these policy ideas, a recent research work showed that “the present quality assurance practices are not adequate and effective in terms of improving the core educational processes that influence student learning. This suggests questions concerning the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of

adequate and effective quality assurance system in the HEIs” Mulu (2012). And it is expressed that no as such remarkable result is recorded in the whole education system concerning quality.

In general, these implications to the unrealized Ethiopian HE objectives pertaining to quality and/or the undesired product of the country’s education system are a sum total and end result of all policy outcomes. This puts a share breakdown on each of the policies’ – their development as well as their implementation process.

Hence, in order to improve policies’ success rate and reduce their undesired effects, careful practices in all the way they are made and practiced are mandatory. So is a review of their real challenges, particularly that of the borrowed HE policies in this study since borrowing is realized as country’s main HE policy making process. Taking this into consideration and for quality being a timely matter, among the previously listed borrowed HE policies, in this research work, the establishing policy of the HE Relevance and Quality Assurance agency was used as a means of demonstrating the nation’s real experience in the policy-borrowing practice for Ethiopian HEIs.

2.11. QUALITY ASSURANCE

According to Materu’s (2007) definition, quality assurance (QA) is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. Vukasovic (2002) on the other hand calls it a means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced.

Even though HEIs need to keep providing quality education in order to achieve their objectives, the recent effort to expand access to higher education has a tendency to compromise educational quality. And the quality assurance practices are receiving

greater attention in ensuring educational quality and relevance in recognition of this challenge (Materu, 2007).

Consequently, various countries across the world have currently adopted formal quality assurance systems with the purpose of regulating and improving quality of their higher education systems (Mulu, 2012). Improvement and accountability are the two major purposes of the QA system. The former is formative in nature, focusing on continual improvement rather than control and the latter is summative and judgmental and focuses on accounting of an institution's performance to stakeholders and public information.

2.11.1. FORMS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

In general, although QA systems involve three different types of practices – accreditation, assessment and audit – based on its purpose it only has two different approaches. These two approaches are in the form of improvement-led internal procedure (self-assessment processes) and in the form of accountability-oriented external procedure (external review) Mulu (2012). In most cases, the self-assessment processes existed even before the establishment of a national QA agency.

The improvement-led internal or the self-assessment approach empowers institutions and their staff to take charge of the quality of their performance without the pressure usually associated with an external review. It also helps institutions to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, while generating awareness of key performance indicators. Moreover, self-assessment is also less costly than external-assessment and can be conveniently planned within an institution's annual calendar. It also has positive effects on the culture of quality within an institution or unit. Because it is conducted within a collegial atmosphere without any pressure from an external body, the self-assessment fosters social cohesion and teamwork among staff and also enhances staff accountability of the results of the process. Thus, irrespective of whether a country has a

full-scale national QA agency or not, regular self-assessments at the institutional and unit levels are the backbone of a viable quality assurance system.

On the other hand, it is argued that External-assessment (accountability-oriented quality assurance) encourages a compliance culture rather than improvement. Whereas the argument for improvement-led quality assurance is embedded in the assumption that quality of student learning depends largely on quality of the internal processes of the institution; it is best guaranteed when the responsibility for quality assurance is located as closely as possible to the processes of teaching and learning (Wilger, 1999 as cited in Mulu, 2012). In this context, the effectiveness of accountability-oriented quality assurance system is viewed in terms of its facilitative role and in its reinforcing effect on the internal quality processes.

2.11.2. SUITABLE CONDITIONS FOR QA SYSTEMS TO BE SUCCESSFUL

According to Mulu (2012), there are several key features of the good practices necessary for the functioning of an effective quality assurance system in higher education institutions. They are: the development of a culture of continuous improvement of learning in HEIs, ensuring the consistency in curricula, teaching, learning, and assessment processes, involvement and commitment of academic staff, involvement and commitment of the institution's leadership at all levels, valuing the role of students in quality improvement, deployment of adequate Resources (human, physical, financial and support services), clear delineation of the role and responsibility of all actors and the necessary policies and structures and proper imposition of accountability and transparency. But above all these, a formal quality assurance system leads to quality improvement when the higher education institutions own it and when the external quality assurance domains play a supportive and facilitative role.

2.12. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to Materu (2007), formal QA process in Africa is a recent but is a rapidly evolving phenomenon. As to him there were about 25 countries practicing some form of quality assurance process and only 30 percent (a total of 16) have established and operationalized quality assurance agencies. Ethiopia is one country mentioned in this list.

As to him, several factors can be mentioned as contributing to the decline in Africa HE quality and as main driving towards strengthening QA in Africa. These include a decline in per unit costs amid rapidly rising enrollments; insufficient numbers of qualified academic staff in higher education institutions as the result of brain drain, retirements and HIV/AIDS; low internal and external efficiency; poor governance; the rapid emergence of private providers in response to the increasing social demand for higher education; pressure from a rapidly transforming labor market; demands for increased transparency and accountability; need for reforms in tertiary education to address new challenges; new methods of delivery challenge traditional approaches to the development; increasing competition and shorter knowledge cycles require continuous improvement; increasing regional collaboration requires harmonization of qualifications and awards and quality higher education in Africa could improve retention of skilled human capital (Materu, 2007).

At present, the self-evaluation is increasingly being done as preparation for accreditation in Africa. However, expertise in conducting self-evaluation or academic audit is limited and strengthening professional capacity in these areas is highly recommended. In addition, as a result of many other unfulfilled suitable conditions QA success in Africa is limited by many other types of constraints as briefly discussed in the following section.

2.12.1. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES IN AFRICA

In general, when conducted properly, QA is a rigorous process which produces useful data that can be used for strategic planning and other purposes Materu (2007). However, the process encounters several kinds of problems of which majors include: QA system demand for a high level of human and financial capacity; the little knowledge gained so far regarding the impact of quality assurance on the quality of graduates, employer attitudes towards graduates, and research outputs of tertiary institutions; standards being applied by national QA agencies are mainly input-based; and the dependency on government funding of both the QA agencies and the public institutions.

The most pressing constraint in national QA agencies, human capacity manifests itself in three ways: 1) insufficient numbers of adequately trained and credible professional staff at the agencies to manage QA processes with integrity and consistency across institutions/program and over the required time frame; 2) inadequate numbers of academic staff in HEIs with knowledge and experience in conducting self-evaluations and peer review, especially in countries that conduct system-wide reviews; and 3) strain on senior academic staff in HEIs as they have to support both their own internal quality systems as well as the external quality assurance processes of their national agencies. This problem exists across board, even in economically more advanced countries.

On the other hand QA costs money and time of governments as well as highly-skilled individuals in various ways including: the cost per program accredited, the costs for running a national agency and the costs to institutions for implementing improvements on programs that are found to be of inadequate quality. Without adequate funding, the quality of QA processes, and hence the credibility and integrity of their outcomes, are threatened.

And the little knowledge gained so far re the impact of quality assurance gives no confirmation to whether implementation of a rigorous QA system actually improves the quality of graduates that join the labor market and the research output of institutions.

In addition, the highly input-based standards being applied by national QA agencies indicate the little attention being paid to process, outputs and outcomes of the HEIs (output standards such as through-put ratio (percent of a cohort that graduates within a specified time) or volume and quality of research).

Furthermore, even though in some cases the establishing laws describe QA agencies as independent bodies, in reality all existing QA agencies are highly dependent on the government. They rely almost entirely on public funding and their governing bodies and top management are appointed by government. This fact raises questions as to the legitimacy of requests by these agencies for HEIs to comply with quality improvement requirements, unless this is accompanied by adequate government funding to address the problems identified.

2.12.2. REMEDIAL ACTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES OBSERVED IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

To address the above challenges, the following options were suggested for consideration by policymakers, QA practitioners and development partners.

Countries need to make frank assessments of their capacity and to structure their QA system matching their available resources. In addition, as a key resource base for QA systems, public HEIs can give solutions to the lack of human capacity since countries with national QA agencies rely heavily on higher education institutions for their professional staff, peer review panels and governance. One other useful experience in this regard helping countries in easing the human capacity constraint is to require newer tertiary institutions, that have sprung up to meet the strong demand for tertiary

education, to establish QA units and affiliate them to an existing established HEIs for an initial period, and for purposes of mentoring.

Moreover, the self-assessment can also be considered an optional solution both to the human capacity and financial constraints since it enable institutions to build capacity from within and since it is less costly. The capacity-building function of self-assessment is valuable in any context, but it is particularly important in countries like Ethiopia where capacity remains very weak.

The internal institutional assessment is the most effective way to introduce a culture of quality into an institution even in the absence of external accreditation or examinations though its necessary pre-requisite is training of staff in self-evaluation and peer-reviewing. Various experiences show that establishment of a dedicated quality assurance unit within an institution helps to ensure monitoring and evaluation of QA processes, maintains institutional memory and ensures implementation of recommended quality improvement measures (Materu, 2007).

Adopting a stepwise development strategy is also what Materu (2007) suggests as most prudent approach stating the general practice that has worked well elsewhere should start taking place elsewhere gradually, taking time to pilot processes before full scale roll-out directing the capacity building efforts of HEIs to building a culture of quality within the institutions since without such a strong culture of quality in institutions of higher learning, there is little chance of success at the national level.

