

Peer Reviewers' Profile and Perception of the External Quality Assurance System in Ethiopia

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Outline for presentation

- 1. Higher Education in Ethiopia**
- 2. The Context of the Present Research**
- 3. Major Findings of the Study**
- 4. Concluding observations**

1. Higher Education in Ethiopia

Some Features

- Ethiopian education system: 8 years of primary education; four years of secondary education; 2-3 years of TVET; 3-5 years of undergraduate studies; and 2-4 years of post-graduate studies.
- A two-tier system of post-secondary education
- Aggressive expansion schemes of public universities since 2000
- Out of 22 universities, 20 have been established after 2000, and ten more universities are being built

Cont...

- More than 60 private higher education institutions
- 320, 000 students (Cf. MOE 2010) with a gross enrolment rate of 5.3 at national level

System Level Structures

- **Ministry of Education (MOE) roles:**
 - Determining requirements,
 - Enforcing policies and strategies,
 - Providing assistance and cooperation, and
 - Conducting needs assessment on the relevance of educational provisions

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- Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC)-2003
- Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) -2003
- **Duties and Powers of HERQA:**
 - ensuring quality and relevance
 - responding to pre–accreditation & accreditation requests
 - preparing and issuing directives;
 - supervision and continuous evaluation of HEIs; and
 - public disclosure of information

2. The context of the present research

- Peer Review: Some Major Considerations from the literature
 - ❖ Definition “A process of subjecting the performance of institutions to the scrutiny of experts from the field being evaluated”
 - ❖ Responsibilities (SED, site visit, and Final report)
 - ❖ Recruitment (competencies, attributes, identification)
 - ❖ Preparation/Training
 - ❖ Other Essentials
 - Code of Conduct
 - Conflict of Interest

Cont...

- **Some Features of External Quality Audit in Ethiopia:**
 - Applies on both Private and Public HEIs
 - Selection of HEIs and Scheduling by the Agency
 - Procedures
 - Self Evaluation by HEIs leading to SED
 - Examination of the SED and the Site Visit
 - Reporting and Publication of the Report
 - External quality audit parameters
 - ❖ *Vision, Mission and Educational Goals*
 - ❖ *Governance and Management System*
 - ❖ *Infrastructure and Learning Resources*
 - ❖ *Academic and Support Staff*
 - ❖ *Student Admission and Support Services*
 - ❖ *Program Relevance and Curriculum*
 - ❖ *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*
 - ❖ *Student Progression and Graduates*
 - ❖ *Research and Outreach*
 - ❖ *Internal Quality Assurance*
 - Achievements so far
 - ❖ Procedures and frameworks
 - ❖ Guidelines, manuals
 - ❖ Training and orientation
 - ❖ Quality Audit (14 from 2007-2009)

Cont...

- **Objectives of the study**
 - Assess the profile of peer reviewers;
 - Gauge the perception of peer reviewers towards the manner in which the external quality audit has been effected;
 - Explore their suggestions for further improvement of the existing peer review process.

- **Method of the study**

- Subjects of the study

- Reviewers who participated in the 2007-2009 External Quality Audits undertaken on 14 HEIs

- Source of Data:

- Documentary evidence (manuals, guidelines, etc)
 - Questionnaire survey (n=18/25 with 72% response rate)
 - In depth interview (n=4 reviewers + Head of QA Unit in HERQA)

- Data Analysis:

- Quantitative & qualitative

4. Major Findings of the Study

1. Profile of Peer Reviewers (Recruitment, Composition and Preparation)

• Recruitment and Composition

- All recruited from public and private HEIs with a strong focus on their academic qualification.
 - ❖ 61% of the reviewers have PhD
 - ❖ Academic rank: 2 Prof.; 5 Ass. Prof.; 6 Asst. Prof. 4 lecturers
 - ❖ Teaching experience: from none to well over 30 years
 - ❖ Agency Staff less qualified and less experienced (but high commitment)
 - ❖ Size of Committee 5-6 two or three from Agency
- Nomination made by HEIs based on Agency criteria
- Criteria set by the Agency
 - ❖ **Expertise and Experience:** qualification, academic rank, experience of working in academic areas in higher education institutions, research experience.

General Attributes and Skills:

