

**Assessment of institutional framework for undertaking research in  
Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs)**

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***Abstract:***

*Scholarly communication is one of the activities of Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). At the heart of scholarly communication, we can find research. The fact that research helps to maintain quality in the teaching/learning and outreach services of higher learning institutions is well attested. As one of the pillars of HLI, it is expected to become the anchor of especially graduate programs. Graduate programs can have strong foundation when research becomes part and parcel. In fact, in order for the research to flourish and sustain, a strong institutional framework that would assist the smooth running of research activities must be put in place. The institutional framework must provide space to enable institutions to have industry linkage so that research becomes practical and applied and grants could also be secured for research activities of HLI as well. Research funding has a direct impact on the overall quality of programs both at undergraduate and graduate level as well as on outreach services (Jain et al, 2010). Despite these premises, little is known about whether there are enabling institutional frameworks for the undertaking of researches. As mushrooming of PHEIs is a recent phenomenon, there is a knowledge gap from PHEIs side considering the overall research engagements and systems of managing the research efforts as well. Therefore, this research was designed to assess the available institutional framework for undertaking research in PHEIs.*

*While making the assessment, research questions such as “are there available research strategy and policy?”; “are there earmarked budget for undertaking research by staff members?”; “does the senate legislation recognizes research productivity by way of tenure and promotion?”; “does the research strategy stipulate ways of research output disseminations?”; “are there any established reviewing systems to award a grant?”; “are there any initiatives to establish industry*

*linkage?”; “what is the role of Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) in strengthening institutional research frameworks?” and “what possible recommendations could be made?” were asked.*

*In order to respond to these questions, qualitative survey, literature review and review of pertinent organizational documents were conducted. Admas University College, Alpha University College, St. Mary’s University and Unity University, based on their research culture and delivery of graduate programs, were targeted for this research. Preliminary findings revealed that the outputs of research are well recognized by considering publications for promotion; there is an earmarked budget for undertaking research for staff members of surveyed institutions; and the focus area used by HERQA to evaluate institutional quality audit has also helped PHEIs to strengthen their institutional research frameworks for the efficient management of their research endeavors. It has also been noted that institutional productivity and visibility in terms of research can be achieved when appropriate framework for the research is put in place. Such frameworks are also important in enabling PHEIs to stay in the scholarly communication cycle in a sustainable manner.*

**Keywords:** Scholarly communication, research management, institutional framework for research, private higher education, university-industry linkage

## **1. Background**

One of the major activities that HLIs are required to carry out is research as it is one of the activities among the triple responsibilities of HLI. In light of handling such responsibilities, HLIs are expected to set research agenda. Most of the time research agenda have been imposed by government or funding institutions on HLIs to ensure Return on Investment (ROI) of the public spending on research (Igor, 2013).

Research engagements of HLIs have been noted to have considerable contributions in the scholarly communication life cycle. HLIs cater for authors, editors, peer-reviewers, grants, infrastructure, content and system for the successful production of knowledge by way of research (Wondimeneh, 2011; King & Tenopior, 2011). Shouldering such a responsibility requires supporting institutional frameworks that serve as a catalyst for the HLI. In order for HLIs to become visible in the scholarly communication arena, they are required to put in place an institutional set up to stimulate, plan, manage, assess and disseminate research outputs so that the outputs have significance. Among the key factors for the sustainable management research in HLIs, linking research with the industry has been given due attention (Wu, n.d.; Hughes, 2006). Such an effort has become of age as it pays to make research efforts of HLIs sustainable by boosting the image of HLIs and drawing additional resources as well (Hughes, 2006). University ranking, which takes research output at institutional level as an input has also been measured (Wondimeneh, 2011; King & Tenopior, 2011) by research productivity. Thus, the best ranking universities in a given country and globally are the ones that will be the most sought ones.

On top of these, quality ensuring institutions have also made it a crucial point for HLIs to have institutional frameworks for undertaking researches (HERQA, 2009). As a result, HLIs have become pioneers in the production as well as dissemination of researches at national as well as international level. Living testimonials for these are a number of national as well as international conferences being organized; professional journals published; authors, peer-reviewers, editors, and printing presses (King & Tenopior, 2011) are predominantly from such institutions.