For countries with large tertiary education systems and adequate capacity, institutional accreditation (rather than a system-wide program accreditation) is a more cost-effective way to get started with a national QA system. It costs less, and the stress on HEIs and national QA agencies is less severe. Where cost is a main constraint, program accreditation should best be limited to professional programs and conducted in collaboration with professional associations (Materu, 2007).

Partnership with foreign institutions and QA agencies with sound QA experience can help to supplement local capacity in the short-term and also bring in relevant experience from other regions. However, this must be weighed against the costs involved and selection must be done carefully to justify the high costs.

Regional collaboration in quality assurance is also a relevant practice in its desirable forms including peer reviewing for accreditation purposes, regional accreditation agency instead of national ones (especially for small countries), common standards and guidelines for cross-border education, mechanisms for credit transfer and recognition of qualifications, and sharing of experiences. But for regional collaboration to work well, increased commitment by governments and continued assistance from international development partners are critically necessary.

Governments and national agencies are advised to consider reviewing tertiary education funding policies such that allocation of public resources to tertiary institutions is linked to quality factors as a strategy for encouraging institutions to undertake quality improvements. Without such a linkage, effective response to quality assessment recommendations by public HEIs will be limited, and eventually, QA systems might lose credibility.

And finally, further work on the link between QA and labor market needs is recommended which should ultimately be undertaken at the country level since size, mix and level of development differs widely from country to country.

2.13. ETHIOPIA'S QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The history of assuring academic quality and standards in the Ethiopian higher education system goes back to the establishment of the first higher education institution in the country, Haile Selassie I University (HSIU) in 1950. The consolidated legislation of the faculty council (senate) was the main legal framework for carrying out academic

matters and maintaining academic standards in the university (HSIU, 1973, as cited in, Mulu, 2012). The board of governors, faculty council, academic commissions and different committees (board of admissions, academic standards, faculty affairs and promotions, library, student affairs and curriculum committees) were the main actors in assuring academic standards. The academic calendar, staff appointment and development requirements, external examiner system, student admission, progression, examination, grading systems etc. were the main policy instruments for assuring quality (HSIU, 1973, as cited in Mulu, 2012). This shows that, though not so formal as we recognize it today; the university had internal QA system during the emperor period – 1950 to 1974.

Later, during the rule of the military regime in the 1974-1991 the internal mechanisms for maintaining academic standards enshrined in the university charter of the emperor's time were weakened or quitted, and quality and standards of education deteriorated throughout this period (MoE, 1997, as cited in Mulu, 2012). There is no documented evidence that shows the presence of legal and regulatory framework for the development and implementation of formal quality assurance mechanisms at both institutional and national levels during this period (Mulu, 2012).

Then following the change in government in 1991, endorsement of the Education and Training Policy in 1994 and the decline in the quality of HE in Ethiopia particularly following the aggressive expansion of HE (Amare, 2005) prompted the government to put in place various forms of quality assurance mechanisms in an attempt to reverse the situation and to regulate the new providers (Materu, 2007; Abebaw and Aster, 2012).

Since then, the HE system has changed in many ways including the establishment of the external QA agency at first in 2003 (FDRE, 2003) followed by the announcement for the need to internal QA system in every HEI. More specifically, the proclamation states that 1) every institution shall have a reliable internal system for quality enhancement that shall be continuously improved, 2) institutions shall develop quality standards, undertake academic audit on a periodic basis, follow - up and rectify the deficiencies

revealed by the audit, and maintain appropriate documentation of the audit, activities undertaken and of ensuing results, and submit such documentations regularly to HERQA. The formal quality assurance system in the university sector consists of internal and external quality assurance elements. Each institution undertakes self - evaluation and prepares a report in accord with guidelines issued by HERQA, and then HERQA undertakes institutional quality audit based on the self - evaluation document and publishes audit report (HERQA, 2006).

HERQA, which has recently changed its name to Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA), is entitled by the proclamation to undertake institutional quality audit and thereby assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the universities' internal quality assurance systems (HERQA, 2006).

In the existing quality assurance framework, the internal quality assurance system in the public universities is considered a foundation for continuous quality improvement of study programs, as stated in the revised higher education proclamation FDRE (2009). Central to the internal quality assurance system is quality enhancement, i.e., making deliberate and continuous effort to improve quality of the education processes that are supposed to influence quality of student learning in the public universities. These can be enumerated as: study programs, teaching, learning and assessment as well as student support and service opportunities. In this regard, the articulation and proper implementation of the proclamation, and setting mechanisms to ensure the establishment and implementation of quality enhancement processes in universities are responsibilities of HERQA. It is within this legal framework that the public universities are required by proclamation to establish and undertake a system of internal processes to enhance quality of their education.

Formal institutional self - evaluation is a recent experience in the public universities of Ethiopia. As stipulated in the higher education proclamation (650/2009), the public universities are required to undertake institutional self-evaluation as per the guidelines

set by HERQA. The self - evaluation and institutional quality audit is focused on the entire institution and not on specific programs or subject levels. In relation to the national quality assurance required by the proclamation, the public universities are expected to retain self - evaluation as an approach for their formal internal quality assurance system. The institutional self - evaluation conducted by universities and the quality audits are initiated by HERQA and the universities are accountable to this agency. In this regard, the national quality assurance model in Ethiopia may be categorized as focused on accountability and compliance purpose rather than improvement.

Unfortunately, these quality assurance practices are generalized as not adequate and effective in terms of improving the core educational processes that influence student learning. And this suggests questions concerning the factors that influence the adoption and implementation of adequate and effective quality assurance system in the HEIs. Hence, this and related questions are addressed in chapter 4.

SUMMARY

Educational borrowing describes a process which could be driven by a range of factors to make a partial or complete transfer of an educational policy or practice from one context to another. The process involves multiple actors and could be a/the result of coercive or voluntary action.

Since the interests of the different parties vary on the content and objective of a particular policy idea, there can be no one common standing set of specific criteria that could filter out one 'best' policy to satisfy every party's desire. But common aspects to be considered by each party include "fungibility" of the policy, its less context dependability; substitutability of service delivery organizations; availability of similar resources required to develop the policy; simplicity of the mechanisms by which the policy works (the "cause and effect structure of a policy"); small scale of change the

policy produces; and existence of interdependence areas between importer and exporter jurisdictions where the values of policy makers are relatively consensual.

Ethiopia, like many other African countries, was practicing/practiced a coercive kind of policy borrowing for a long time, though currently, this has changed to the semi-coercive and voluntary kinds. Borrowing is observed as a major policy making process, especially in the country's HE. This is clearly demonstrated by the magnitude of the borrowed global ideas in the HE policy documents which involves decentralization in HEIs management, HEIs autonomy, HEIs being research-based, HEIs being self-income-generating enterprises, English as a medium of instruction, cost-sharing, privatization, active learning, and external and internal quality assurance systems.

Among these borrowed global ideas, the policy that founded the national HE Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) is used in this particular study to demonstrate the actual borrowing practice exercised in the country.

A QA system is a means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. It is practiced by many countries all over the globe including 16 African countries, of which Ethiopia is one (Refer full list of these countries in the appendix section). The purpose is to regulate and improve the quality of the HE system.

Improvement and accountability are its two purposes, based on which the two approaches, namely, self-assessment and external-assessment, are formed. In general, it is when HEIs own QA internally and the external QA system plays a supportive and facilitative role that a formal QA system can lead to quality improvement.

Hence, Ethiopia developed its national QA system which considered the internal QA system in the HEIs as a foundation for the continuous quality enhancement central to it. Based on the conception, HE proclamation (no. 650/2009) laid down a system of QA that comprises three stages: a) self-evaluation and report to be undertaken by the institutions, b) institutional quality audit to be conducted by an external agency based

on the self-evaluation report, and c) publication of the report. For which the agency (HERQA) set working procedures and standards that comprised the eight good practices in QA. These eight good practices are: 1) a focus on quality improvement; 2) focus on core educational processes that involve ensuring the consistency in curricula, teaching learning, and assessment processes, 3) involvement and commitment of academic staff in the development and implementation of quality assurance, 4) involvement and commitment of the institution's leadership at all levels, including the board, to the development and implementation of quality assurance, 5) value active participation and commitment of students in their learning and in the quality assurance processes, 6) adequate resources provision and effective utilization, 7) policies and structures clearly delineate the role and responsibility of all actors, and 8) accountability and transparency. Unfortunately, according to Mulu (2012), the Ethiopian quality assurance practices are generalized as inadequate and ineffective in terms of improving the core educational processes that influence student learning.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter considers the methodology of the study. At first it presents the research design and then discusses the sampling, data collection instruments, ethical issues, the issues of validity and reliability and finally discusses techniques of data analysis.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

“Research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2009). “The purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research.” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

According to Creswell, there are three research designs considered to be the most advanced namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed research designs. The mixed methods approach was used in this work which according to Creswell “is a procedure that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem. Its use of both approaches in tandem gives an overall strength to a study greater than either a solely qualitative or quantitative research” (Creswell, Plano & Clark, 2011 as cited in Mulu, 2012).

Two issues were taken into consideration when choosing the mixed methods design for this study. First, studying policy borrowing as a process is a complex and multi-faceted procedure that involves the perspectives of different actors and the collection and analysis of data from different sources. Second, employing a single approach to study the whole educational policy borrowing process and practices at the institutional level

may limit the comprehensiveness of the data and accuracy of the findings. And one advantage of the mixed method is that it gives greater strength to a study because it involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2009). Another advantage is that it is useful in developing a better understanding of complex phenomena by triangulating, corroborating or complementing one set of results with another (Mertens, 2005, Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2002; Green, Benjamin, and Goodyear, 2001 as cited in Mulu, 2012). Hence, the mixed methods design was selected for this study to generate greater understanding about the issues under study.

Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were needed in providing useful information. Through the use of the qualitative approach, an essential narration of how the policy borrowing process is conducted from the start, to the attraction to the borrowed and employed HE policy ideas, all the way up to the stage where they got practiced while being adapted to the locality, was acquired. The quantitative approach was helpful in generating data from a wide number of sources regarding respondents' real experiences and views on the implementation of one of the borrowed policies across the target HEIs, namely, Quality-Assurance.

According to Creswell, in designing a study, a researcher not only selects a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods study, but is also required to decide on a type of strategy to be employed within the chosen design. And the mixed method includes three different strategies called sequential, concurrent and transformative. These strategies provide specific direction for procedures in a research design.

Consequently, in this study the purpose of describing the actual borrowing process and the need for gathering data from various sources leads to the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the design becoming a mixed kind. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered at the same time and both are given equal weight. This was done to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem as mentioned earlier. The qualitative and quantitative data were merged and integrated in the interpretation of the overall results according to the framework based on the four stage model of educational

policy borrowing, explicitly mentioned in the previous chapters. This indicates that the researcher applied a concurrent mixed methods procedure.

Concurrent mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator collects both types of data at the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

For this study, mixed methods approaches serve the purpose of triangulation and complementarities in two ways. Firstly, using its pluralistic approach, it helps in getting a relatively comprehensive picture of the issues under study by allowing data to be gathered from the different sources employing various data collection instruments and showing the convergence of their results. Secondly, applying its permission to complement the weaknesses of one method using the strengths of the other, it helps to improve the breadth and depth of the data by combining the results of the different data gathering instruments.

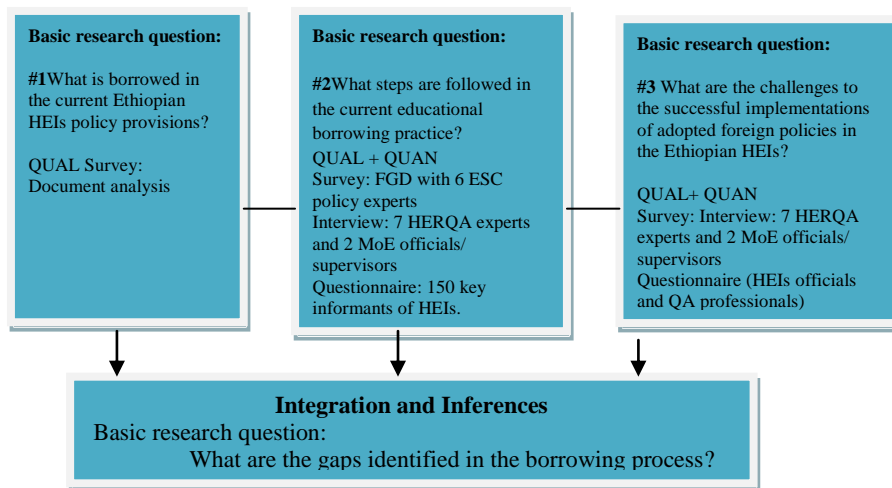


Figure 4 Visual Representation of the Study

As shown above in figure 6, all required data for this study was gathered using both the qualitative or quantitative approaches. Mixing of the two was applied during the empirical investigation of: 1) the steps followed in the process of adopting the quality

assurance practices in light of the four stage policy borrowing model, and 2) the factors that challenge the implementation of the quality assurance practices in the HEIs.

3.2.SAMPLING

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn (Best & Kahn, 2003)

The first step in sampling is to define the population to which results will be generalized. A population is the larger group from which sample respondents are selected. Since the entire group of interest to the researcher is rarely available, a distinction is made between the population to which it would be ideal to generalize study results (the target population) and the population from which subjects can be realistically selected (the accessible/available population).

In light of the above stated definitions, this research considered 22 HEIs (5 private and 17 public) as the accessible population while all more than 120 HEIs in the country as target population. All these 22 HEIs (i.e. 17 public and 5 private universities and university colleges) are audited by HERQA at least once for their fitness to the nation's quality standards. The geographical location of these public universities and their respective distribution was also used as a basis for selecting representative samples from the public HEIs. The 17 HEIs were at first stratified geographically into five as:

<i>North</i>	Bahirdar University, Debremarkos University, Gondar University, Mekelle University and Wollo University
<i>South</i>	Arbaminch University, Dilla University and Hawassa University
<i>Central Ethiopia</i>	Addis Ababa University
<i>East</i>	Haramaya University
<i>West</i>	Jimma University

From each category a representative sample of HEIs were selected randomly as below:

- 2 of the 7 audited universities from the North (Gondar University and Mekelle University)
- 1 of the 3 audited universities in the South (Hawassa University)
- 1 of the 2 audited universities in the center (Addis Ababa University)
- 1 of the 3 audited universities in the East (Haramaya University) and
- 1 of the 2 audited universities in the West (Jimma University)

In addition, 4 of the 5 audited private universities and university colleges (Admas University College, Alpha University, St Mary's University and Unity University) were considered in the study. The inclusion of various HEIs was preferred in this study because it was believed that including more than a single HEI's experience, gives more strength to the analysis in terms of providing comprehensive and rich information regarding the quality assurance systems and practices of the Ethiopian HEIs. It further provided wealthier feedback involving the various encounters in implementing borrowed policies.

After selecting the 10 HEIs, considering a 95% confidence level and -0.5 to +0.5 confidence interval, from the 249 academic staffs (at the Dean, Associate Dean, Director, Associate Director, Vice President and QA expert positions) 176 were taken based on Cohen's table of random sample size.

Furthermore, to gather qualitative data six of the total seven experts at the strategic center and seven of the total 17 HERQA experts were chosen purposively for their knowledge and access to the appropriate information on the subject matter. Also two concerned officials of MoE were taken using availability sampling as they are the only knowledgeable individuals regarding the study topic, i.e., HE policy.

3.3.METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

In this study, attempts were made to grasp/collect secondary and primary data from official documents as well as directly from research participants respectively. This involves both quantitative and qualitative kinds of data gathered through four different instruments namely, questionnaires, a focus group discussion (FGD), interviews and document analysis.

In the survey method, the intention was to collect data concerning the characteristics, attitudes and perceptions of a wide range of subjects towards the practice of quality assurance, in which self-administered questionnaires, a focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews were employed. Furthermore, the document analysis was employed to provide a contextual understanding of the policy and the practicing environment that underlie quality assurance in universities. Each of the four data collection instruments employed in this study are described as follows:

Questionnaire – For this study, different self-administered questionnaires were developed for the private and public institutions. The questionnaires were based on the conceptual framework of the study and were to be filled by policy implementers including vice presidents, directors, deans, associate deans and experts in the QA offices at all sample HEIs in order to measure the practicability of the stated QA standards and procedures and to find out the success and challenges of the implementations of the borrowed QA policy. This helped to interpret the subject's perception of HERQA's performance, as well as their own (HEI's) performance.

Numerous theoretical developments suggest that a researcher should place few restrictions on people's answers. Hence, 90 properly-worded, close-ended type questions and 2 open-ended type questions were included in the questionnaire given to private HEIs; while 70 close-ended questions and 2 open-ended type questions were included in the questionnaire given to the public HEIs. For the close-ended questions,

respondents were provided with 5 different levels to be able to express their thought better.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) – Six open-ended questions were developed based on the conceptual framework of the study to guide the FGD. These discussion questions contained items on the educational policy borrowing process that were focused on quality assurance practices and procedures. The FGD was held among six ESC policy experts, with the purpose of gathering qualitative data to help judge the success of their performance in a policy transfer practice (attraction and decision).

A group of six participants were invited from the strategic center, HESC. They were all policy experts and the discussion took 90 minutes.

Semi-structured interview – For this study, different versions of semi-structured interview schedules were developed and administered to available potential actors of the concerning authorities (MoE and HERQA). In-depth information was gained on the existing educational borrowing process as a whole but particularly on identified challenges to the successful implementation of the QA policy. The aim of these semi-structured interviews was to obtain relevant data regarding the participants' personal experiences, perspectives, meanings, and values concerning the current quality assurance practices in their respective institutions, and in the HEIs. The semi-structured interviews also allowed comprehensive clarifications of the issues under consideration to be asked for in order to gain comprehensive insight into the real reasons behind the challenges and to determine whether or not these reasons are gaps in the actual educational borrowing process.

Appropriate guiding questions for the interview, with no leading details towards any particular perspectives, were prepared in advance in order to gather unlimited information directly from the research participants. A friendly and psychologically-conducive environment was also facilitated to conduct the interviews so that

participants could freely enjoy the duration of the session while providing meaningful and quality data to the researcher.

Interviews were conducted with the two key officials from MoE and the seven experts at HERQA (4 accreditation experts and 3 quality audit experts). The purpose of the interviews were to gather qualitative data to determine their success in approving proposed policy transfer ideas and executing transferred policies respectively. Each interview took 40 minutes on average.

Document Analysis – Relevant official documents were obtained and analyzed. These included policy statements, proclamations, guidelines, and institutional audit reports published by HERQA. The document analysis was conducted to locate employed foreign policies and practices, and to uncover policy intentions, information regarding the implementation of standards and procedures, and reported outcomes of quality assurance.

