Educational Accountability Relationships and the Provision of Quality Education in Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions: Wollega University in Focus

*Feyera Beyessa

Abstract: In this study, I have tried to explore the educational accountability, relationships and the provision of quality education in Wollega University (WU). To attain this purpose, qualitative Single-Case (holistic) study research design was employed. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of ten respondents which include: five University teachers, one academic administrative assistant and four students. To gather the necessary data, semi-structured interview and documents (official and unofficial) were used. The data were analyzed using qualitative methods of data analysis. The study's findings indicated that although the term accountability is stated in the proclamation as one of the objectives of HIEs in Ethiopia, the core values of Wollega University (WU) strategic plan rejects the word as a significant concept to deliver quality education. The study also pointed out that the educational accountability relationship between University students and policy-makers/Ministry of Education (MoE) seems weak. The study critically indicated that both long and short routes of accountability system are weak for students in holding providers (WU) to acquire quality education. To this end, I strongly recommend three urgent calls (a) peace and stability, rigorous and innovative educational quality-driven reform that promote performance educational management is needed, (b)establishing clear and effective educational accountability system, policies and relationships to provide quality education in Ethiopia is mandatory and (C) developing an eclectic model for managing HIEs beyond Yes and Okay groups whereby educational actors within the designed circuit at all levels should be powerfully engaged to address successful educational provision.

Key terms: *Client power, Compacts, Educational Accountability, Management, Provision, Quality Education, and Voice*

1. Introduction

The major goal of education is to enhance the individual's social and economic prospects. Specifically, Higher Education (HE) is seen as an engine of empowerment as well as a means of cultural and economic

―――――――
*Lecturer at Wollega University, Ethiopia; Address; mob: 0912035472, feyebeye@gmail.com

development in meaningful way (Leveille, 2006).This can only be achieved by providing quality education for all (Zajda, 2009). Thus, the Ethiopian HE reform objectives are to ensure equity, accountability, relevance and responsiveness (Proclamation, 2009). Similarly, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) emphasized the issues of quality and relevance in educational programmers; quality of teaching staff and facilities; improvement of the learning process towards a focus on students; improvement of management and leadership; introduction of financial diversification; and improvement in the system of evaluation, monitoring, autonomy and accountability (MoE, 2010).

As a worldwide political, economic, and cultural process that is shaping and reshaping our lives, globalization has had a profound influence that transcends national borders on all domains of social life. Amid to this contemporary trend that is sweeping the world, the governments of many countries have changed their ways of administration (Kai, 2009) to accountability issues. In line with this, the main objective of HE is achieving an institutional autonomy with accountability to prepare knowledgeable, skilled, and attitudinally mature graduates with an international competitiveness (Proclamation, 351/2009). As one of the third generations of Ethiopian HE, Wollega University (WU) "*aspires to be one of the top 25 Universities in Africa in 2025E.C.*" (WU, 2016:10)

Consequently, the purposes of accountability programs for HE have shifted over time from system efficiency to educational quality, organizational productivity, and from external responsiveness to public priorities or market demands (Burck, 2005).To address the provision of quality education, Pandy (2004) argues that publicly funded HEIs are accountable in their actions and outcomes to the external environment. In HE, educational accountability has been imagined as a commitment to truth and unfettered inquiry is nurtured, standards of conduct are marked by integrity, and quality teaching and learning are considered to be the highest priority (Leveille, 2006).

However, "poor accountability structural leadership and management" of higher education system, and the institutions in particular, have resulted in disappointing performances resulting in poor supervision, misuse of personnel, inappropriate resource utilization, and the absence of an

information system and organized management (Yizengaw, 2003, pp.12) for their accountability clusters.

In many middle income countries, the poor system of educational accountability relationship caused common problems of service provision such as unaffordable access, dysfunctional schools, low technical quality, low client responsiveness, and stagnant productivity (WDR, 2004). Similarly, one preliminary draft paper done in Harvard Kennedy School, Kenya, entitled as Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes showed incoherent educational accountability system has resulted in (Pritchett, 2015):

> no Ministry punished the schools for not achieving targets; incoherent information in the client power accountability relationship as citizens; and authoritarian states or weak democracies there might be little coherence between the delegation of what education outcomes citizens may desire via politics from the state and what the state may delegate via a compact relationship to organizational providers.

It is important to note that the study conducted on the practices of governance with particular domains of professional and administrative accountability in South Nation Nationalities Region, Ethiopia Public Universities deficits that none of academic leaders have considerable amount of accountability in their respective universities (effective support in the university; fair treatment of academic community; efficient, honest and open accounting system and use of resources; well-designed system for organizing, managing and distributing information to appropriate audience) of administrative accountability variables are rated favorably by the majority of lecturer respondents and even by middle level managers (Mulatu & Befikadu, 2017).

Consequently, international concern with accountability in education reflects several factors such as inadequate access and availability, the unquotable distribution of educational opportunities, poor quality learning, increasing costs, limited quality assurance, abuses of power, financial mismanagement and corruption, and non-responsiveness to students' needs (UNSCO, 2017).

