

THE EXCUSION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE ETHIOPIA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Quality management in the education system is highly imperative, and it has gained the attention of the government of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government acknowledged the need for systematic re-engineering of universities to foster quality in the system. Effective higher education has a significant contribution to the eradication of poverty and economic growth. Thus, it is essential to execute management of quality on the strategic level. Therefore, this study aims to examine the Ethiopian universities excursion of quality management. A sample of 472 participants was taken from 11 Universities for the study, and the descriptive survey was conducted through a questionnaire and interview 20 system level experts from the Ministry and Agency The study's findings represent a substandard implementation of quality management in Ethiopian universities due to external and internal factors like shortage of government funds, lack of adequate evaluation, poor infrastructure, substandard teaching, and inadequate facilities in the campus. It is recommended to integrate quality management with community involvement so that students, teachers, and all higher education stakeholders can incorporate to maintain the standard of teachings and learn an unparalleled experience.

Keywords: quality management, Ethiopia, education, higher education, perception

Introduction

Quality of education is an essential indicator of national growth and societal values. Higher education must lead to a sustainable level of literacy, skill development, and community upliftment Eze (2017). For Ethiopia, higher education was challenging as the education community faced many vigorous shortfalls. Tensions were rising out of a lack of resources, leading to a shortage of faculty, fewer enrollments, or resistance towards transformations Habtegeorgis, Maheshwari, and Yadav (2020). Even constant strife between government interventions and the autonomy of universities complicated the quality management procedure. There was a need for a professional workforce and a positive attitude towards the growth and development of the education sector in Ethiopian universities Baitanayeva et al. (2020).

In Ethiopian universities, quality management and assurance have been based on the efficacy and effectiveness of teachings and student-driven learning. The approaches to access the quality in the instructions depend on subject evaluation and program accreditations, which provide insight into students' learning experience and other stake-owners Chapman and Adams (2002). Higher

education in modern Ethiopian universities is subject to quality audits and regulations, resulting in transformations in teaching and assessment methods towards betterment. Thus, another approach to capture the in-depth understanding of quality management standards at Ethiopian universities is audits done by higher education relevance and quality agency, i.e., HERQA Arega (2016).

HERQA is a legally organized agency that looks after audits and governance of autonomous and public universities for quality assurance Nysba (2020). Further, the number of enrollments in public and private universities is a necessary quality standard for educational institutions. Ethiopian universities faced a significant problem of decreased registrations, dropout, and repetitions percentage in the past Adamu and Addamu (2012). With this, though the enrollment number has improved, limited capabilities and audits hamper the quality of education. The unit cost of higher education is beyond reach for stake-owners of the education sector. For tackling these challenges and manage the quality standards, the government is supporting universities in the form of funding and financial aids to colleges and universities Yallew (2020). Thus, the study focuses on examining quality management in Ethiopian universities.

Literature Review

Factors of quality management in university education

Quality management plays a vital role in bringing extraordinary improvements in university education. Regular evaluation of the challenges in current practices helps deal with constraints leading to substandard quality of education Moti (2015). To ensure Ethiopia's growth and transformation in higher education, quality management, and capacity-building programs are essential. Various quality evaluation agencies were formulated to look after the day-to-day affairs of Ethiopian universities and assure that curriculum of the appropriate standard is being followed in the universities Megenase (2018). They are recognized to safeguard and enhance the quality of education in Ethiopian universities. Technological advancement is a crucial factor in higher education that continuity should be worked upon Tribus (2014).

The inadequacies of information and communication technology bring many challenges in modern-day education at universities. Another important factor is financial inefficiency that affects the education community adversely Kumaravelu and Suresh (2020). Available funds and resources are critical to uplift the teaching practices from conventional mode to the modern-day upgraded method Matorera and Matorera (2018). Socio-cultural factors also play a vital role in deciding the quality of education in universities. The culture of meritocracy and the University's attitude towards acknowledging the merit of its students drive them towards their education and encourage them to perform well (Mesfin, 2020). Monitoring and evaluation also lead to transparency in the system and give students and their parents a process approach. Regular assessments and research bring student satisfaction towards the quality of education Trines (2015). Attendance in classes should be scrutinized and evaluated periodically to give student-focused delivery of education in universities. Political factors also play a vital role through budget allotment, resource allocation, and policymaking and planning for public and private universities Airat (2014). Thus, regularized

attendance, effective scrutiny, and fund allotment can help governing bodies build a coherent framework to reach institutional excellence and quality education.