Although different researches are being undertaken in HLIs set up in Ethiopia and more than two dozens of journals are published by HLIs, productivity measuring index for HLIs in Ethiopia is not satisfying. As latecomers to the higher education landscape, PHEIs are also not immune from such an image. Nonetheless, in order to improve their competitiveness in the global scholarly communication arena, both public

and private HLIs must put in place a strong institutional framework for research.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The HLI landscape in Ethiopia is relatively young. Despite its existence, the research wing is demonstrated by overall emaciated productivity. Concerning this issue, top government officials have been complaining that research has not been given appropriate attention as a result poverty reduction efforts of the government are not supported by indigenous research output. Rather, the solutions being provided are more of imported ones. Anecdotal evidence shows that for the gaunt development of research, one of the contributing factors is the developmental stage of the institutional framework of research which is characterized as low.

On top of these, the number of journals published in Ethiopia has increased, exceeding two dozen (AJOL, 2014). Nevertheless, productivity in terms of research is paying for HLIs by making themselves visible and draws a number of resources in return (Hughes, 2006). In addition, it will add value to the entire HLI activities. It is also one of the factors that will help HLIs to rank among the best one and attract talented students as well as scholars.

Notwithstanding these facts, little is known about whether there are enabling institutional frameworks for the undertaking of researches in academic institutions in Ethiopia particularly in the private ones.

## **3. Objective of the Study**

The general objective of this research is assessing the available institutional framework for undertaking research in Private Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia.

## **4. Research questions**

In order to achieve the research objective, the following research questions were posed and attempts were made to respond to each of them.

- ♣ Are there available research strategy and policy?
- ♣ Are there earmarked budget for undertaking research by staff members?
- ♣ Does the senate legislation recognize research productivity by way of tenure and promotion?
- ♣ Does the research strategy stipulate ways of research output disseminations?
- ♣ Are there any established reviewing systems to award a grant?
- ♣ Are there any initiatives to establish industry linkage?
- ♣ What is the role of Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) in strengthening institutional research frameworks? and
- ♣ What possible recommendations could be made?

## **5. Methodology**

In order to find appropriate answers to the research questions, qualitative survey, document review, analysis of HERQA Audit report, content analysis of institutional websites of surveyed institutions, review of registration system of Putting Research Knowledge at the Heart of Development (a system that belongs to the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)) and literature review were used as sources of data.

### *Qualitative survey*

Interviews were conducted for Admas University, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University and Unity University. The institutions were selected based on their prior research experiences. For instance, Admas University College has organized seven national and international conferences and also publishes a journal; Alpha University College has organized eight national conferences in a row and launched a journal; St. Mary's University has organized eleven national and international conferences and also publishes five journals in different disciplines and Unity University also organizes thirteen national conferences and publishes a journal. The individuals interviewed belong to one of such

categories as Dean, Director and Head of structures responsible for the management of research activities in their respective institutions.

#### *Document review*

To substantiate data obtained through the interview, the Senate Legislation, research strategy/guidelines of the surveyed institutions were also consulted.

#### *Analysis of HERQA Audit Report*

To augment the data obtained using the above methods, Audit Report of HERQA of Admas University (HERQA, 2009a), Alpha University College (HERQA, 2011), St. Mary's University (HERQA, 2009b) and Unity University (HERQA, 2009c) with particular emphasis on Focus Area was made.

#### *Content Analysis of Institutional Web sites*

Content Analyses of institutional web sites of Admas University, Alpha University College, St. Mary's University and Unity University were made in order to assess the level of research dissemination of the surveyed institutions using the internet platform.

#### *Literature review*

The interview was prepared using the literature as framework and checklists for content analysis of the institutional website was also designed based on experiences from the literature (Harzelkorn, 2004; Taylor, 2006; Anita & Taylor, 2011).

#### *Review of Registration system of Putting Research Knowledge at the Heart of Development*

Review of registration system of Putting Research Knowledge at the Heart of Development was in order to identify the types and number of online resources/databases registered by the surveyed institutions.