As a final point of this section, the study conducted in Tanzania's public schools showed that lack of clear accountability relationships, arrangements and structures to support accountability at various levels of educational

structural organizations. Accountability arrangements have been found to be confusing, making it difficult for the end-users of education services to clearly identify the authority responsible for the good or bad performance (Komba, 2017).To this end, I am initiated to explore the educational accountability relationships and the provision of quality education in WU. Thus, based on the above statement of the problems, the following research questions were formulated.

1. How do students hold the policymakers or Ministry of Education (MoE) accountable for the provision of quality education through the communication of HE?
2. How do students hold the educational accountability of frontline providers by communicating the Universities' management for the engagement of quality education?
3. How do teachers and students perceive the provision of quality education?
4. How do WU practice major accountability approaches to enhance the provision of quality education?

2. Conceptual Framework of the study

The study is informed by the World Development Report (WDR) by World Bank's, 2004 accountability framework, which explains the relationships between policy makers, consumers, and service providers. This framework emphasizes the need to ensure the education provider's direct accountability to the consumer (WDR, 2004). It is emphasized that when the government assumes the responsibility of providing education, there must be a well-established accountability relationship between the students (consumers), the providers (teachers), and the policy makers. Arguably, when this relationship breaks down, service delivery fails in getting quality education (QE).

The framework classifies accountability routes into two types, namely the long and the short accountability routes. In the long route of accountability, citizens/students are expected to influence policy makers by, for example, demanding that the government improve the overall quality of education and students' learning outcomes. In contrast, policy makers are required to monitor and motivate teachers to work toward the desired outcome.

The short accountability route refers to the client–provider relationship (WDR, 2004). In the context of this study, clients are expected to play two major roles in strengthening the delivery of education services: Demanding improved educational quality and monitoring providers' performance to achieve the desired learning outcomes. In this study, the world development report framework assisted in examining both the long and the short routes to accountability in HE and in determining how these routes explain students' learning outcomes. This framework was thought to be relevant for examining the status of the provision of quality education for effective students' learning outcomes in Wollega University.
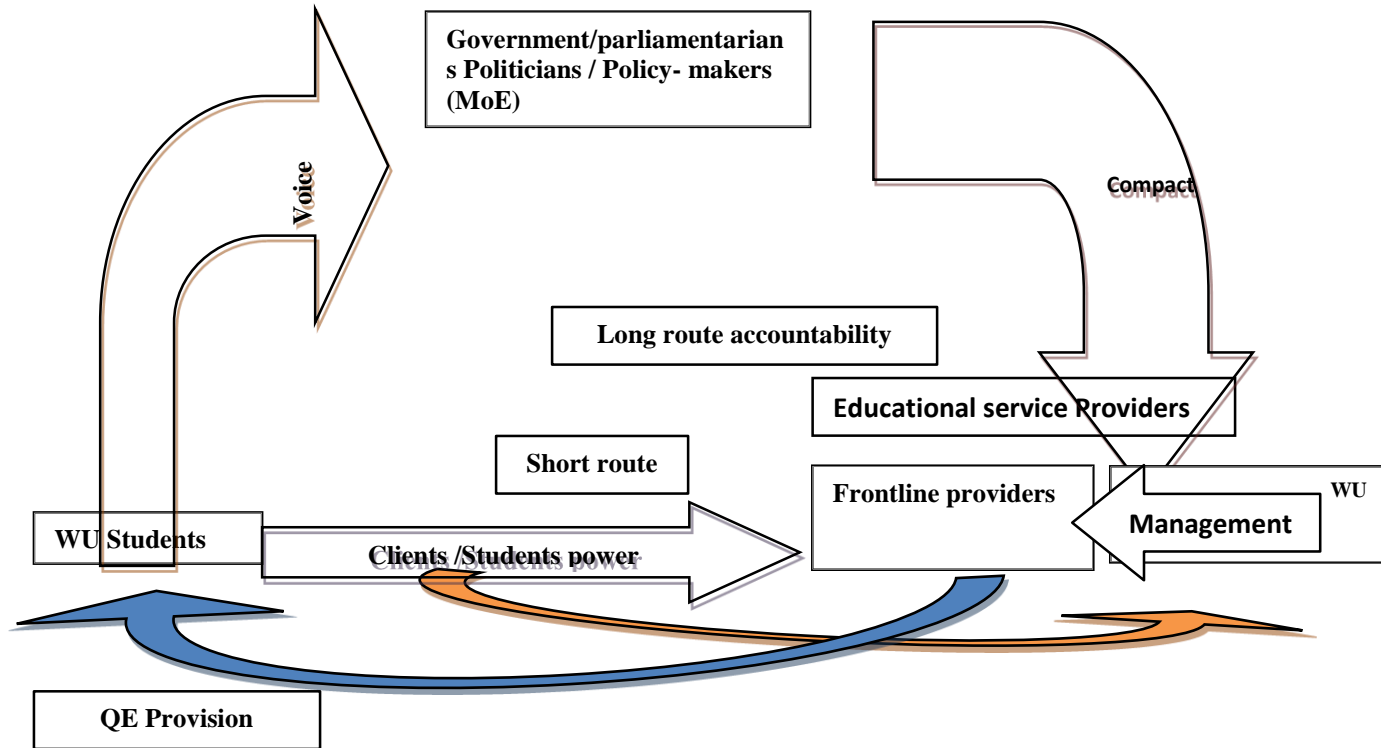
Figure 1: Educational accountability relationship of HE (adapted from Pritchett 2015:16 and WDR 2004:49)