In general, the use of various instruments served two purposes: (1) to enrich and enhance results and (2) to triangulate findings with one another.

3.4.ETHICAL ISSUES

As various scholars expressed the major ethical dilemma in a research work is the requirement for researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Hence, participation in this particular project was on a voluntary and informed consent basis, with the right to withdraw at any time maintained.

Prior to their involvement in the data collection practice, each participant was given an explanation as to the purpose of the research in clear and simple language with an emphasis on how relevant their genuine responses would be to the study. Then research participants were assured that it was against professional ethics to disclose their identity

in public without their consent, and were also reminded of their rights to quit participating at anytime during the course of their involvement. After, participants were left with their natural right to choose whether or not to participate in the study.

3.5.VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

After developing the questionnaire, the interview and the FGD guideline questions, to confirm its validity, experts from both the policy making and policy implementing areas, examined the questions for their coverage as well as representativeness of the whole content areas (all the four stages of the policy borrowing models and key factors under each stage as well as all the implementation standards and procedures of the regulatory bodies). Moreover, each question was also examined for its relevance in bringing useful information for the topic under study with respect to the basic research questions.

Furthermore, questionnaires were prepared and then pilot tested on 15 selected research participants of the HEIs. These participants were similar to the ones included in the final study except the four department heads involved. All these respondents were excluded from the final respondent groups.

According to Creswell (2009), a pilot study is important in establishing the content validity of an instrument and in improving questions, format, and scales. Hence, the analysis of the pilot data was made in this study to indicate that the sub-scales of the questionnaire had good item characteristics in terms of internal consistency and homogeneity of the items contained in each sub-scale. It also helped to identify one item as unrelated to the issues under consideration and identified two other items as repetitions. These items were therefore excluded in the final questionnaires. In addition, a few of the vocabularies and expressions were rephrased as they were found to be vague for respondents.

Above all, the pilot questionnaire helped the researcher to reconsider respondent groups. Thereby, department heads were excluded from being considered respondents as they were found to have little or no knowledge of the QA policy practices.

In general, the pilot test helped the researcher to avoid errors related to clarity of language and content, to exclude repeated ideas and to narrow the group of respondents down.

For the type of the questionnaire used in this study, the Cronbach alpha was selected as a suitable test of reliability. This was because the questions were presented in five-scale Likert mode having more than two options with the intent of gaining better precision in the respondent's answer. The result of this measurement showed that the reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for the questionnaire is .933, considered sufficient for the purpose of the study. Hence, the instrument was found to be reliable, as statistical literatures usually recommend a test result of 0.65 and above as reliable for perception question items (Yalew, 2011).

3.6.DATA ANALYSIS

In order to explore how the available policies and practices are suited to the needs of the society and the locality, all potential actors were closely examined in view of their approach towards each stage of the theoretical education policy borrowing model.

Following the data collection through all verified instruments, analysis was made step by step. In order to make appropriate analysis, collected data was at first presented in a meaningful, organized and related manner so that the researcher could easily figure out the findings from each instrument to make the appropriate triangulation. This would be needed in order to reach tangible and valid conclusions of the study.

Identification of borrowed ideas pertaining to QA within the current HE policy document was first made by extracting all information from the official proclamation and policy documents. This data was then organized presentably with respect to the

source documents, then were analyzed and interpreted in line with the objectives and research questions.

On the other hand, data collected through the questionnaires were, combed through, coded, entered, cleaned and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20) computer software.

Moreover, descriptive statistics like arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to indicate the extent of response or frequency per each item. The decision rule used in the analysis throughout the study was: Mean value less than 3 low; Mean value equal to 3 medium; and Mean value greater than 3 high.

Descriptive techniques were chosen in this study as the aim was not to make inferences or predictions to the general borrowing process but rather to simply report what has been found against the QA policy borrowing process (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Furthermore, in order for all participant comments to be understandable and useful, records of the FGD were first transcribed and notes were inserted into transcribed material where appropriate. Then, nonessential words were stripped off. All comments were then categorized and organized based on common themes across the entries for each question.

Similarly, each record of the interview responses were transcribed and printed. During transcription, the questions and responses were clearly marked written in different font: questions written in normal font, while responses italicized after each interview question. Preliminary themes were identified under each of the four stages for the model. The themes were used as the basis for the account of the participants' responses, which took the form of the narrative argument. Similar to what was done to the FGD, the thematic approach was followed to display the analyses and findings. The thematic approach was followed to display the analyses and findings from both quantitative and

qualitative data. The themes for the data analyses were derived from the conceptual framework of the study that is grounded on the basic research questions.

Finally, in addition to extra information they provided, the data that came through the interviews was used to further shed light on the findings of the previous two. The qualitative data obtained from the official documents, FGD, interview and open-ended questions were triangulated, checked against the quantitative ones and discussed. Furthermore, these findings were discussed and interpreted in relation to the relevant literature.



CHAPTER FOUR

4. ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL STUDY AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary, analysis and interpretation of the various data gathered using the four instruments. Interpretations are given for the results of the data analysis in a way that can help readers to understand the actual policy borrowing practice in the Ethiopian education system and to clearly observe its variations from the theoretical model.

As depicted in the conceptual framework, an educational policy borrowing process needs to comprise the four main stages (i.e. attraction, decision making, preparation and implementation and adaption) along with appropriate consideration of each of the determinant factors mentioned under each one of the stages.

An attempt was made to discover existing gaps in a borrowing process either directly or indirectly: directly, by observing what components in the stages are missed while performing a borrowing practice; indirectly, by examining the practical challenges faced by the policy implementer and trace back their possible cause in relation to the borrowing process. In this study, challenges of both HERQA and the HEIs upon their implementation of the QA policy were used to trace back gaps in the borrowing process accompanied by a direct assessment made of the actual QA policy borrowing process in light of the four stage model.

For this purpose, both quantitative and qualitative data drawn from different sources were collected. At first, identification of borrowed ideas pertaining to quality was done through the Ethiopian HE policy document analysis. And then by choosing one of the identified borrowed ideas, founded the external HE QA agency (HERQA); reasons for attraction towards it, its implementation planning and practice, standardization and challenges of its actual implementation as well as its adaption practices were all analyzed. This is done through a simultaneous interpretation of the data obtained from

the questionnaires, which was summarized using the SPSS software, and with data from three other qualitative instruments.

4.1.CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Most of the time the basic background information of research respondents in the study is considered as a determinant factor for its accomplishment. Hence, the background information for respondents of this study in terms of their exposure to the HEI's environment where QA policies were being practiced is summarized and presented below.

For this research, a total of 193 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 150 were returned successfully completed. As indicated below in Table 2, of these 150 respondents' 36.7% were from private HEIs while the remaining 63.3% were from public HEIs.

Table 2 Participant's summarized by type of institute

Item	Characteristics	Respondents in number	Respondents in %
Type of Institute	Private	55	36.7
	Public	95	63.3

In addition, as shown in Table 3 only 11% of the respondents were female and only 41% were in the age category of 45 years and above.

As shown in table 3 below, MA/MSc is the educational profile for more than half of the participants, 57%, while the ratio for BA/BSc and PHD holders is almost equal, 21% and 22% respectively. Giving the expected national profile level of HEIs 0:75:25, though it cannot represent the total academician's profile in the HEIs, the indicative figure for the BA/BSC holder academic management staffs (21%) can be said to show that meeting the national standard in this regard still requires further work as the system comprises significant number of under-qualified academic staffs.

Table 3 Participant's background as summarized by sex, age, academic rank, job title and work experience

Item	Characteristics	Respondents in number	Respondents in %
Sex	Male	134	89
	Female	16	11
Age	26-30	5	3
	31-35	12	8
	36-40	29	20
	41-45	42	28
	> 45	61	41
Educational Level	BA or BSc	31	21
	MA or MSc	86	57
	PHD	33	22
Work Experience in Years	<5	3	2
	6-15	39	26
	16-25	56	37
	26-35	39	26
	>35	13	9
Job Title	VP	15	10
	Director	39	26
	A/Director	6	4
	Dean	36	24
	A/Dean	27	18
	QA	27	18

Moreover, the summary showed that more than 60% of the respondents have between 15 and 35 years of work experience in the Education sector and about 82% are in the HEIs management positions. These make respondents more credible individuals to provide required information as it is only 10 years since the QA policy has been in practice.

4.2. IDENTIFICATION OF BORROWED QUALITY ASSURANCE ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES

The following are policy ideas stated in the Ethiopian HE policy documents and identified as global trends:

- The creation of a decentralized educational management to create the necessary condition to expand educational relevance and quality (FDRE, 1994).

- The promotion of active learning in the teaching and learning process of any institution (FDRE,2003; FDRE,2009)
- The establishment of an internal system for quality enhancement in every institution (FDRE, 2009).
- The establishment of an external system for quality enhancement (FDRE, 2003).

These policy ideas are discussed by various scholars as common current HE global trends (Molla, 2013; Maassen & Cloete, 2006; William S., Christine L.and Materu P. (2009).