## **6. Literature review**

## **6.1. Scholarly communication vs. management of research**

Research management encompasses all activities one can find in scholarly communication. These are putting in place the organizational structure, policies, incentive mechanisms, and systems and infrastructures, contents to provide the researcher with conducive environment to produce research output and to put in place a systems for dissemination (Kirkland & Ajai-Ajagbe, 2013). HLIs have become the focal point of government with the expectation to contribute towards capacity building, economic growth and innovation and thus the importance of strengthening institutional research capacity has not become an option, rather mandatory (Harzelkorn, 2004). According to Harzelkorn (2004) institutions might be engaged in research undertakings for such reasons as sustainable academic and professional reputation in knowledge-based economy; align economic activities with economic development; provide economically useful skills with industrial relevance; academic excellence in a professional context; eligibility of specific funding opportunities and retain and improve position. While managing research undertakings at institutional level such factors as collaborations, organizational funding, human resource, enhanced status of applied research and indicative actions in the environment must be considered (Harzelkorn, 2004). It has also been noted that research management is an outgrowth of research functions (Anita & Taylor, 2011). In order for research to flourish, challenges towards conscious and active management of research environments must be addressed. The research environment must be put in place in such a manner to properly address “the capacity to design and operate new structures and processes for stimulating, guiding and overseeing research” adequately (Anita and Taylor, 2011). In order for research environment successfully attract productive researchers at institutional level, the provision of research stimulant environment has also been underlined. Research stimulant environment is a product of managerial style that is more focused on creating a situation that streamlines research in a productive manner (ibid). HLIs do not exist on island, rather the kind of institutional framework they are required to put in place in managing research usually is a factor of a number of variables. One of such variables or factors is

the fact that government interest is a driving force to put in effect institutional framework for managing research (Igor, 2013).

HLIs are required to embrace research undertaking as part of their core activities *inter alia*. We can find research at the core of scholarly communication life cycle and HLIs are the prime stakeholders that are committed to providing the institutional framework, content, author and products of research (Wondimeneh, 2011). In addition to publishers, libraries, fund granting institutions, HLIs have played immense role in the production as well as sustainability of knowledge production by way of research to date (Kirkland & Ajai-Ajagbe, 2013). These institutions can manage to be the focal point in the research arena as they have been successful in the management of their research undertakings by providing the necessary inputs to help grow and thrive good research culture.

Taylor (2006) is of the view that for research environment to be productive, it is expected to have such characteristics as clear goals that serve a co-ordinating functions; research emphasis; distinctive research culture; positive group climate; assertive, participative governance; decentralized organization; frequent communication; accessible resources (particularly human resources); sufficient size, age and diversity of the research group; appropriate rewards; concentration on recruitment and selection; and leadership with research expertise and skill in both initiating appropriate organizational structure and using participatory management practice.

According to Taylor (2006) good practice in managing research at institutional level is demonstrated by having “clear definition of mission of the university; definition of priorities in research fields; definition of policies to balance fundamental and applied research; definition of policies to support local development; definition of policies of social accountability and operational transparency in the use of public and private funding”.

The following sections discuss issues in managing research at institutional level; organic documents for managing research and research productivity; criteria for awarding research grants; research industry



linkage; and role of quality assuring organization for the development of institutional research.

## **6.2. Issues in managing research at institutional level**

Research as one of the core activities of HLIs is the catalyst to create vibrant environment. Nevertheless, in order for research to survive and thrive appropriate institutional framework must be put in place (Delaney, 2009). This will call for the management of the researcher as well as the research itself. Authorities contended that research is a highly personalized endeavor even though the product usually is owned by institutions. The fact that research is personal makes it challenging to manage as any other activities in HLIs (Harzelkorn, 2004; Taylor, 2006). Like any other activities, research must be planned, organized, staffed with necessary human resource, controlled and should have all the required resources and be evaluated or assessed, etc. (Leimer, 2009; Delaney, 2009).