3. Material and Methods

I used qualitative and exploratory case study types (Yin, 2003) educational accountability relationships and the provision of quality education in public higher education single case (holistic) design, only single case is examined, and at a holistic level. Thus, in my research educational accountability relationships of quality education provision was addressed through various units including university teachers, academic assistants and students. However, the purpose of my research was not to single them out as units as such. Hence, my research resembles mainly the holistic case study recognized by Yin (2003).

3.1 Samples and Sampling Procedure

Sampling in this study was purposeful and my intention was seeking WU teachers, academic and administrative staff and students, who directly or indirectly participated in the provision of quality education. I selected respondents purposively so as to get relevant information through contacting them many times in a short period of time. Thus, five university teachers coded as D1, D2, L1, L2, & L3; one academic assistant coded as A1 and four students coded as S1, S2, S3 & S4 from different colleges were selected for this study.

3.2 Data collection instruments

The researcher used triangulation method to collect data in order to increase the reliability as well as the internal validity of the research (Merriam 1998). The triangulation method includes semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 respondents of WU. The researcher also used official and unofficial documents to gather the necessary data for the study.

4. Results and Discussions

In this analysis I have presented the findings in relation to the following three broad categories: the existing educational accountability and relationships, teachers and students view on the provision of quality education, and approaches to educational accountability for quality education.

4.1The Existing Educational Accountability Relationships and the Provision of Quality Education

4.1.1 Voice and Compact Relationships

Politicians are expected to serve as a vehicle for conveying students' views to the government. These views are presented to them through citizens/students' voices: Citizens'/students either speak directly to politicians in meetings or by visiting their offices or, as in most cases, the councilors and parliamentarians as representatives of their respective constituencies, are expected to be well-informed about educational problems. So, voice addresses the issue of how well students can hold the state politicians and policy makers and MoE accountable for performance in discharging its responsibility for educational quality provision (WDR, 2004, pp.113). In many cases, however, the opinions that are largely reported by students involve issues related to lack of teaching learning materials, teachers' competency and commitment and socio- politics issues.

> While politicians or representatives from MoE visited the university, we speak directly to them about the absence of laboratory equipment, machine, pommel horse, vault....... in meetings. And we expected for three or four years to get more improved quality education services and instructional materials from the University. However, we did not get any more improved educational quality services and I am disappointed with the gradual decline of education (S1).

Regarding the voices of students to speak directly to politicians by visiting their offices,

> I do not have mechanism to punish the MOE/ policy makers and no such trend. I do not have information to do this. If I go to the Ministry, who is going to hear my voice and give positive responses? ዛፍ ከቁመት በላይ መቁረጥ አደጋ አለው (cutting the tree above your height is dangerous) (S4).

The relationship of accountability between university students and politicians/MoE have designed the range of measures through which the student expresses their preferences and influence MoE to be well served from quality education. Yet it can be argued that the relationship between end-users of the educational quality provision, such as regular, evening, summer... distance students on one hand, and policy makers and politicians, on the other hand, remain astronomically far. Students observed the relationship between them and the ministry/policymakers as path less

educational accountability relationship to get quality. Similarly, international intellectuals agreed that the voice is the most complex accountability relationship in service delivery (WDR, 2004, pp.79). Thus, the ways for students' participation to improve the services for the provision to quality education is extremely weak and always invisible.

With regard to compact relationship, the policymaker provides resources and delegates powers and responsibility for collective objectives to the service providers (WU). The policymaker generates information about the performance of organizations. Enforceability comes into play when the compact also specifies the rewards (and possibly the penalties) that depend on the service provider's actions and outputs. Compact between policymakers and organizational providers should create an environment in which a university has the means and motivation to provide high-quality learning. Whether there is public production or government funding of a range of providers, the compact should focus on outputs and outcomes. This requires a means of assessing a University's contribution to the collective objectives of education, and creating an environment for organizations to innovate and bring those innovations to scale University autonomy with accountability (WDR, 2004, pp.113).

Evaluations tell policymakers/MoE in other countries what works and what doesn't. Nevertheless, intention of the MoE however, focused on the input aspects rather than the outcomes,

> The representatives from the Ministry come at the end of the year so to evaluate the university performance with such low participatory approach of all stakeholders at all levels. Their evaluation criteria focused on quantitative aspect that አለ ወይስ የለም (does it exist or not) such as the amount of student enrollment, one-to- five arrangement, library room, laboratory room, research symposium carried out, classroom desks, toilet facilities, curriculum review, the opening of departments, reports sent, minutes of committees with minuet...... that may or may not really indicate the status of the University (D2).