4.2.1. ATTRACTION TO INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERIENCES

As described in the literature, need assessment and objective integration are the two main components of the first stage in a policy borrowing – attraction

Table 4 **Attraction to international experience sharing**

Item	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Prior to the implementation of the QA practices by HERQA, your institution had an institutional standard to measure the relevance and quality of education and trainings conducted in the institution.	150	3.7	.9
Prior to the implementation of the QA practices by HERQA, your institution had a mechanism that the education and trainings conducted in the institution are in line with economic policies.	150	3.9	1.0
Prior to the implementation of the QA practices by HERQA, your institution had a mechanism that the education and trainings conducted in the institution are in line with social policies.	150	3.8	1.1
You institutions objectives are aligned with the objectives of the QA policy.	150	4.2	1.1
Initially recognized demand was observed at your institution for the external QA practices.	150	3.8	1.0

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

As shown above in Table 4, the above Mean values of the first three items 3.7, 3.9 and 3.8 respectively as obtained from the response of the participants, indicated that there was an institutional or internal QA system with a mechanism to ensure societal and economical relevance of the HEI's performance. Besides, the 3.8 Mean of the last item

‘demand for external QA system’ proved there was a need for an external QA system on top of the existing internal QA system.

This was again supported by the outcome of the FGD and interviews conducted. In answering the question ‘What initiates the idea of HE QA policy?’ FE3, one of the FGD participants mentioned that increased access to HE as a whole and privatization in particular, was a reason for the rise in demand of an external QA mechanism. Therefore the establishment of HERQA came as a recommendation from one of the international supra organizations – World Bank. Moreover, IH1, an interviewee, also said “the national need for development in general was the reason for implementing the QA practice which demanded more educated manpower than the country could produce at that time which then initiated an expansion of HEIs”.

Furthermore, various documents explained Ethiopia’s demand for an external QA system as a result of several issues. They were the aggressive expansion of HE (Amare, 2005; Teferra, 2007), the new vision on relationship between the state and HEIs (the increasing pressure in demand for transparency and accountability by government, especially after granting institutional autonomy), the private initiatives in HE and the international discourses on quality in HE (Abebaw & Aster, 2012)

All the outcomes of the various instruments indicated that though Ethiopian HEIs had an internal QA system, the need for an additional QA mechanism was there for various reasons to which the World Bank suggested the establishment of an external QA system, HERQA.

With regard to objective matching, during the FGD, in answering to the question ‘What things were considered in proposing/placing the HE QA policy?’ partaker FE2 explained that the nation’s desire to become a middle class income country was one aspect considered as the national objective and matched with the policy objective in the policy exporter’s jurisdiction that had similar aspiration. Moreover, the 4.2 Mean of the

4th item in Table 5 indicated that appropriate objective integration was done between the HEIs and the newly adapted QA policy objectives.

4.2.2. AGREEMENT TO PROCEED

In deciding on transferring a policy idea the model recommended several issues to be considered. They are stakeholder’s involvement, making an appropriate way for synthesis with other existing policies and practices, and theoretical formulation of the new policy as a solution to the existing demand.

In the below summary table, the 4.3 Means obtained for the 1st two items, and the 4.0 Mean obtained for the 3rd item showed that instructors exercise their rights of making comments on the quality and relevance of the teaching learning process and that HEIs played their part in the decision made to borrow the practice of external QA system. This means HEIs as stakeholders had a chance to get involved in selecting suitable policies to their respective institutional QA demand and context.

Table 5 Approval of the quality assurance policy transfer

Item	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Your institution instructors exercise their rights of making comments on the quality of the teaching learning process.	150	4.3	.7
Your institution instructors exercise their rights of making comments on the appropriateness of the teaching learning process.	150	4.3	.7
Your institution takes part in the approvals made concerning current Ethiopian HEI QA practices adoption and implementation.	150	4.0	1.0
As part of the policy implementation process smooth synthesis of the QA practices with other policies in your institution was worked out prior to its actual practice.	150	2.2	.6
Current QA practices were formulated as a complete theoretical solution to your institution’s QA need prior to its actual transfer and implementation.	150	2.4	.7
Current QA practices can be made realistic and long lasting solutions for your institution QA.	150	4.1	1.0

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

Besides, the respondent’s agreement with a Mean value of 4.1 for the ‘capability of the QA system to become a realistic and long lasting solution to HEIs QA need’ also confirms this same truth. However, the work done to synthesize and integrate the QA

policy with other existing policies and practices was found to be weak as respondents' view shows with a Mean value of only 2.2 towards 'Smooth synthesis of QA practice to other policies'. The 0.6 standard deviation for this same item also indicates high respondent's agreement on weak effort made towards synthesizing QA and other policies and practices. (Approved policy justification stated only the non application of any other policy that has a potential to restrict the implementation of the new QA policy rather than pinpointing the disagreement of such policies with the new policy and suggest way outs)

This was also expressed by interviewee IH3 and IH4 in answering the question 'what challenges are faced in implementing the QA policy?' as integration of the QA system is one major challenge for its incomplete function. One example they mentioned was the requirement imposed on the HERQA to assure HE program relevance and its limitation to control public HEIs which allows public institutions to conduct any programs they want. Moreover, the 2.4 Mean for the 5th item puts in question the exhaustiveness of the effort made towards making the new policy as a complete solution to existing HE quality challenges. And it indicated the incomprehensiveness of the aspects realized in examining the policy idea.

4.2.3. PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

As described in the literature, this stage is all about planning the suitable conditions and the logical requirements of implementation. Consequently, for QA policy implementation these are identified as HEIs structural adjustment to incorporate internal QA unit, availability of qualified staff, full time employment and engagement of academic staffs in the same institution, presence of adequate physical, electronic, and administrative support services, appointment and promotion of staff based on academic merit, commitment and understanding of university's top leadership of the quality assurance system, presence of a fair degree of academic freedom and a strategic approach to policy implementation. The latter involves: the placement of a general framework having a detailed profile of the system input, process and output; linking

objectives with the general framework; professional development trainings and awareness creation; the provision of suitable conditions (in terms of resource, structure, power, ...); clear and informed role assignment to practitioners; the placement of guidelines and standards; developing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism; securing needed authority to enforce action on findings of the evaluation, and developing possible solutions to foreseen challenges.

As shown in table 6 below, respondents' vote with a very high Mean of 4.6 for 'QA's positive national contribution' indicates the HEI's trust in the importance of a QA system. On the other hand, their 2.3 Mean response towards QA success indicated the existence of certain gaps that hinder the system from achieving what it was believed able to. The standard deviation for this item showed that agreement between respondents' view on its under-successfulness, is high.

Table 6 Preparation and implementation of the quality assurance policy

Item	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
HERQA is currently formulating and providing your institution with suitable policies on the appropriateness and quality of HE.	150	4.0	.9
Logical requirements of QA practices implementation were straightened up at your institution before the practical implementation of the policy.	150	2.5	1.2
Suitable conditions in the local context were created at your institution to increase the success of QA practices implementation.	150	2.5	1.3
For your institution role of significant actors in the QA practices implementation were well determined in advance.	150	2.9	1.1
In your institution QA practitioners (academic staffs) were well informed on who would do what by the actual implementation time.	150	2.9	.9
In your institution professional QA development programs for the academic staffs were conducted.	150	4.0	.7
In your institution QA practitioners (academic staffs) received professional development trainings prior to implementing the policy.	150	3.8	.8
In your institution QA practitioners (academic staffs) are empowered to take remedial actions on their own discretion for faced challenges.	150	2.4	1.0
In your institution QA practitioners (academic staffs) have the skill and knowledge to take remedial actions on faced challenges by their own discretion.	150	2.6	.8
HERQA is properly supervising the educational provisions at your institution as per the organ's QA institutional quality assessment procedure.	150	2.8	1.0
QA practice is one of the successful policies in your institution.	150	2.3	.5
The QA practice has positive contributions to make in the country's overall development.	150	4.6	.9

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

Moreover, results showed that QA practitioners were not well-informed of their role and have no adequate QA skills to deliver what is expected from them with Mean values of 2.9 and 2.6 respectively in table 6 above. Besides, though it is indicated that practitioners received developmental QA trainings the 4.0 Mean value to the gap in their QA skills indicates that the conducted trainings were less successful in transferring the needed QA knowledge. This according to interview respondents is because its contents were not developed based on an appropriate need analysis which identified practitioner's skill gap.

In addition, these practitioners further expressed to not be equipped with an appropriate level of empowerment with the 2.2 Mean value shown in table 6. This indicated that they are not empowered even to enforce monitoring results. Participant's also mentioned empowerment as their main challenge in their response to open question 'what challenges are you faced with in implementing the QA policy'. They said empowerment not fully given to responsible individuals.

In addition, the response to this open-ended question revealed that HEIs process of leader's assignment in the institutions is not at all an open and transparent and is not a merit and competence based process. According to them, this negatively affected the competency and efficiency of HEIs' management, the commitment and motivation of academic staffs and then the HEIs' overall performance according to the QA requirement.

Interviewee IH05 and FGD participant FE06 as well respectively mentioned lack of commitment and motivation both from HEIs academic and management staffs as major challenges.

All these above stated problems further justified by questionnaire respondents in their response to the other items with a Mean value of 2.5 for the provision of all logical requirements and suitable conditions of the policy which is low or inadequate.

On the other hand, regarding the placement of standards and procedures, the various official documents showed that HERQA sets 8 procedural steps and 10 focus areas for its standardized approach towards institutional quality audits. Self-evaluation is then carried out by the HEI on 10 focus areas.