Empirical review

Jansen, Celilia and Eldridge (2019) examined the variables that contribute to quality education in Ethiopia and identified that the quality of education served to the stake-owners at Ethiopian universities. Many variables accompany it; one is political intervention and implementation of policies in the higher education system. While examining the relevance of the accreditation system, it is found that the ministry of education in Ethiopia has made service quality dimensions, and HERQA was also created to analyze and evaluate the practical application of public funds and improvements in the allocation of resources at Ethiopian universities. One of the critical factors identified through the research was setting up a benchmark for quality standards as an essential perspective of the Ethiopian government supported by HERQA and other governing bodies framed in Ethiopia.

George (2002) observed and stated that incompetent service quality could be improved in Ethiopian universities only when the student's needs are identified and worked. The author emphasizes the lack of intelligent allocation of funds towards infrastructure building, technological upgrades, and awareness programs for higher education; there is also insufficient commitment towards larger goals like literacy and poverty reduction. Ibe (2006) also analyzed and stated that higher education in Ethiopia lacks international appearance and global presence. There is less focus of the government towards technical skills development to prepare the students for competitive job markets across the globe.

Deweese (2011) emphasizes a crucial perspective of quality management in Ethiopian universities, including execution quality associated with technological advancement and using the integrated network for students' access. Globally education sector has seen many reforms and upgrades. The researcher builds a positive correlation between institutional performance and the use of technology. The fundamental purpose of his study was to understand the role of institutional management in creating a flow of information in the system that is reliable, fast, and easily accessible. Further, the analysis states that IT increases the access of students and the faculty. It fills the gap between the locally run institutions and the global education parameters. According to Nega (2012), Ethiopian universities need to understand a critical perspective, i.e., providing quality service to students. The researcher stated that colleges and universities have an intrinsic need for business re-engineering and administrative and teaching staff development to provide quality education at a reasonable cost. Training and effective leadership building in faculties is significant to give the students a sense of involvement, teaching standards, and satisfaction towards education quality and university management. All the stakeholders in Ethiopian universities, like faculty, administrative staff, governing bodies, students, and parents, must be dealt with professionally. Another crucial perspective highlighted through similar research by Isig (2013) that came out through the analysis was increasing student enrollments in higher education. Some issues indicated in testing were insufficient infrastructure, inadequate educational planning, and

high cost involved in higher education, leading to fewer enrollments in Ethiopian universities. Wondemetegn (2016) also noticed that providing effective services to the students requires the university management to be aware of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the stakeholders on the quality assurance parameters. The key points were lack of monitoring and leadership, increasing the challenges in providing quality service to students. Faculty and administrative staff should be trained and enriched in technological skills and current developments in teachings worldwide to minimize staff resistance towards transformations.

Further, a study by Michael (2017) on Ethiopian university education and improvements stated that Ethiopian universities had simplified their education system with many enhancements and use of information technology. Still, there is always a constant need for identifying the service attributes that can be utilized and further developed so that quality assurance can be there. According to Bishaw & Lasser (2019), modern education demands a broader perspective than reading, writing, arithmetic, and classroom studies. The researcher highlights the lack of encouragement to the students for research, no emphasis on developing leadership among the students or increasing their potential in skill-based vocational courses. Also, incompetent methods to design curriculum include a lack of standardized global curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, research submissions, focus on personality development programs, and skill-based practical learning.

According to Delta & Jennifer (2015), higher education suffered from severe inadequacies, and agencies formed. Still, they were not empowered and organized governing bodies which could manage and evaluate the higher education quality on strategic levels. Thus the studies done above give an insight into the challenges and shortcomings of Ethiopian universities, which led to an inadequate number of enrollments and lack of upliftment of quality standards through various financial and strategic means. The studies above also show that quality education in Ethiopian universities was limited to the locally developed curriculum, low awareness among the community people, and substandard teaching. To improve the standard of education, HERQA was established to enhance the standard of education. Other governing bodies conduct various audits and development programs to strive for continuous improvement in Ethiopian universities. Still, there is a need for systematic re-engineering and community involvement to attain quality assurance and sustained development.