The MOE guide institutional quality enhancement efforts as the case may be, determine or indicate core learning outcomes or graduate competencies (Proclamation, 2009/22), respondent indicated that MoE has no mirror to see the University's overall efficiency, productivity, profit and specific quality of class room educational practices.

> How do students learn and get satisfied? How do teachers teach? What was obtained as result of one-to five organizational activities? What are the important innovative elements as a consequence of curriculum review? Addressing educational quality provision was not the main concern of the MoE representatives/supervisors. Regarding the curriculum review they interviewed and got response as it was done, yet no such activity was done in WU (D2).

Conducting both quantitative and qualitative evaluations by using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and workshops will be useful to triangulate what was done and not (WDR, 2004). In this regard, the link of compact relationship between policymakers and frontline educational provider would further strengthen the accountability of university teachers, *"I have never seen representatives from MoE to communicate with me with classroom practice of academic issue". (L2)*

The existing accountability relationship of the policy makers/MOE and university teachers shows no link in influencing teachers to provide quality education. In this regard, the study reveals that there is poor ***focus*** in monitoring and evaluating university performance processes in relation to quality education provision. Yet, collection of crude data with poor participation of all stakeholders of the University would make weak accountability system compact relationships with respect to effective provision of quality education. Thus, the current flow through compact accountability relationship to the quality education providers is sluggish; due to MOE's act as the annual evaluator of the hardware part or proximate determinants of success. However, such supervision and evaluation mechanism does not have direct power to bring fruitful educational quality in classrooms.

4.1.2 Students Power and Management Relationship

Policymakers can not specify all actions of providers in the compact. Students must reveal to providers their demand for services and monitor the providers' provision of services. Students and organizational providers interact through the individuals who provide educational service, teachers, the frontline professionals and frontline university teachers (WDR, 2004, pp. 51), and it focuses on how well students can increase the provision of educational accountability system of university. It is regarded as the "short route" of accountability, which denotes forms of direct client feedback, co-management, and/or students choice related to services provided (Gropello,

2004; WDR, 2004). Under this type of accountability, the end-users of quality education provision, for example, undergraduate and graduate students are expected to hold the frontline educational providers accountable for student engagement to quality education.

Previously the result of the study clearly indicated us about the disconnection power of students' services through the long routs accountability system so as to be provided with quality education. In short accountability routs, students declared many dissatisfaction points to the provision of quality of education,

> I am 4ᵗʰ year mechanical engineering student and the quality of educational services is totally converted to the social studies. However, course outline tells us about the industrial visit, laboratory applications, machine operation.... I also faced incompetency of both Ethiopian teachers and expatriate teachers (focused to give good grades than good teaching) who have similar skills in operating the machine with us (S1).

Another student from the Sport Science department said the following:

> We do have disagreement with teachers who have poor competency. Our laboratory is our gymnastic. Yet we lack football field, swimming pool, and other facilities... to learn our courses effectively. We are hopeless now (S2).

Similarly, regarding the professional practices of some teachers, an informant in the study said "We see some demotivating factors from few teachers and their methodologies. The majority of teachers use the same teaching approach using LCD throughout the year." (S4)

In order to get quality education service students from various disciplines identify problems for their poor engagements as: lack of teachers' commitment, poor preparations and incompetency, lack of practical application of teaching... students used client power relationship, which is defined as a relationship that connects them to university management bodies. From each class students formed committee and asked many times about the above stated deficiencies and a response from the university management was as follows;

> The response to our questions from the university management showed that we do not have budget; we are in the process; the time is gone to go to industrial visit; students of this and that batch are አስተማሪ ከሳሾች (the blamer of the teachers) and so on. Thus, with such low quality education, we cannot create job after graduation and majority of engineering and computational

> students are optionally diverting their fields through evening and weekend program (S1).

Although there are meeting with the university management body,

> More of the meeting agenda is on peace issues. Through discussion we asked to get balanced food for sport science student and quality of educational facilities. However, the response from the University indicated that we are second Generation University so, we can fulfill turn by turn and we are in the process. (S2).

From the above analysis the students' power to get quality educational provision from the frontline providers is insufficient to make them to be globally competent and the response from the university management is discouraging. In reality, "ደሞዜ ይቆረጣል ብዬ አስቤ አላውቅም (*I did not assume to lose my salary as a result of management punishment)" (L2).* Thus, under this scenario, I observed that the only remaining option is to apply voice accountability to politicians and policy makers by visiting their office, yet no such movement. Moreover, politician/policy makers must use compact accountability to hold the University accountable for the provision of quality education. As already noted, however, the compact accountability relationship is hardly helpful in holding the University as accountable as they should be. Thus, students are highly suspended to play with both long and short route accountability relationships to be provided with quality education.

Regarding management relationship, organizational and frontline providers' accountability relationships indicated insignificant contribution for the provision of quality education. Nevertheless, managing for effective services means getting people with the right skills and training in place (capacity)and providing the right infrastructure and inputs to work with (logistics) and ensuring the motivation (both extrinsic and intrinsic) of frontline workers (WDR, 2004, pp.124) are the great accountability of the management. Definitely, every organization has formal and informal tools of management to provide frontline workers with assignments and delineated areas of responsibility, equipping them with the resources to act.