### *Planning research undertakings*

For research to be well planned it must be first part and parcel of an organizational structure. In such a case, research can be initiated from department, faculty, research offices, etc by reporting either to the Deans, Directors, Vice Presidents or Presidents of HLI (Leimer & Terkla; Volkwein, 2008; Taylor, 2006; Igor, 2013; Parmley, 2009). Irrespective of where it is situated, the planning aspect of research at the institutional level rests on the responsible body. Managers for these positions are appointed rather than peer-selected (Anita & Taylor, 2011). However, it has been identified that there is no one size fits to all organizational structure for research.

Based on such prevailing challenges as massification, accreditation, fierce competition for meager research grant worldwide, the need for the development of research strategy, internalization of HLIs have become mandatory (Harzelkorn, 2004; Taylor, 2006; Igor, 2013). Planning of research must also guide the overall research activities of HLIs based on the research strategy developed. Formulation of research strategy is

critical as it is a starting point to do a well-crafted research at institutional level (Harzelkorn, 2004). The practicing of planning of research at institutional level will help HLIs to utilize resources allocated for research in an optimum manner. In addition, the plan would also help as factors that assist help to measure performance of the researchers as well as different entities that involve in the production as well as dissemination of research output. Authorities also noted that planning research and defining research clusters would put institutions in a competitive advantage (Harzelkorn, 2004; Doutriaux, 2003).

#### *Staffing research institutions*

As part of managing research activities in HLI, one of the crucial elements is assigning adequate number of staff with the relevant experiences that are in congruent with the mission and vision of the HLI. Since the academic environment is strict in who is legitimate to teach in postgraduate and undergraduate programs in terms of qualification, similarly qualification and experience for managing research at institutional level must not be compromised (Leimer & Terkla, 2009; Anita & Taylor, 2011). Experiences show that most research offices are managed by individuals who are appointed to manage research as well as researchers (Delaney, 2009). Such offices are explained by shortage of human resources in terms of quantity as well as quality (Harzelkorn, 2004). The staffing aspect of research institutions is also challenged by the absence of human resource development plans to equip well all the managers and the one who will be managed (Taylor, 2006). In terms of the skill set required, individuals who are assigned in such positions required to have planning, financial intelligence, team management, collaboration, etc, skills (Igor, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2012).

Harzelkorn (2004) recommends “investment; active use of performance indicators; development of limited number of research priorities, research clusters and centers; designing funding, recruitment, etc. to research priorities; strategic alliances with other HLIs or industrial partners and culture of scholarship” as approaches for the development of research capacity at institutional level.

### *Controlling*

One of the challenges that professionals faced with in the management of research activities is the nature of the business of research does not lend itself for effective controlling (Taylor, 2006). Nevertheless, unless controlling mechanisms for different research projects and other activities alike is made, the success of research at institutional level will suffer (Harzelkorn, 2004). Especially, with the ever dwindling and competitive budget/grant for research, managers of research must put a controlling mechanism (Taylor, 2006). However, the controlling mechanism must ensure an environment that will never create bureaucratic situation and make researchers frustrate and agonize.

### *Resources allocation for research*

As part of the management endeavor of research, one of the critical success factors for research to flourish at institutional level is the availability of the necessary and adequate resources (Harzelkorn, 2004). On top of availing human resource conversant with the management of the research and the researcher, providing the researchers with all such necessary resources such as infrastructure, content, research grants, incentives, etc. have practical impact on the overall productivity of the researcher and the institution (Taylor, 2006). In an attempt to undertake research, an institution might tap different funding sources. These include institutional fund, fund from government, international grants on competitive basis, etc. (Harzelkorn, 2004). It has also been asserted that availability of institutional funding has a direct impact on the overall quality of HLI activities including research (Jain et al, 2010). Especially, the need for the allocation of travel grants and others to help researchers communicate their research findings has been noted by different authors (Taylor, 2006; Leimer & Terkla, 2009; Harzelkorn, 2004).