Methodology

The research methodology presents the theoretical and systematic analysis of the methods applied to the study. It highlights the techniques used in the current research to identify, target, select, process, and examine information about the perception towards quality management in Ethiopian universities. The methodology presents a brief on the research approach, methods of data collection, and analysis (Kothari, 2012). The research method used to carry out a mixed study comprising qualitative and quantitative data analysis in the current study. For the quantitative approach, data collection was done from 11 higher educational institutions of Ethiopia. A total number of 472 survey respondents students and faculties were selected by using a simple random sampling method. For collecting data, a close-ended survey questionnaire is used to reveal the

demographic characteristics, general knowledge of the students about the quality management concept and its implementation, and perception of students on the impact on quality management. The quantitative data through frequency analysis via SPSS software is conducted for demographic and background data. Also, inferential analysis is undertaken for analysis of the perception of the students using, the below-stated hypothesis is tested.

H01: There is no significant impact on the adoption of Quality Management on the quality of higher education

HA1: There is a significant impact on the adoption of Quality Management on the quality of higher education.

The above hypothesis is analyzed using regression and correlation using SPSS at a confidence level of 5%. Further, data from 20 quality assurance unit heads of the 11 higher educational institutions, and senior experts from the ministry and Agency were involved to collect the qualitative data to the analysis. With an open-ended interview questionnaire, the perception of respondents, and further examined using thematic analysis.

The demographic analysis of the survey respondents shed light on the background of the target population on parameters such as age, gender, and level of education, among others. The parameters analyzed in the current study are presented in the graph below.

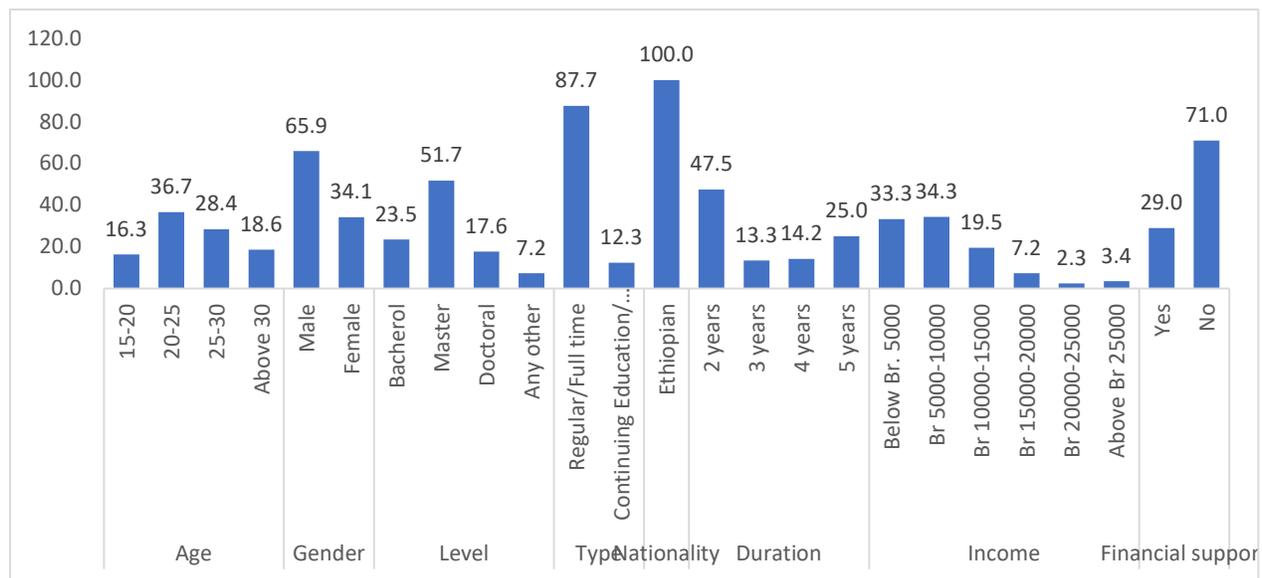


Figure 1: Demographic profile of respondents

The figure above suggests that maximum respondents belonging to the age group of 20-25 years (36.7%) are male (65.9%), have attained masters in the level of education (51.7%), and are studying full-time (87.7%). The demographic survey further suggests that all students are Ethiopian (100%), have a minimum of two years in course duration (47.5%), have a family income of between Br 5000- 10000 (34.3%), and do not have financial support (71%).

In addition to demography, the questionnaire presents questions to attain the background knowledge of the survey participants on the subject under study. The findings are reported below.