In public agencies this management function is at times blurred because providers are employees of "the government." But all the standard management issues of selecting, training, and motivating workers in an

organization apply to all organizations (WDR, 2004, pp.51). It is the actions that create effective frontline providers (University teachers, department heads, and college deans) within organizations (WU).

As internal factor that affect the provision of quality of education in the University, a great issue, either directly or indirectly related to the structure and competency of management approach of the system.

> The effort of the University management is more of administrative rather academic. They do not have potential to advise, monitor, coach, and mentor, assist, and supervise the overall provision of quality education. This is because the majority of them are **the Yes and Okay** and from non-teaching/leadership /teacher education/ background. There are professionals and academicians who can properly manage the University in well manner and yet they do not get chance to be invited to their profession related management position. Basically, there is no competition (D1).

Another respondent also tangibly explains that the University's top management is formed as right person is not in the right place and worried about the *wastage and expire of knowledge* as an emerging theme,

> Professional from law department is assigned to the position of educational assessment position and the one from education background is assigned to work on anti-corruption position and law and legal activities". (D1). "This can be done purposively and ሰው በሚያውቀው ቦታ እንዲሰራ አይፈለግም (assigning right person at the right place is not needed)". (D2). And hesitating and refusing academicians and intellectuals and talents is the instrumental rule repeatedly seen from management (L1).

Frontline professionals tried to classify the accountability relationship of University management in to two categorized as driving and hindrance for their quality service provision and such as,

> Management body is the key factors in accelerating the provision of quality education. Unfair treatment from the management body will motivate teachers who breathe with similar lung with the yes group. In this case the under qualified and failed research paper at department level was used as promotion at top management level. Similarly, those who have smooth relationship with the management body will get promotion and position as well (D1).

On the other hand, there is demotivating factors of teachers that are related management interference of professional autonomy and intrinsically de motivated and less committed to teaching, which in turn affects both their level of accountability to provide quality education,

> We are forced to teach students of masters' programs who got 3 and 5 marks out of 50% of entrance exam and who were academically dismissed of the yes groups. The value given from the management to the University teachers is too low than other University communities. (D1).

Autonomy and accountability are twins and two faces of a single coin (WDR, 2004).This indicates that one can affect the other for providing quality education. To this end, another university lecturer added that,

> We faced problem to submit students' grade. When we submit it, የተማሪ ውጤት ቆጥረው ይረከቡናል (the department head count the number of As, Bs, Cs... for approving or not). The department head never believes our work and he says improve it if low scored student name ID observed on the grade report list (L3).

Autonomy and accountability create incentives to adopt "proven successful practices", to "evaluate the effectiveness of homegrown initiatives", and to create a sense of pride and commitment in the school (WDR, 2004, pp.123). However, from the analysis, the University management was blocking teachers' commitment in providing quality education. They negatively influenced teachers' decision making authority in many aspects rather than making coherent professional assistance to improve the quality education through collection of information on frontline performance. Indeed, the empirical evidence suggests that the management accountability relationship is rather inadequate in making capacity building, motivation..., thus contributing to students' poor quality education provision.

4.1.3 Accountability Relationship of Teachers and Students' Views in Holding the Provision of Quality Education (Emerging theme)

An institutional arrangement for higher education should be judged by its production of high-quality learning, equitably distributed. This requires that students be ready and they learn. In this case, economists summarize this relationship under the metaphor of a "*production function*." Little is known about this function because instruction involves human beings (teachers and students) in all their complexity way (WDR, 2004 pp.119). Similarly, Amare (2007, pp. 252), "accountability is the central to teachers' professional practices", Yet there are open ongoing, open debate about internal and external stability, "***one size fits all***" pedagogical approach, students and teacher motivation and background of students are considered for providing quality education. In this regard, intelligent University teacher explained the

gradual decrease of students' education background of providing quality education,

> Since competency of the students is gradually decreasing, I tried to teach in Afan Oromo and Amharic Language so as to make the content more clear. Majority of students say that we reach here through dependency on one- to-five group work and smooth promotion. Students say that, አዚህ ደረስን ምን እናመጣለን (Here after all we do not expect to add new knowledge). So we are suffering with the crisis of quality education at primary and secondary school level (L3)

Another lecturer elaborate this as,

> If students reach University with poor understanding of mathematical operation, it is very difficult to teach about Calculus, Differential, and Abstract... I can't teach more critical issues. To provide quality education student should be ready and be motivated to receive instructional flow. They do not want to do activities independently (L1).

One respondent indicated about major students' views to be engaged that contributed to the blocking factors for the delivery of educational quality.

> In a class, more than half students say that, we are sure that we will pass and graduate through the group work assessment. And other said that እኛ ብቻ አይደለንም የትምህርን ትጥራት የምናረጋግጠው (we are not the only to assure quality education)". We are also demotivated with the outside stress (socio-politics and jobless graduates); yet we are blamed as we are careless and not motivated to learn (S3).

One talented teacher addressed as teachers' motivation and effort also related to students' motivation in providing quality education.