HERQA's institutional quality audit proceeds through the following eight steps: 1) HEI carries out an institutional self-evaluation and prepares a Self-Evaluation Document. 2) HEI sends HERQA its Self-Evaluation Document and informs HERQA of their wish to have an institutional quality audit; 3) HERQA and HEI agree on a date for the institutional quality audit; 4) HERQA establishes an external institutional quality audit team in consultation with the HEI; 5) HERQA institutional quality auditors make a one-day briefing visit to the HEI; 6) HERQA institutional quality audit team makes a four-day institutional quality audit visit to the HEI; 7) HERQA issues a quality audit report; and 8) HEI prepares an action plan to enhance quality and relevance (HERQA QA05/06/V1, 2006).

HERQA Areas of Focus for external audit: 1) Vision, Mission and Educational Goals 2) Governance and Management System 3) Infrastructure and Learning Resources 4) Academic and Support Staff 5) Student Admission and Support Services 6) Program Relevance and Curriculum 7) Teaching, Learning and Assessment 8) Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes 9) Research and Outreach Activities and 10) Internal Quality Assurance (HERQA QA02/06/V1, 2006)

Consequently, HERQA was voted by research participants with a Mean value of 4.0 for its provision of standards and procedures to the HEIs QA system. Moreover, the various documents analyzed in this study have proved HERQA's sets its own working procedures and checklist for accreditation. Copy of the check list is attached in the Appendix section for reference as appropriate for easy comparisons against participant's response. But surprisingly, upon responding to the question 'is there any guide line for you to follow during a policy borrowing?', the FGD and interview participants (FE01, FE04, IH03, IH07 and IM02) revealed that none of the organs considered in this study

have a guideline to the policy borrowing process which, according to the key informants, is sometimes a reason for lack of uniformity in policy ground works as well as miscommunications among the different organs.

More on the suitable conditions to QA, in responding to the question ‘what challenges are faced in implementing the QA policy?’ these participants enlightened another key factor – resource. Interviewee IH01 and IM02 mentioned that HEIs and HERQA face no financial constraint. Rather, the HEIs lack of efficiency in using allotted budgets is the reason the lies behind the shortage of the various kinds of needed resources. This again indicated HEIs inefficiency in management capacity. On top of these, other interview participants (IH03, IH06, IM01 and FE05) called the trend in giving solutions only to encountered challenges rather than developing a habit of “in advance” identifications of possible constraints to avoid wastage of resources, including time as ‘lack of pro-activeness’ which they mentioned as one factor for shortage in resource. In relation to resource they raised the issue of high scarcity in human resource – skilled QA expert and adequate instructors to fill the required 0:75:25 ratio.

4.2.4. IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTION

Since the model allows interaction between adjacent phases, the monitoring and evaluation requirement is considered under this stage. Accordingly, as a means to identify improvement areas developing continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism is one requirement of the model to be followed by an action plan and its practice. This needs to be accomplished by a responsible agent who is empowered to measure achievement, to make stakeholders aware on achievement, to hold responsible those that do not adhere to the requirement, to encourage creativity and enhancing thoughts through a reward system and to encourage research activities to advance the overall QA system.

Table 7 Owning the QA policy

Item	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
There exists a monitoring and evaluation mechanism at your institution to follow up successful implementation of the QA practices.	150	2.6	1.2
Impacts of the QA practices over other existing policies and practices are being considered in your internal evaluation.	150	2.4	.9
Based on the outcome of the internal evaluation, possible remedial actions were taken on constraining circumstances to the successful implementation of the QA practices.	150	2.7	1.0
Based on the internal evaluation outcome, possible ways to smoothen integration of the QA practices with other existing policies were devised.	150	2.7	0.9
In your institution, a mechanism to ensure academic staffs acquire the understanding towards the QA practices over time is in place.	150	2.5	0.7
In your institution a mechanism to ensure academic staffs acquire the ownership towards the QA practices over time is in place.	150	2.2	0.7
In your institution a mechanism to ensure academic staffs acquire the accountability towards the QA practices over time is in place.	150	2.8	0.8
In your institution a mechanism to ensure academic staffs localize the QA practices over time is in place.	150	2.7	0.7

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

Consequently, in the above summary, a Mean value of 2.6 for the first item indicated that no sufficient monitoring and evaluation mechanism exists in the HEIs. And this poor rating comes because of the fact that the mechanism lacks the power to enforce remedial actions based on its outcomes (Mean 2.7). Respondents as well explained this very well in answering the open-ended question ‘what challenges are faced in implementing the QA policy’. They said that, since there is no accountability to what is not done following the outcomes of the evaluation, there consider the evaluation and monitoring mechanism as not existing.

Moreover, weak ways of integrating the QA system to other policies and practices (Mean 2.7), assessing and working on staff understanding of the QA (Mean 2.5), measuring staff’s ownership of the QA practices (Mean 2.2), measuring effects of QA practices (Mean 2.4), making staffs accountable for their actions towards QA (Mean

2.5) are all indicators of the weakness of HEIs' QA monitoring and evaluation system both in identifying improvement areas and in carrying out counteractive solutions.

In this regard, FGD participant FE02 raised the absence of a general framework with appropriately stated profile for input, process and output of the Ethiopian educational institutions as one cause for lack of a complete monitoring and evaluation mechanism and for the absence of a means to follow up the impacts of QA practices on HE quality.

Table 8 Accreditation of Private HEIs

Item	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Your institution has received accreditation from HERQA.	55	5.0	0.1
In providing accreditation to your institution HERQA assessed the execution of minimum institutional requirements.	55	4.9	0.3
In providing accreditation to your institution HERQA assessed the realization of minimum curriculum requirements.	55	4.9	0.3
In providing accreditation to your institution HERQA assessed the fulfillment of minimum facilities requirements of the programs conducted in your institution.	55	4.9	0.4
In providing accreditation to your institution HERQA assessed the achievement of minimum staff requirements for the programs conducted in your institution.	55	4.9	0.5
In providing accreditation to your institution HERQA assessed the implementation of minimum requirements of institutional rules and regulations.	55	4.7	0.8

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

In a continued effort to confirm standardized practices of QA by HERQA, questions concerning the accreditation and reaccreditation procedures of private HEIs were presented only to respondents of the private HEIs and the results were as summarized in Table 8 above.

Similarly, Table 9 below, showed HERQA's attainment of such a remarkable adherence to the stated standards in reaccrediting private HEIs. A Mean of 4.3 and above was what expressed respondents view of each standard criteria.

Based on the explanation given in the literature on the importance of the self-assessment procedure, it is found mandatory to examine HEIs' practice towards nurturing it. Hence, the result of the following table was intended to indicate the same.

Table 9 Re-accreditation of Private HEIs

Item	n	Mean	Std. Dev
Your institution is re-accredited by HERQA.	55	5.0	0.1
Your institution reported to HERQA on improvements made as per the recommendations given during the accreditation period.	55	4.7	0.6
Your institution reported to HERQA on self-evaluation document of the program to be re-accredited	55	4.7	0.6
Your institution reported to HERQA on the academic structure of the institution.	55	4.8	0.4
Your institution reported to HERQA on the administrative structure of the institution.	55	4.7	0.6
Your institution reported to HERQA on the teaching learning practice.	55	4.8	0.4
Your institution reported to HERQA on its curriculum.	55	4.8	0.4
Your institution reported to HERQA on its QA mechanism.	55	4.6	0.7
Your institution reported to HERQA on student's involvement in the teaching learning process	55	4.3	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on its student support service.	55	4.3	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on student's evaluation on quality of education.	55	4.3	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on student's evaluation of the academic staff.	55	4.2	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on the list of support staff.	55	4.2	1.0
Your institution reported to HERQA on the qualification of support staff.	55	4.3	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on the scale of research activities	55	4.4	0.9
Your institution reported to HERQA on the relevance of research activities	55	4.5	0.9

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

The below summary table shows that on average, HEIs conduct a regular internal QA audit (3.3 Mean). And the overall internal audit practice is a standardized process (3.6 and above Mean for all criteria except for four). But taking measures on audit outcomes without the intervention of other regulatory organs, HERQA, MoE, is rated with a 2.3 and 2.5 Mean respectively. This revealed the poor habit of HEIs in self-regulated enhancing QA activities which prevents them from owning the system and benefiting most out of it and then weakens the potential of the whole national QA system to attain improvement in quality as the literature explained that ‘a formal QA system leads to quality improvement when HEIs own it and when the QA domains play a supportive and facilitative role’.

Table 10 Examining internal quality assurance assessment practice

Item	n	Mean	Std. Dev
Your institution has standards for internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.8	1.1
Your institution's vision is reviewed in the internal quality assessment.	150	3.8	1.0
Your institution's mission is reviewed in the internal quality assessment.	150	3.8	1.0
Your institution's educational goals are reviewed in the internal quality assessment.	150	3.8	1.0
Your institution's governance and management system is reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	1.1
Your institution's infrastructure is reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.8	1.0
Your institution's learning resources are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	1.1
Your institution's academic staffs are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	1.0
Your institution's support staffs are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.2	1.1
Your institution's student admissions services are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assess.	150	3.8	1.9
Your institution's student support services are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	1.1
Your institution's program relevance is reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	1.1
Your institution's curriculum is reviewed in the internal quality assessment.	150	4.0	0.9
Your institution's teaching learning modes are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.9	0.7
Your institution's assessment modes are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	4.0	0.7
Your institution's student progression levels are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.8	0.8
Your institution's graduate outcomes level is reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.6	0.9
Your institution's research activities are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.7	0.9
Your institution's outreach activities are reviewed in the internal institutional quality assessment.	150	3.7	0.9
Your institution develops a self evaluation document based on the outcomes of the internal institutional assessment.	150	4.0	0.8
Your institution conducts internal institutional assessment regularly.	150	3.3	1.1
Your institution takes measure on findings of the internal assessment without the intervention of HERQA.	150	2.3	1.2
Your institution takes measure on findings of the internal assessment without intervention of MoE	150	2.5	1.2

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

The purpose of the summary in Table 11 was to confirm HERQA's standardized act in conducting external audits on HEIs. The result 3.0 and above Mean of all the items

except follow-up showed that the agency conducts its audit in a fairly standardized way.