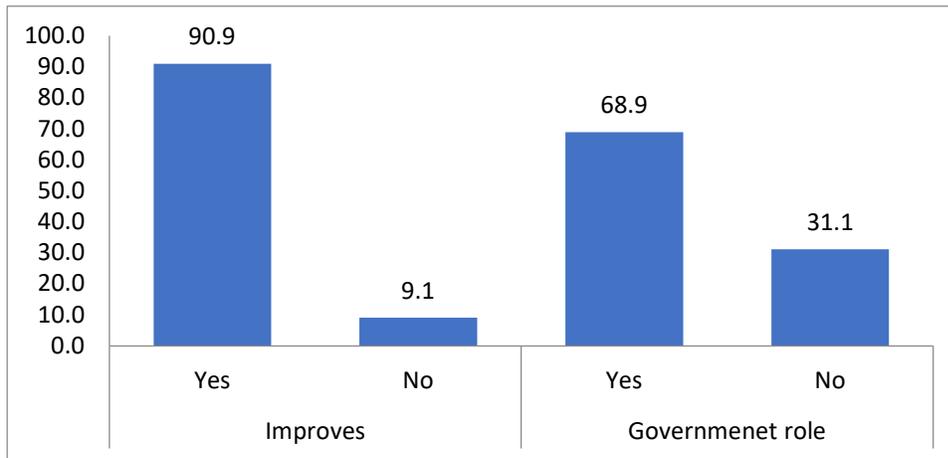


Figure 2: Background Analysis – Evaluation Method

The figure above highlights most of respondents (90.9%) replied that implementing quality management improves the quality assurance and standard of higher education in an institution. Concerning the role of government in higher education quality management in an institution, maximum respondents perceive a positive influence.

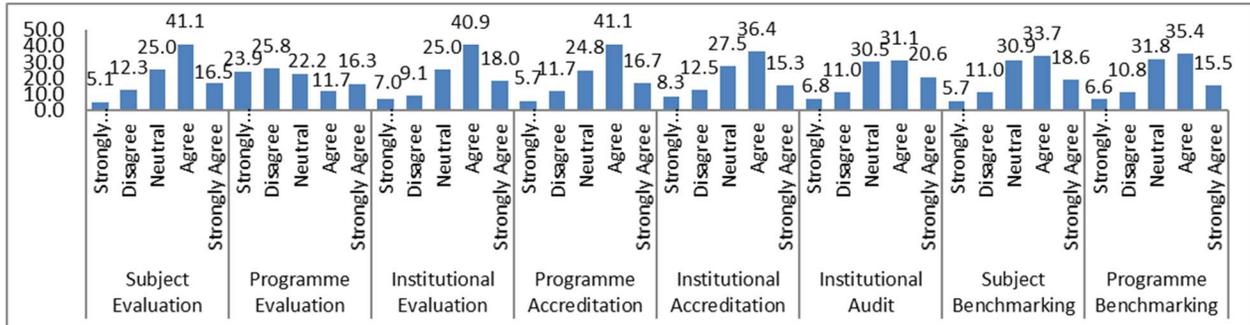


Figure 3: General background

The survey respondent was asked on the evaluation method their institution uses, for which maximum respondents agree on the subject evaluation (41.1%), institutional evaluation (40.9%), program accreditation (41.1%), institutional accreditation (36.4%), institutional audit (31.1%), subject benchmarking (33.7%), program benchmarking (35.4%). In comparison, the maximum respondent disagrees on program evaluation (25.8%) in their institution. Also, the least number of respondents strongly disagree with subject evaluation (5.1%), institutional evaluation (7%), program accreditation (5.7%), institutional accreditation (8.3%), institutional audit (6.8%), subject benchmarking (5.7%), program benchmarking (6.6%). In comparison, the maximum respondent agrees with program evaluation (11.7%) in their institution. Thus, the background analysis reveals that most respondents agree to implement quality management in improving the quality assurance

and standard of higher education in an institution and the role of government in higher education quality management in an institution. They perceive that subject evaluation, institutional evaluation, program accreditation, institutional accreditation, institutional audit, subject benchmarking, and program benchmarking are carried out by their institute, while they disagree on program evaluation.

The inferential analysis is used in the current study to deduce what the sample population might perceive about the subject in the study. It allows the researcher to draw and measure the reliability of conclusions from the information gathered. The section below presents inferential analysis drawn from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data gathered from the survey of 472 respondents is analyzed using the hypothesis testing method. Some statements representing contributors to quality in higher education institutes are coded and presented in the table below for students' perception.