> While teaching, students are present in the class physically. However, psychologically they are absent from the class because of Region unrest and instability of both the internal and external factors. Our families are displacing and dying due to internal conflict of the country. This directly inhibits our motivation (D1).

From the analysis, students are blaming their previous education progresses that did not prepare them for tertiary education as also confirmed by their teachers. Teachers' motivation in providing quality education is also affected by students' motivation and unrest to provide deep learning. Thus, in order to provide quality education with great accountability, the status of quality education system at all levels and the issue of peace and stability should be deeply considered for more rigorous quality education provision in HEs.

4.1.4. Approaches to Educational Accountability in Providing Quality Education

Although UNESCO (2016) notes various approaches to accountability, in order to explore the educational accountability system for WU, I adapt the following major approaches from internal and external situations by making most relevant for the provision of quality education.

4.1.5 Financial Delegation Accountability

According to Proclamation (2009/30), every institution shall institute rules and procedures on employment and promotion of its academic staff, consistent with international good practices. In this case university has been delegated to provide quality educational delivery with necessary budget. In this regard,

> I know that only few male and female students are selectively supported with small amount of money. There are many students, who need financial assistance for the success of their education. I know students from my class, who are from the poor family, and our class member students contributed money to help them (S4).

In fulfilling the instructional materials, specialized food for physical education students commitment of the university management was seen as effortless as, *We asked the university management to buy and provide the laboratory materials, machines.... yet their response is always related to the shortage of finance*. (S4).

Consequently, in order to provide more nutritious food,

> Since our education is highly related to physical exercise, we need more **nutritious food** other than normal Cafe. We asked to get such food, but no response from the university management body and they say no budget" (S2).

To achieve a variety of desirable teacher behaviors, entirely to act to motivate teachers in any way, intrinsic or extrinsic, on the basis of their undertaking the desired behaviors (Ptitchett, 2015) and yet,

> We do have the least to get payment other than salary as compared to the other University. We do have children and living house to leave the University. Payment for research activity is also not encouraging. We also write modules with no payment (D1).

From the analysis universities are responsible for ensuring that funds are effectively used in accordance with government directives and that they help bring about the expected improvement of educational quality provision, the

University provides insufficient or inflexible finance for teachers, students and high technologically advanced teaching learning materials with poor accountability approach address quality education. Yet for students food provision, the world development report indicated that ***why not vitamin A*** (WDR, 2004) in supporting students of future generations.

4.1.6   Regulatory and Professional Accountability

Regulatory accountability focuses on inputs and processes, emphasizing compliance with avail-able laws and regulations (UNESCO, 2016).University' teaching and learning processes are largely regulated by the university supervision system, which is expected to hold teachers/departments and teachers accountable for achieving not only teaching and learning goals but also organizational management and leadership goals (UNESCO, 2016). In achieving its vision related to the accountability of the provision quality education, WU formed the overall supervision team,

> We have supervision team, who see the overall teaching learning activity. I have not seen any punishment as a result of the report of this team. If there are issues or problems related to the provision of quality education, the department can manage it. (A1).

With the practical activity of the university supervision, intellectual respondent colored the secret as,

> They largely focused on visiting University compound, pointing out mistakes, writing reports, and submitting the reports to the MoE bodies in very attractive way. During evaluation time of the MoE/ policy makers, those groups are interviewed and communicated (D2)

Professional accountability concerns issues such as the extent to which education enables learners to meet their day-to-day needs and the extent to which educators adhere to professional standards (UNESCO, 2016). The question here resolves around whether students of the public higher education system accept that education is relevant to their day-to-day needs and whether teachers work ethically. With respect to teachers professional accountability, WU introduced dressing style rather than students classroom engagement of quality education.

> WU distributed neckties for all university teachers to wear in the campus. The intention was just to make teachers to be ethical and professional. Some teachers

wore them for a week and stopped it and continued their practices. The implication is dressing will enhance the delivery of quality of education (D2).

Concerning teachers professional usual accountability towards the students,

> Recently MoE introduced exit exam for graduate class. Student voiced that our professional teacher who are preparing us should first take the exam. This implies there are teachers who are not properly accountable and efficient for their student learning and students hesitate the quality of educational provision. (D1).

From the discussion more activities were given to department to foster and strengthen accountability, and ultimately to provide quality education. This implies that informational feedback loop between the University and the frontline providers are weak. Similarly, the intention of majority teachers' professional accountability towards the students in WU is below the expected approaches and the whole University too. Thus the University's regulatory accountability approach is also unsuccessful for provision of quality education.

4.1.7 Strategic Plan (2016-2020) for Provision of Quality Education

"Clear organizational objectives" are the driving forces for successful working situation of educational accountability (WDR, 2004). Similarly, the reform (Proclamation 351/4&7) underline the importance of autonomy, coupled with *strong accountability.* Likewise, as the main element of excellence in learning and teaching, the document strategic plan (1016-2020) seriously indicated to increase customer/students satisfaction. To provide quality education for students/customers the following *ten* core values are stated: innovation and creativity; Excellence; quality; academic freedom; stewardship; empowering; commitment; democratization; diversity; and team spirit (WU, 2016, pp.10-12). WU considered those core values as an effective strategy for building equitable education systems and providing quality education; However,

> The core values are simply the written words. As one element of core values accountability is purposely not stated for the fact that management body cannot fulfill the accountability system to the concerned domains. They do not like to hear the word accountability, because the University is **corrupted in many aspects** (in finance, position, provision, other treatment of the staff...). I believe that everybody is accountable to his/her duties" (D1).