### *Performance evaluation*

One of the critical factors identified in the research management arena is performance evaluation. Due to its peculiar nature, research as any other activities must be evaluated against the set standards or objectives (Sousa

et al, 2010; Taylor, 2006). Basically, the research content produced by different researchers might be evaluated with the already established evaluation tools like peer review and impact factor (Taylor, 2006; Anita & Taylor, 2011; O'Reilly et al, 2012). On top of these, the institutions must also be evaluated for the provision of quality, relevance, appropriateness of their research topics, whether they meet external stakeholders requirements, etc. (Huynh et al, 2009) of research systems.

### **6.3. Organic documents for managing research and research productivity**

As it has been mentioned in the previous section in relation to planning of research using research strategy, there are also other documents which facilitate the effective management of research at institutional level. One of such documents is research strategy/policy. Factors that influence research strategy at institutional level include globalization, knowledge economy, national research strategy, external funding mechanism and policy instruments, demands from industry/government, consultancy and entrepreneurial activities (Harzelkorn, 2004). Priority setting for institutional research can be affected by factors like availability of competence, competitive advantage, availability of funding, compliance with national priorities, budget constraints, internal evaluation process, compliance with regional priorities, internal institutional pressures, public pressure for relevance, and public pressure for accountability (ibid). In addition to research strategy, one of such documents is the Senate Legislation. Senate Legislation must provide rooms for research management from organizational perspective as well as kind of major activities that a responsible body must carry out within any organizational set up. On top of these, based on the productivity of researchers/academicians, it must also have spaces to recognize researchers by way of promotion and tenure (Sousa et al, 2010), a well-established activity that injects life for the scholarly communication.

### **6.4. Criteria for awarding research grants**

The attention given for research at institutional level is considerable. Institutions provide their researchers with grants for the undertakings of

research. Nevertheless, since the budget earmarked for research is usually meager (Sousa et al, 2010; Harzelkorn, 2004), grants are awarded based on merits and the criteria used for the award also varies from institutions to institutions. As it has been stipulated in different organic documents of HLI, the criteria for the award of research include but not limited to relevance, different stakeholders priority, alignment with graduate programs if there is/are any, etc. (Sousa et al, 2010; Harzelkorn, 2004).

### **6.5. Research industry linkage**

HLIs are important catalysts in the development of different products in the industry. State of the art products have been traced back to HLIs (Doutriaux, 2003; Hughes, 2006; Wu, N.D.). In this regard, research universities have been identified as the primary drivers of knowledge economy (Igor, 2013). Basic features of research universities can be explained by high concentration of talent among both faculty and students; abundant resources availability for the creation of sustainable environment for cutting-edge research and generation of new knowledge; and governance structure with high degree of autonomy, freedom, flexibility, organizational learning and a culture of excellence” (Igor, 2013). HLIs in their effort to carry out research might be required to link up their research with industry. The need might also arise from the requirements of the grant awarding institutions (Harzelkorn, 2004). Linking up research with industry will also increase visibility of HLIs for the industry is the living witness about the productivity of HLIs. The more HLIs are linking their research with industry, the more they will have resources that will make their research sustainable (Hughes, 2006; Wu, N.D.).

### **6.6. Barriers to institutional research productivity**

The fact that research is highly personalized is the major challenge to make institutions productive in terms of managing research. This is because productivity of research at institutional level depends on the motivation as well as willingness of the researchers (Taylor, 2006). On top of these, there are a number of issues that hamper the success of institutions in their research endeavor. In this line, Sousa et al (2010)

identified issues like “availability of resources, poor infrastructure, lack of expertise and teaching load” as problems that hamper productivity of research at institutional level. Similarly, Hazelkorn (2004) also identified “funding, evaluation criteria, poor research culture, infrastructure, status, uneven competition and physical location” (Hazelkorn, 2004) as barriers to institutional research productivity.

## **7. Summary of findings**

Summary of findings of the research is organized into two sections. The first section provides the general background summary of the findings of the analysis of the overall research management efforts of the surveyed institutions. The second part of the findings presents specific findings of the research vis-à-vis the research questions framed.