Tab.1: Coding for Variables

Statements	Codes
Quality of Higher Education (Dependent)	Q
Class lectures impact teaching and learning.	qms1
Career guidance is available.	qms2
The university classrooms are good.	qms3
The university laboratory facilities are good.	qms4
The feedback mechanisms help to do better.	qms5
Close contact of the academic staff and students of the University are up to the expectation.	qms6
The university facilities, for example, libraries, facilitate teaching.	qms7
Awareness level towards the support of networks at the university meets the requirements.	qms8
A variety of teaching methods utilized to deliver course/modules influence teaching and learning process.	qms9
I am challenged by what I am learning.	qms10
The university is led by a competent leader.	qms11
Engagement of students in the university affairs is up to the expected level.	qms12
The relationship among the teachers, faculty and management is up to the expectation of the University.	qms13
The effort of the university to improve the quality of education are appreciable	qms14
Regular assessment of student performance takes place.	qms15
External examinations observe standards	qms16

Instructors are always willing to change.	qms17
There is regular innovation at the university leading to positive changes.	qms18

The statements coded to initial analysis for building the model are essential to understanding the relationship between variables. Herein, correlation analysis was done to present and analyze the magnitude of linkage between different variables. Findings are shown in the table below.

Tab.2: Correlation Analysis results

Dependent	Q		
Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Variance
Q	1		1.37
qms1	0.567	0	1.33
qms2	0.665	0	1.34
qms3	0.486	0	1.25
qms4	0.662	0	1.52
qms5	0.498	0	1.53
qms6	0.134	0.093	8
qms7	0.686	0	1.36
qms8	0.593	0	1.33
qms9	0.38	0	1.36
qms10	0.668	0	1.41
qms11	0.576	0	1.39
qms12	0.688	0	1.33
qms13	0.374	0	1.42
qms14	0.662	0	1.55
qms15	0.566	0	1.39
qms16	0.623	0	1.4
qms17	0.409	0	1.18
qms18	0.633	0	1.4

The above-stated results indicate that all statements except qms9 representing contributors to quality in higher education institutes have a significance value of 0.00. These values are less than the required significance level for the study that is 0.05, denoting a relationship between the quality of higher education and its contributors, except for statement qms9. Also, the Pearson correlation for the different variables should be less than the required value of 0.5 to be included in the model. Based on the analysis, variables of qms1, qms2, qms4, qms7, qms8, qms10, qms11, qms12, qms14, qms15, qms16, and qms18 have values 0.57, 0.67, 0.66, 0.69, 0.59, 0.67, 0.58, 0.69, 0.66, 0.57,

0.62, and 0.63 respectively are included in the model. Whereas qms3, qms5, qms6, qms9, qms13, and qms17 are excluded from the model. Based on the above result, the relationship between the dependent and independent variables was assessed with the help of regression testing of the hypothesis at a 5% level of significance i.e.

Table 3: Regression results

Q	Coefficient	T-statistic	p-value	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F ratio
Constant	0.02	0.14	0.89	0.68	0.68	82.41
qms1	0.08	2.16	0.03			
qms2	0.22	5.24	0.00			
qms4	0.24	6.37	0.00			
qms7	0.16	3.38	0.00			
qms8	-0.02	-0.50	0.62			
qms10	0.10	2.17	0.03			
qms11	-0.10	-2.26	0.03			
qms12	0.09	1.72	0.09			
qms14	0.18	4.62	0.00			
qms15	0.06	1.28	0.20			
qms16	-0.15	-2.82	0.01			
qms18	0.14	3.00	0.00			

The regression analysis reveals the R² value of 0.68 and an adjusted R² value of 0.68. A 68% variation in quality in higher education is due to its different contributors. The F-ratio has a value of 82.41 that is greater than the required value of 1. The inclusion of respective independent statements derives the precision of the model.

All statements except qms8, qms12, and qms15 have a p-value less than 0.05 that is the significance level of the study. The analysis of Coefficient values for the variables depicts that with 1% increase in factors influencing the quality of higher education is due to class lectures impact teaching and learning (qms1) by 0.08%, career guidance is available (qms2) by 0.22%, university laboratory facilities are good (qms4) by 0.24%, university facilities. Libraries facilitate teaching (qms7) by 0.16%, challenged by learning (qms10) by 0.10%, University led by a competent leader (qms11), the effort of the University to improve the quality of education is appreciable (qms14) 0.18%, and regular innovation at the University leading to positive changes (qms18) by 0.14%. However, external examinations observe standards (qms16) decrease the quality of education by 0.15%. Thus, the null hypothesis of having no significant impact of the adoption of Quality Management on the quality of higher education is rejected.