From the analysis I understood that unclear objectives of strategic plan that lack accountability issue and weak commitment of administrative academic management in reducing accountability issue from the strategic plan for the provision of quality education. This result the deeper weaknesses of institutional arrangements to enhance quality education. In this case, underlying concept of the goal setting approach is simple; however, one way of implementing the goal setting process that has been found to be useful in education through powerful relationship accountability system.

4.1.8 Result Oriented Evaluation as Performance- Based Approach

Evaluation-based information, important not only for monitoring providers, also enables the rest of the world to learn about service delivery. Systematic evaluation of service delivery can have a profound effect on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals and the provision of quality of education too (WDR, 2004).Thus, an evaluation of the information campaign about the provision of quality reveals a large improvement. In this case WU has result oriented evaluation mechanism that focused on the provision and of education.

> The evaluation mechanism is more of top-down that opens floor for fault finding rather than the direct professional practice of teachers. It has not bring any impact on quality education because the elements of the resulted oriented evaluation never talk about the practice of teachers of research, teaching learning and community service. (L3)

Similarly, one respondent from one college clearly gave details of the evaluation mechanism effectiveness and approaches as,

> Result oriented evaluation in WU is more of for ranking individuals view and not transparent, and it is not properly related to the provision of quality education. While evaluation, for instance teachers who got "C" which is the least of members of the college, are immediately promoted to the member of the top management of the University. The University management was not evaluated in front of academic staff (frontline providers) (L3).

In this regard, another University teacher pointed out that,

> The points of the evaluation does not reflect the over all aspects of quality education at University level. It is the mechanism of surface criticism, but not professional. The evaluation points have been annually the same and it **talks beyond academic issue**, thus I have not seen any punishment and improvement of **quality education** as a result of this evolution. I see it is one means for reducing teachers' moral to provide quality education (D1).

By documenting success through rigorous evaluation, the program has been improved, scaled up, and taught others (pp.29) as best practices. Yet from the analysis, one can conclude that the semester based resulted evaluation conducted by the University has no contribution to the teachers educational accountability in providing quality education and rather it is used for the formation of groups and for finding faults. Such practice conform that little evaluation, little innovation, stagnant productivity (WDR, 2004, pp.26).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that despite the Ethiopian government's commitment to enhancing quality education (TGE, 1994) as a means of improving educational service provision, few efforts have been made to establish a strong foundation in educational accountability relationships, arrangements, and approaches. Therefore, it is concluded that Ethiopia lacks effective educational accountability policies and mechanisms, contributing to students' poor provision of quality education and resulted that four educational accountability relationships are all weak and contend with various (visible and invisible) challenges as conclusions:

1. Accountability arrangements of voice and compact have been found to be confusing, making it difficult for the end-users of educational quality provision to clearly identify the authority responsible for the good or bad performance. Therefore, the University students are ignorant and hand caped in holding politicians, policy makers and MoE to get quality education and they see them astronomically far to influence them.

2. Compact also indicates how well and how clearly the responsibilities and objectives of students' engagement are communicated to the public organizations (WU) that provide educational provision (WDR, 2004). The study revealed that compact between policymakers and WU as providers are seen as annual visitors of the countable input aspect that facilitate the quality education rather than the educational accountability system of the process, outcome and output. The study also depicts MOE has showed no enforceability relation with University teachers to influence them for the provision of quality education. Thus, the policy makers and politicians should use well established educational accountability system and structure so as to force fully affect positive and core learning outcomes or graduate competencies than surface evaluation mechanisms.

3. The study revealed that through client power relationship, University management is in a position of non-responsiveness in decision-making and showing commitment to challenges (related to teachers, teaching learning materials...) raised by the students that affect the provision of quality education. This implies that the student power relationship was violated to create trust between management and teachers to deliver the quality education they have been delegated to deliver. Thus, the University should empower students by strengthening the short route and strongly take the right educational accountability to the overall quality provision.

3. The management relationship with well-organized authority, responsibility, and accountability; reducing and/or avoiding duplication of work; providing prompt or quick decision making; and enhancing coordination and teamwork, boosting workers' morale and positive attitude, and ultimately leading to higher productivity (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Nevertheless, the study indicated that the university management groups lack competency and showed sluggish and non-accountability to hold frontline providers of educational professionals. Rather, they act as catalysts to demotivate talent, innovators, teachers, who are effective educational leaders by eroding university professors' professional autonomy that resulted for corresponding weakening of their professional accountability to provide quality education. Likewise wastage and expire of talent knowledge was observed. This will result to lose the power and capacity to affect the future directions of the struggle for knowledge domination. In general, as noted earlier, both routes are weak in holding the frontline service providers accountable to provide quality education.