As part of the interview such items as whether research management has been reflected in the mission and vision of the surveyed institutions; the availability of an organizational structure for managing research; staffing; availability of resources including allocation of budget; and sources of funding for research at institutional level were raised and respondents response is organized in the subsequent headings.

### *Mission and Vision*

Towards the incorporation of research in the institutional mission and vision, surveyed institutions have shown their institutional commitment for the undertaking of research by incorporating phrases that promote and favor research in their Mission, Vision, Goal (MVG) and strategic plan.

### *Organizational Structure*

Consistent with the literature, review of the organizational structure of the surveyed institutions revealed that the offices for the management of researches are under the Vice president or Executive Vice President.

The office responsible for the management of research at Admas University is organized under the Office of Academic President for Marketing and Research; for Alpha University College it is under the

Vice President; for St Mary's University it is under the Executive Vice President and for Unity University, it is under the Office of Academic Vice President.

Besides, all the surveyed institutions have also bestowed the responsibility of planning, directing, organizing, etc. of institutional level research and publication upon such offices (Admas University College, 2010; Alpha University College, 2010; St. Mary's University, 2012; Unity University, 2012).

### *Staffing*

In light of managing research at institutional level, availability of staff members in the above mentioned offices with the necessary qualification, experience and number is imperative (Anita & Taylor, 2011). The assessment revealed that the office responsible for the management of research at Admas University has a director, two experts, case manager/secretary and messenger. Likewise, a dean, senior expert and secretary are assigned for similar activities at Alpha University College. St Mary's University has organized the office comprising a director, three research experts and a secretary. Finally, at Unity University the office is organized having a director, managing editor, publication officer and a secretary.

### *Barriers*

Effective institutional framework of research must be put in place by addressing the barriers for research. In connection to this, as part of the general research questions, respondents were asked to identify the potential barriers in their institutions and have identified the barriers accordingly. Admas University has been found not to identify barriers at all. Whereas the respondents from the other surveyed institutions identified lack of staff commitment, poor research culture, lack of commitment from the owners (of the respective institutions) ; scarcity of resources, capacity of researchers, absence of adequate grant, looking for quick money for research output, consumer behavior in utilizing research output (even though the research output is disseminated, utilization rate is

very minimal), absence of staff motivation and attractive reward system as major barriers.

On the other hand, major findings pertinent to specific research questions are documented as follows:

***Availability of research strategy/guideline/policy***

Authorities affirmed that for research strategy to make the institution successful in the management of research endeavors, it must address research stimulant strategies, availability of research clusters, review mechanisms for the provision of research grant, stipulate the need to organize such research forums as conference, seminar, workshop, etc. and it must have rooms for venue of dissemination of research by giving emphasis for open access. All surveyed institutions have research strategy/guideline/policy. The findings from documents can be summarized as follows:

- All surveyed institutions have put different research stimulant strategies in their documents (honoraria, grant, promotion and tenure).
- Research clusters per se were not observed in the policy strategy in the surveyed institutions rather some of them have stipulated thematic areas.
- Review mechanism for awarding grant is available and the key criteria for reviewing are aligned with the research process, i.e., sound problem, good methodology, etc.
- Different categories of conference are organized by the surveyed institutions as follows:
  - ♣ Admas University
    - International Multi Disciplinary Conference
    - Student Research Conference
    - Research Conferences/ at Campus level
  - ♣ Alpha University College
    - Annual National Multi Disciplinary Research Conference



- ♣ St. Mary university
  - International conference on private higher education in Africa
  - National Multi Disciplinary Conference
  - Student Research Conference
  - Other forums for staff engagements in research
- ♣ Unity University
  - Multi Disciplinary Research Conference
- Research output dissemination mechanism are put in place in all the surveyed institution which include: dissemination of conference proceedings; ensuring wider accessibility of research output through open access initiative is being pioneered by SMU; content analysis of institutional website of the surveyed institutions revealed that, Admas University and Unity University do not use their institutional website to create wider access to their research products.

#### ***Availability of earmarked budget for research***

Budget for research activities is allocated in all the surveyed institutions. The budget is utilized for conference organization, proceedings and journals publications, grant for individual staff research, travel grant for conference participation, etc.