Qualitative

Qualitative analysis is the process of analyzing non-numerical data to form a subjective judgment and understanding the opinion, concepts, or experiences. Herein, qualitative analysis is used to gather in-depth insights contribution of quality management system adaption on the quality of higher education. Twenty responses were collected from academic staff members selected from 11 different higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. The academic staff with a minimum of 4 years of experience were chosen. The demographic analysis of the sample population selected suggests that maximum of the respondents among the academic staff members are lecturer or professor (45%), associate professor (25%), HOD (15%), assistant professor (10%), and research assistant (5%). Further, the study ensures that the confidentiality of the respondents is maintained. The name of the respondents is coded alphabetically as AS1 to AS20.

For the qualitative analysis, the basic perception of the participants has examined the concept of quality management, the importance of managing the quality of education, basic principles needed for education quality management, and criteria of classifying education quality in higher education were posed. Concerning the concept of quality management in the higher education sector, professor AS1 stated that "quality management in education is very vital as it encompasses leadership, management commitment, and teamwork to improve the standard of education." Also, the HOD (AS3) added that "quality in higher education is a process of continuous improvement with communication and involvement of all stakeholders towards positively influencing the institute's performance."

In Ethiopia, there have been efforts toward the betterment of the quality of education in the country. To Stress the importance or purpose of managing the quality of education, Professor (AS8) stated that "the purpose of quality management focuses on continuous improvement, commitment, cooperation, culture, control, and customer focus to fulfill the goal of the institution." Further lecturer (AS12) added that "Quality management in higher education is vital as it contributes to the development of the modern and future Ethiopian society. It is important to provide cohesion to the requirements of society and students for a foundation of sustainable knowledge."

Also, on the institution's basic principles maintained in education quality management, HOD (AS5) stated that "the principle of quality management adopted focuses on a continuous improvement process focused on customer focus while involving the employees and enhancing administrative leadership." Also, AS9 added that education management in their institution is done with "the aim of redesign the institutional processes, structures, and systems to achieve improved performance. The principles are applied in the components of culture, organization, technology, process, and strategy".

Furthermore, for criteria of classifying education quality in higher education, Assistant professor AS 19 revealed that "the parameters such as those of attitudes of teaching staff toward innovative methods of instruction, institution's assessment of academic achievements, facilities, and administrative procedures. and suitability of classrooms and proper timetable management" is essential. Also, professor AS14 added that the "experience of teaching staff and their involvement with students' holistic development are critical criteria on which quality is classified in higher

education." Thus, the qualitative analysis reveals that quality management is imperative to properly set a benchmark for students' educational needs and higher education. It is also essential for empowering educators to meet the global competitive education market's needs, demands, and expectations.

Conclusion

The study aims to examine quality management in Ethiopian universities. Herein, quality management in higher education is recognized as a must to lead to the sustainable development of literacy, skill, and community. For this, the Ethiopian universities need to enhance their vision of quality education towards continuous improvement to attain global curriculum standards. In this respect, the current study presents the findings from a qualitative survey of 472 students and 20 academic staff from 11 institutions. The quantitative analysis of the data gathered suggests that maximum respondents are male, belong to the age group of 20-25 years, have attained Master of Education, are studying full-time. They have a minimum of two years in course duration, have a family income of between Br 5000- 10000, and do not have financial support. The background analysis reveals that maximum respondents favor implementing quality management based on various parameters specific to institutes under government supervision. The inferential study suggests a relationship between the parameters of quality management on the quality of higher education. Qualitative research of the academic staff also indicates the need for quality management for institutes' growth and the development of the overall society. The findings of the study recommend:

- Reorientation of higher education to encompass global academic frameworks of value education, professional ethics, health consciousness, evaluation and assessment systems
- The adoption framework of quality management in higher education of the governing authority and ministry to develop a quality assurance model showed inadequacy.
- Proper resource allocation to develop infrastructure, educational planning, and technological skills of staff to ensure enriched quality management in institutes and decreased staff resistance.

On the findings and recommendation, the limitations of the current study are also recognized. The present study has surveyed only 11 institutes, 472 students and academic staff in Ethiopia. Thus, generalizing the respondents' findings, future research can be undertaken comprising a higher number of institutes, staff, and students. Furthermore, in lack of time, the current study uses purposive sampling to gauge respondents' at a point in time. Since quality management is a continuous process, a set of longitudinal studies would be helpful for further studies.

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