Therefore, there should be educational accountability reform at both university and country level that incorporates rigorous competition so that the knowledge talents are the players of the game in quality education provision. In this regard, "*next to God, the hope of this country is on our hand, and the need for well-established accountability system at all levels is mandatory to save our country from poisoned education quality*" (D1). I would like to stress that, since talent belongs to humanity, WU, Oromia Region, Ethiopia, Africa, and world; those who abuse and suspense their ocean knowledge to the fertility of Ethiopian education system are challenger of the growth of the country. Thus, talent should respected and serve as

corner stone of the overall educational accountability system to provide quality education in particular emphasis to HE.

5. Since there is no clear accountability relationships, arrangements and structures to support accountability at various levels, which is among the possible factors that contribute to the fragmented educational provision. Thus, establishing clear and effective accountability policies and relationships with effective performance management system should be introduced with strong educational accountability, otherwise, the organizational culture will remain trapped by corruption even if the system is decentralized and greater autonomy is provided.

6. Student unrest in HE has been a challenging issue for more than two decades that systematically affects the educational accountability of both teachers and students in providing quality education. Since the emergence of education and training policy, quality education provision in HE has been the main agenda at various meetings and research conferences. However, teachers, students and community at large do not completely trust that the existing status of quality of education meets the global scenario. The *discussion of such scenario will left open*. Absence of that peace and prevalence unrest are also the main agenda that affect the educational accountability relationship of both teachers and students. Thus, the government should work on situational, environmental, and motivational factors so as to improve the provision of educational accountability through peace and security. The world is dramatically changing. Therefore, more rigorous educational policy and strategy that promote criticality with strong accountability relationship should be reformed.

7. Regarding, the effective approaches to educational accountability in providing quality education, the study revealed that: ineffective use of funds to address quality of educational provision; superficial regulatory system and little to boost about educational quality provision; weak professional accountability (both teachers and managers); irrelevance of result oriented evaluation to the provision of quality education; and unfortunate and unclear plan which lacks accountability relationships and arrangements that contribute to the weak provision of quality education. Thus, urgent preparation and circulation of accountability guidelines to engage all levels and university's community in an eclectic model for managing quality

education whereby every level have to be simultaneously responsible to educational accountability relationships. The system work well when forces are the same direction.

References

Amare Asgedom (2007). Academic Freedom and the Development of Higher Education: The case of Addis Ababa University 1950-2005. Un published PhD thesis.

Burke, J. (Ed.) (2005). Achieving accountability in higher education: Balancing public, academic and market demands. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gropello, E. (2004). Education decentralization and accountability relationships in Latin America (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3453). Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=625333

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2013). Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Kai, J. (2009). A Critical Analysis of Accountability in Higher Education, Chinese Education & Society, 42:2, 39-51

Komba, A. A. (2017). Relevance of schooling in Tanzania: Educational leaders' perspectives on economically disadvantaged families. In E. Lehtomaki, H. Janhonen-Abruquah, & G. Kahangwa (Eds.), Rutledge studies in culture and sustainable development: Culturally responsive education: Reflections from the global South and North (pp. 95-113). London, England: Rutledge.

Leveille, D. (2006). Accountability in Higher Education: A Public Agenda for Trust and Cultural Change, University of California, Berkeley: CHSE.

Merriam, S. B. 1998. Qualitative Research and Case Study applications in Education. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

Mulgan, R (2000) 'Accountability': An Ever-expanding Concept? Public Administration, Vol. 78, No.3, pp. 555-573.

MOE (2010).The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Mulatu D.& Befikadu, Z. (2017).Governance of Ethiopia Public Universities in Southern Region: Professional & Administrative Accountability Perspective. OSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 22, Issue 5.

Pandey, I.M. (2004). Governance of higher education institutions, VIKALPA, V.29, No.2.

Pritchett, L.(2015). Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes: Making the Transition from Schooling to Learning. Harvard Kennedy School and Center for Global Development.

Proclamation (2009).Higher education proclamation, Federal Negarit Gazeta, Addis Ababa: No. 64.

TGE (1994).Education and training Policy of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.

UNESCO (2016). Theme of 2017 global education monitoring report: Accountability in education (Concept Note me of 2017). Retrieved from https:// en.unesco. org/ gem-report/ sites/ gem-report/ files/ Concept% 20Note.pdf on 01/01/2008.

UNESCO (2017).Global education monitoring report: accountability in Education, Concept note.

WDR. (2004). World Development Report 2004: Making services work for poor people. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bit-stream/handle/10986/5986/WDR%202004%20-%20English.pdf?sequence=1

WU (2016).BSC Based Strategies plan 2016-2020. Nekemte: Wollega University Printing Press.

Yin, R.K.(2003) Case Study Research: Design and Methods(3rd.ed.). Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.

Yizengaw, T., 2003, Transformations in Higher Education: Experiences with Reform and Expansion in Ethiopian Higher Education System Keynote paper prepared for a Regional Training Conference on Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things That Work, Accra, Ghana.

Zajda, J.(2009). Globalization, policy and Comparative Research: Discourse for globalization. .Australia: Springer Science+ Business media B.V.