#### ***Promotion and tenure***

Review of the senate legislation of the surveyed institution revealed that contribution of research is recognized as a basis for promotion.

#### ***Availability of university industry linkage***

Except for Admas University, linkage of university research with industry is missing in the surveyed institutions.

#### ***Role of HERQA in strengthening institutional research framework***

HERQA is a government organ working on quality issues. Respondents were asked about its role in strengthening institutional research framework and they responded that the agency has to:

- assist PHEIs to strengthen institutional research framework through its continuous assessment
- encourage PHEIs to be innovative instead of repeating what others are doing
- support in terms of funding must be made
- eliminate the divide between public vs private
- encourage research after auditing; it must go beyond auditing and should venture in grant provision and capacity building

### ***Gaps identified***

In this section, attempts have been made to summarize the findings of the research by enumerating the gaps as identified as follows:

- ♣ Research office staff performance and appraisal is non-existent
- ♣ Funding is biased towards internal sources only
- ♣ Available research stimulant schemes found to be inadequate
- ♣ Despite the relevant contents provided by INASP, only Alpha University College and St. Mary's University are getting access to these resources.
- ♣ Absence of strong research clusters
- ♣ Dissemination of research output using open access mode is missing in Admas university and Unity University
- ♣ University- industry linkage of research is non-existent
- ♣ Absence of enabling mechanism to create research universities
- ♣ Lack of staff commitment and poor research culture
- ♣ Lack of commitment and appreciation for research from the owners
- ♣ Scarcity of resources including absence of adequate grant
- ♣ Low capacity of researchers
- ♣ Looking for quick money for research output

- ♣ Consumer behavior in utilizing research output (even though the research output is disseminated, utilization rate is very minimal)

## **8. Conclusion**

The research was initiated to assess the available institutional framework for undertaking research in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). Assessment of the available institutional framework for research revealed that the necessary framework for undertaking research in the surveyed institution is existent in varying degree. Review of the institutional audit focus area 9 of the surveyed institutions also confirmed the same. Despite the existence of institutional framework for research, PHEIs must exert efforts in instituting good research culture by addressing the gaps identified in this research.

## **9. Recommendations**

- The ultimate aim of putting an institutional research framework is to enable PHEIs to contribute their research in the arena of scholarly communication. Therefore, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the framework, performance evaluation of the office and researchers should be observed properly.
- In light of addressing the poor research culture in PHEIs, different capacity building schemes for researchers must be developed.
- Availability of resources for research is one of the manifestations of the availability of good research institutional framework. In this line, especially sources of funds must be diversified from external sources in order to augment the internal budget earmarked by the institutions.
- In order to ensure quality in the ultimate research output of PHEIs, Admas University, Unity University and others must follow suit and join Consortium of Ethiopian Academic and Research Libraries (CEARL) to secure wealth of information resources provided by INASP.

- For research to survive and thrive in PHEIs, different research stimulant schemes must be designed and such stimulants must also be as attractive and motivating as possible.
- Review of research strategies of the surveyed institutions made it clear that different research clusters are missing. Therefore, PHEIs must make it of top importance to craft different research clusters that are aligned with the national government interest and the higher education landscape.
- In order for the PHEIs research output to be exploited by the scientific community and increase visibility, open access must be highly promoted and PHEIs should use their institutional websites and other open access platforms for dissemination of their research output.
- University-industry linkage is one of the weak spot in the PHEIs. Therefore, efforts must be made to link up institutional research with industry. This, in turn, will also help PHEIs to increase their visibility.
- The fact that HERQA audit makes sure that availability of research institutional framework is encouraging. However, HERQA must also be one of the prime champions in creating favorable environment so that PHEIs will build strong research system. In addition, it should assist in seeking grants for PHEIs which will serve to conduct research.
- In light of creating wider base of research output consumers, all stakeholders in the scholarly communication arena must promote the use of evidence based research in all walks of life.

## **10. Limitation**

One of the limitations of this research is that it is biased towards management aspect and does not include the one to be managed. Future research in this area must incorporate individual researchers as respondents.

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