Table 11 Examining the external QA examination HERQA made to HEIs

Item	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
HERQA made an external institutional quality assessment to your institution.	150	3.3	1.5
Your institution sent its self-evaluation document to HERQA prior to the external institutional evaluation.	150	3.2	1.4
Your institution and HERQA in advance agreed on a date for the external institutional quality assessment.	150	3.1	1.3
HERQA established the external institutional quality assessment team in consultation with your institution.	150	3.2	1.2
HERQA institutional quality assessment team made a one-day briefing visit to your institution prior to the actual external assessment.	150	3.0	1.1
HERQA institutional quality assessment team made a four-day institutional quality assessment visit to your institution.	150	3.1	1.1
HERQA issued a quality assessment report based on the four day assessment outcomes.	150	3.2	1.2
Your institution prepared an action plan to enhance quality in your institution based on the external institutional assessment outcome.	150	3.2	1.4
Your institution prepared an action plan to enhance relevance in your institution based on the external institutional assessment outcome.	150	3.1	1.4
Your institution act on external assessment findings without HERQA's supervision.	150	3.1	1.4
HERQA follow up your institution based on the external institutional quality assessment report.	150	2.7	1.3

(Mean < 3 low, Mean = 3 medium, Mean > than 3 high where n is number of respondents)

In general, key informants of the FGD, interview and responses to the open questions revealed that, though regular self-QA assessments are made by HEIs and action plans developed, no measure exists to enforce the action plan, and follow up from HERQA is infrequent and very weak in this regard. Moreover, even if the forums (national forums like the institutional transformation counsel) are a good means of gaining stakeholders' feedback, there is no system to measure achievement levels, and good research habits to make stakeholders aware of their performance and to encourage system enhancement creativity are missing.

4.3. CHALLENGES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES

The literature describes the main QA challenges as: a QA system's demand for a high level of human and financial capacity; the little knowledge gained so far regarding the impact of QA on the quality of graduates, employer attitudes towards graduates and research outputs of tertiary institutions; the standards being applied by national QA agencies are mainly input-based; and the dependency on government funding of both the QA agencies and the public institutions.

Consequently, key informants of this study were asked in the FGD as to what the challenges they face upon implementing QA policy and practices are. FE01 mentioned attitude or resistance to accept change by leaders; that instructors and students preference of easy way outs rather than commitment to adhere with stated standards and procedures up on implementation; the unrealized effects of other practices; resource shortage (financial, material, human...); capacity gap observed on staffs (the 0:75:25 is not yet achieved); ego and selfishness; and cultural resistance to change. While IH01 raised the issue of manpower shortage; cost of audit (honorary payment for external auditors); and IH03 pointed out an unattractive salary of auditors; lack of awareness on QA practices; lack of professionalism; knowledge, skills and experience deficit of staffs to conduct the teaching learning session; the absence of a QA system; lack of commitment; an inefficient use of the budget.

In addition, absence of appropriate authority over public HEIs (they are allowed to implement any program they want); the business-driven mindset of private institutions (creates negative competition among HEIs and spoil each other's reputation based on wrong information); the none application of strict entrance criteria; the shortage of manpower; the restriction on joint employment of professionals in the private HEIs; the lack of truthfulness from HEIs to provide genuine information to HERQA (deception); the absence of a research culture in the institutes to base actions and functions were mentioned by IH04.

Furthermore, IM02 said insufficient trainings to qualify academic staffs to control QA by themselves; low salary and per-diem for auditors which open doors for corruption; a shortage of qualified, professional manpower at HEIs and HERQA (limits the depth of inspection and the speed of service delivery); and that no clear requirements of the programs are stated by concerned bodies to support the monitoring and evaluation system are some of the challenges hindering the QA practitioners.

In short, all these challenges of the Ethiopian QA system as summarized from the data obtained in this study through the FGD, interviews, responses to open ended questions, and the various reports of the organs were categorized into two broad categories and presented below in table 12 and 13. Challenges of the QA policy regulators/makers and their chain effects are summarized and presented under table 12. While under table 13 challenges of the QA policy implementers are summarized.

Major challenges	Chain effects
Experts shortage (auditors)*	high cost of audit (honorary payment for external auditors)
	limits the depth of inspection and the speed of service delivery
Low salary and per dim provided for auditors	opens door for corruption
	High auditor's turnover
Absence of research culture*	its action lack its base on proper gap identification
Lack of the required level of authority*	allow public universities to conduct irrelevant or unqualified programs
	absence of QA system in some of the HEIs
	lack of accountability for lack of awareness (common understanding), commitment, strict adherence to stated standards and procedures, and no action plan and/ or unactioned audit outcomes
Business driven mindset of private HEIs	negative competition among private HEIs and an act to spoil one other's reputation based on wrong information
	act of deception up on external audit sessions
Absence of the general framework that provide profiles of input, process, output and outcome of HEIs*	absence for measurement mechanism for HEIs achievement or impacts of the QA practices resulted in no or very little knowledge re QA impact

Table 12 Challenges of the policy regulators/makers and their chain effects

*of the above listed challenges in table 12 shortage in QA experts (auditors), absence of a good research culture in the HEIs, lack of required level of authority at each level

and no or very little knowledge re QA impact are among the previously identified challenges as experienced by other countries practicing QA.

Major challenges	Chain effects
Absence of a transparent merit and competence based appointment process	Lack of management readiness and competency
	Nepotism or in-breeding
	Inefficiency in use of resources
	Resistance to change
Professional shortage	No standardized teaching learning process
	Ego and selfishness
Lack of awareness to QA	Lack of common understanding
Frequent and consecutive reforms	Lack of a comprehensive enhancement plan
	Unrealized effects of other policies and practices
	Low staff motivation and resistance to change
	Symbolic compliance to standards or pretention
Background weakness of applicants	Poor commitment of students
	Unreasonable enforcement and expectation to promote most students
Unavailability of resources in the market	Shortage of reference materials – books, journals, ...etc
	Shortage of other teaching learning resources – laboratory chemicals, equipment, workshop facilities...etc
High cost of buildings for private HEIs	

Table 13 Challenges of the HEIs/QA policy implementers and their chain effects

*of the below listed challenges in able 13 e shortage in QA, absence of a transparent merit and competence based appointment process in the HEIs, shortage of professionals (QA experts and instructors) are among the previously identified challenges as experienced by other countries practicing QA.

Moreover, absence of a general framework which is a main factor for getting no or little knowledge on the impacts of the QA practices made so far is one indicator of the deficiency in the implementation preparation stage of the QA policy borrowing process.

In general as shown in the above summary tables, the implementation of the current QA practice is limited by various constraints. But the continued presence of some of the challenges previously identified as experienced by other countries, having no proposed solution yet, indicates that a detailed examination of the QA policy practice in others' jurisdiction prior to the policy transfer was given little or no consideration.

In contrast, despite all these challenges the study participants mentioned the following achievements in response to the question ‘What major successes are observed so far as a result of implementing QA policy?’

IM02 talked about: the establishment of QA unit in the institutions; improved ability of HEIs to look into their own weakness and strength; institutions development of their own institutional vision, goals and objectives that are more quality oriented; HEIs encouragement on the development of institutional strategic plan; the start of the external QA audit by HERQA; and increased employability of HEIs graduates as traced by some of the HEIs.

Besides FGD participants FE02 and FE03 discussed: better awareness of QA in the education system; the development of institutional self- evaluation mechanism; the development of institutional QA policy and guideline by HERQA; the start of program review at institution level by the task force; the implementation of the modular approach and the affirmative action; the application of the continuous assessment; and the existence of external examiners for graduate programs and program reviews as successes observed since the implementation of the QA policy.

Furthermore, many respondents of the questionnaires as well mentioned in their response to similar open-ended question: the awareness created concerning QA through the institutional quarterly news letter and through the trainings being given to the students; the improved capacity to maintain the quality of the teaching learning process; the private HEIs ability to remain competitive institution, to attract more students, their engagement in research activities, the on time program accreditation given by HERQA as per its requirement, the adherence to the 5 year national strategic plan with all the activities conducted in the institutions, its impact in their achievement of quick promotion in securing the institutional rank (training center to college to university college), their initiation to become a member of the international QA organization and to participate in the national quality award contests,

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of major study findings, the conclusions drawn based on the findings, recommendations and implications for further work.

5.1 SUMMARY

This study endeavored to explore the process of policy borrowing with an intention to understand the whole process from both the policy makers' and policy implementers' points of view in order to identify possible gaps or possible improvement areas in the process. The study employed a mixed method approach as an appropriate design to understand complex issues under investigation through real experiences, perceptions and perspectives from a holistic standpoint.

Experts of the concerned authorities (MoE, HERQA and HESC/ESC) as well as the management and QA unit staff of HEIs, all participated in this work. Data was gathered through document analysis, an FGD, interviews, and questionnaires from a total of 150 participants. The data secured through the quantitative instrument was summarized and analyzed using the SPSS software while simple narration is used to summarize data obtained through the qualitative instruments. Then all results gained were interpreted, one supporting the other to provide answers to the basic research questions:

- 1) What characterizes policy borrowing in the Ethiopian HEIs pertaining to quality?
- 2) What steps are followed in the borrowing process?
- 3) What are the challenges to the successful implementations of borrowed policies pertaining to quality?

The study's response to each one of these questions is summarized as follows under different sections:

Identification of borrowed ideas pertaining to quality in the Ethiopian HE policy document

The study identified the following as borrowed global ideas from the three major Ethiopian HE policy documents: decentralization of the educational management to create the necessary condition to expand educational relevance and quality, the promotion of active learning in the teaching and learning process of HEIs, the establishment of an external system for quality enhancement, HERQA, and the establishment of an internal system for quality enhancement in every institution.

As described in the literature the idea of quality assurance is of a global experience which many other countries all over the globe have practiced.

Steps followed in the policy adoption process

The analysis proved that in adopting a QA policy, all four main stages of a policy borrowing process were practiced in various degrees.

1. Attraction to the establishment of the external QA agency, HERQA, involved a need assessment and objective cross examination. The need assessment provided strong indication that HERQA is the result of a pressing demand raised from the new vision on relationship between the state and HEIs (the increasing pressure in demand for transparency and accountability by government, especially after granting institutional autonomy), the private initiatives in HE, and international discourses on quality in HE.
2. The analysis proved that the decision making stage involved proper consideration of stakeholders' agreement but was weak in analyzing and synthesizing QA policy to other existing policies and practice and weak in examining the challenges the policy had encountered during its implementation at other's jurisdictions to work out proactive-solutions.
3. As per the analysis the planning and implementation phase is found missing the placement of a general QA framework at all levels, clear role assignment to

policy practitioners, and the development of solutions to major known challenges. In addition, this stage of the policy transfer secured only partial attainment to the provision of suitable conditions (resource, structure, power, transparency), in setting a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and in conducting professional development. The failure of implementation does not mean that an education system is left unaffected by a new policy. Even when unintended borrowed policies leave their imprint on education systems, they often add another layer of sedimentation to deeply grounded practices and beliefs, making even more difficult the success of another wave of reforms – whatever the national origins.

4. The analysis indicated that all the gaps in the former stages make adaption the weakest stage in terms of achievement so far. It showed the stage lacks HERQA's regular follow-up mechanism, a system to measure HEIs achievement whether to reward or punish, to enhance, to identify knowledge and skill gaps, to make stakeholders aware on status, and to encourage creativity and research.

Identification of challenges to the implementation practice of the QA policy

The analysis of this study identified the following major implementation challenges of the QA policies and practices. Shortage of experts (auditors), absence of a research culture, lack of the required level of authority, large class sizes in public HEIs, absence of the general framework that provides profiles of input, process, output and outcome of HEIs, absence of a transparent merit and competence based appointment process, , lack of awareness of QA, frequent and consecutive reforms, background weakness of applicants, unavailability of resources in the market, and high cost of campus buildings for private HEIs.

5.2 CONCLUSION

In general, the borrowing process that brought the QA policy into Ethiopia was partial and substandard in many aspects. The missing elements at each stage made the

formation of the QA policy insufficient which is one factor for its unsuccessful practice in the Ethiopian HEIs. Absence of a clear guideline on how to perform the borrowing process, lack of proper integration among policies, the inadequate provisions of the suitable conditions and the continued presence of the challenges experienced by other countries several years back indicated that detailed examination of the QA policy prior to transfer to Ethiopia was given little or no consideration. Though the four main stages of the global policy borrowing model were being followed in the Ethiopian practice, the extent to which each stage is being worked out, especially in the areas where this study indicates weaknesses, requires meticulous examination in order to ensure full execution of the process and in order to then boost quality in education. By and large, QA policy borrowing being practiced in Ethiopia needs to be strongly backed by adequate operational policies focusing on institutional capacity development, practical empowerment, awareness creation, allocation of adequate resources and infliction of accountability for the realization of desired goals in terms of improving the quality of higher education and producing competent professional work force.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is of utmost importance to note that the findings pinpoint certain areas requiring priority actions by Ethiopian policy makers. Furthermore, based on the findings and the conclusions derived from them, it is important to recommend ways for improving the educational policy borrowing process for Ethiopian HEIs and to give indications for further research works. Hence, anchored in the foregoing, suggestions are made as follows.

The first major finding revealed in this study is the absence of a clear guideline on how to perform the borrowing process at any of the responsible organs. Therefore, it is highly recommended for the MoE to provide all institutions responsible for making policies with common guidelines to the process which would help them follow complete and well standardized steps. The ministry is also recommended to encourage the organs to execute their responsibility in this regard.

In addition, weak integration of borrowed QA policy with other existing policies and practices is one of the findings of this study, it is recommended that HESC, as a strategic center, develop appropriate strategies and help HEIs to have proper integrating and synthesizing strategies among their existing policies.

Concerning the findings in relation to the provision of adequate suitable conditions and logical requirements as well as proper adaption of the policy, since the borrowing model permits interaction between adjacent stages it is still possible to work on makeover thoughts. Hence, the following recommendations were forwarded concerning each of challenges.

In this study it is found out that responsible QA agents lack an adequate level of authority. It is therefore suggested that the government should trust and grant full autonomy to the delegated regulating organs and that the organs should trust management actions and distribute the power needed at each level to enforce measurements to help align activities with stated standards.

Moreover, the study reveals the absence of a common general framework that defines the expected profile of HEIs input, process and output. Hence, it is recommended for HERQA, in collaboration with HESC/ESC to develop a general framework with all the detailed profiles of the HE input, process and output. This will give a base for HERQA to develop a solution for another major finding – lack of a mechanism by which the impact of the QA system can be measured. HERQA should have a mechanism by which a regular measurement of HEI's achievement pertaining to quality is made involving an initial input intake system from the HEIs (periodical achievement recordings of the HEIs). HERQA should make all stakeholders aware of the outcomes of this measurement so that it motivates everyone to achieve more. In addition, formerly suggested linkages between budget and achievement outcomes by the government will also help in this regard. HEIs should develop a rewarding system to praise achievements and encourage creativity.

It is also noted that HEIs' progression system lacks transparency. Hence it is recommended that HEIs develop an open and transparent merit and competence based system for the appointment of their leaders.

One other major finding of this study is the realization of a weak culture in being proactive to realize future outcomes and challenges of reform action, i.e., QA practice. This is found out initiating consecutive frequent reform deeds. Hence it is recommended that MoE avoid repetition and minimize the frequency of reforms by planning reform ideas envisioning some time of the future and all aspects of the reform ideas. HESC also needs to encourage and consult organs to identify possible challenges and policy impacts before implementation. Giving more space to other stakeholder's involvement, basing reform ideas on research outcomes, and considering real experiences of other countries in implementing the reform idea could help to gain in depth insight in this regard.

The study also discovered that another major hindrance in succeeding in QA, is in ensuring appropriate resource management in the HEIs and in conducting the teaching-learning process as required, is a lack of skilled manpower and other resources. Lack of human resource is also observed in the agency in QA experts. Hence, as a quick fix, it is suggested for HERQA to create a mentorship between well-achieving HEIs and those that are weak in the area of QA so that they get relief on their QA expert shortage and for the government to allow joint employment to restrain the shortage in qualified instructors.

For a long lasting solution in this regard, HERQA should support all HEIs 1) to strengthen their internal QA system 2) to get a better understanding of how to use their allotted budget efficiently and effectively in improving their expertise, (this could be done by hiring foreign professionals for the time being) and should equip their laboratories and workshop centers with needed facilities. Besides, HEIs should develop their capacity to best employ their allotted budget by realizing that efficiency does not simply mean not using resources at all. In addition, the government should develop a

linked system of budget allocation and achievement of results in collaboration with HERQA or any other responsible organ.

Unavailability of the teaching learning resources in the local market is one other problem identified in the study. It is therefore suggested that the government encourage local investors to avail themselves of educational resources in the market by facilitating a linked market with the institutions; and impose a commitment on them to build public resource centers, such as libraries.

Poor competency and low levels of motivation in applicants to HEIs is another finding for this study. Hence it is recommended to HERQA to encourage community services of HEIs in helping lower level educational institutions to enhance the quality of their graduates.

Furthermore, low salary and per diem scales of audit experts is one other finding of this study. Hence it is suggested that the government revise the scale and that HERQA work on instilling honesty and commitment in the individuals.

It is also discovered that the absence of a research culture in the organs is one major problem, meaning that they lack solid ground for their effort towards QA. Hence, all parties are recommended to cultivate their respective research culture. Following this, another major problem could get resolved – lack of awareness to QA and respective responsibilities. Researches could help HEIs to easily identify knowledge and skill gaps in their staffs so that they will be able to mould their trainings accordingly.

Finally, as the observed shortcomings in policy formation have clearly negative impact on the QA and then on the overall HE system's successfulness, the study strongly recommends further research works to be done in the area concerning the processes of how each of the remaining borrowed ideas were brought into the Ethiopian context. This will help enhance understanding of the actual process and to develop a more comprehensive and feasible framework for future borrowing practice.

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