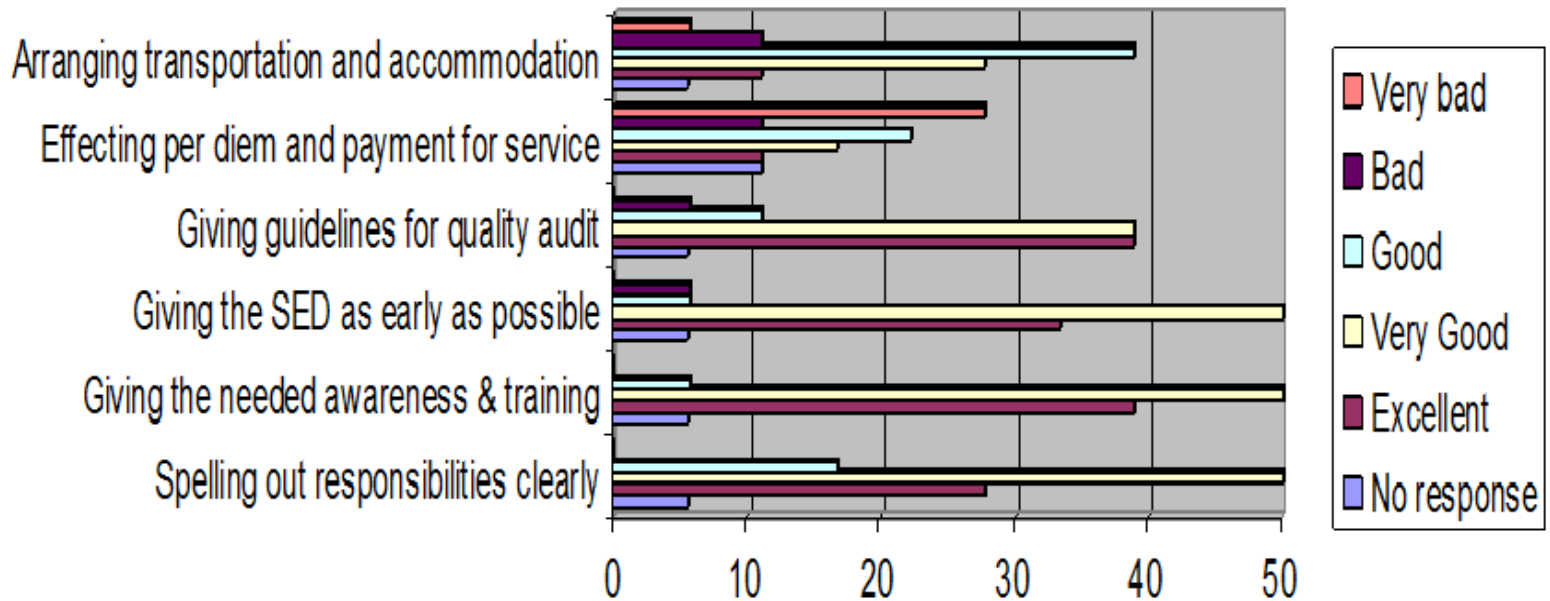
- Commitment & readiness
- Professional competence and impartiality
- Effective and cooperative team member
- Working as an effective and cooperative team member
- Ability to prepare and submit reports on agreed deadlines
- Keeping the confidentiality of all information

- **Training and Preparation**
 - Reviewers received 4 days training (theories and concepts of QA; approaches and techniques of EQA; practical and organizational aspects of a QA visit; documentation and making judgements)
 - MOU between reviewers, HEIs and Agency
 - Manual guiding the whole process
- **Conflict of Interest:** .Institutions were asked to express their agreement on the reviewers chosen

2. Perception of Reviewers towards

- HERQA
- Audited HEIs
- Other Reviewers

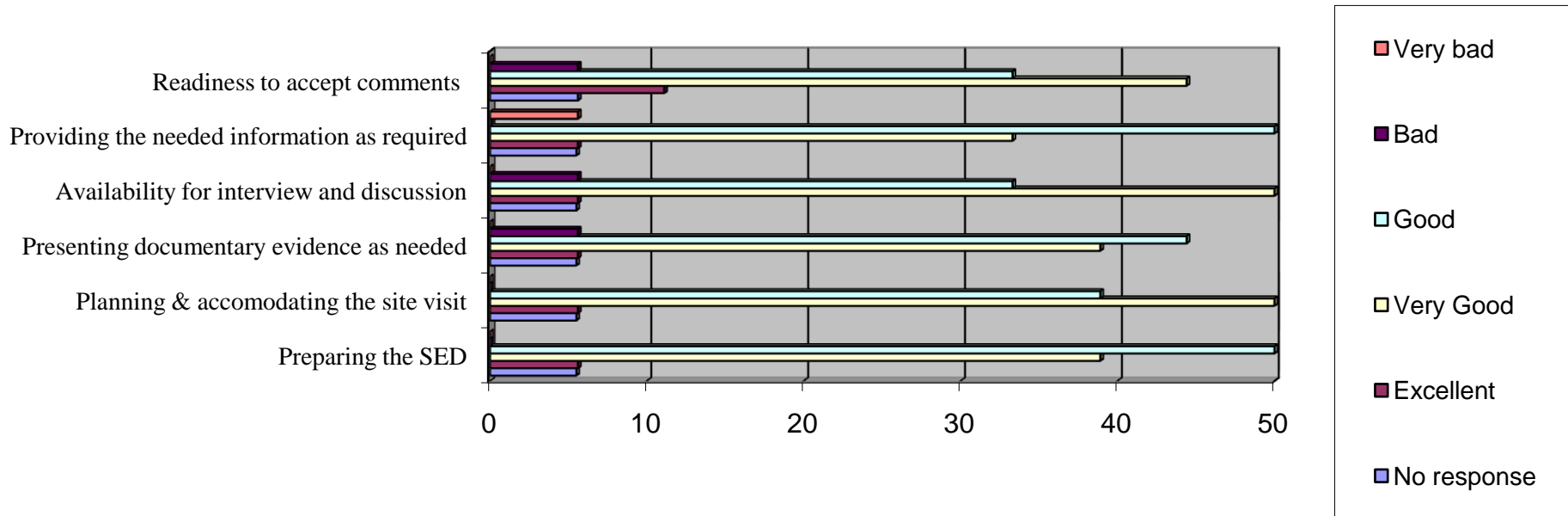
Reviewers' Perception of HERQA



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- HERQA was rated by the majority of reviewers as very good to excellent in terms of *spelling out responsibilities , giving awareness & training, giving out the Self Evaluation Document (SED)*
- With regard to *effecting per diem and payments and that of arranging transportation*, HERQA was rated lower

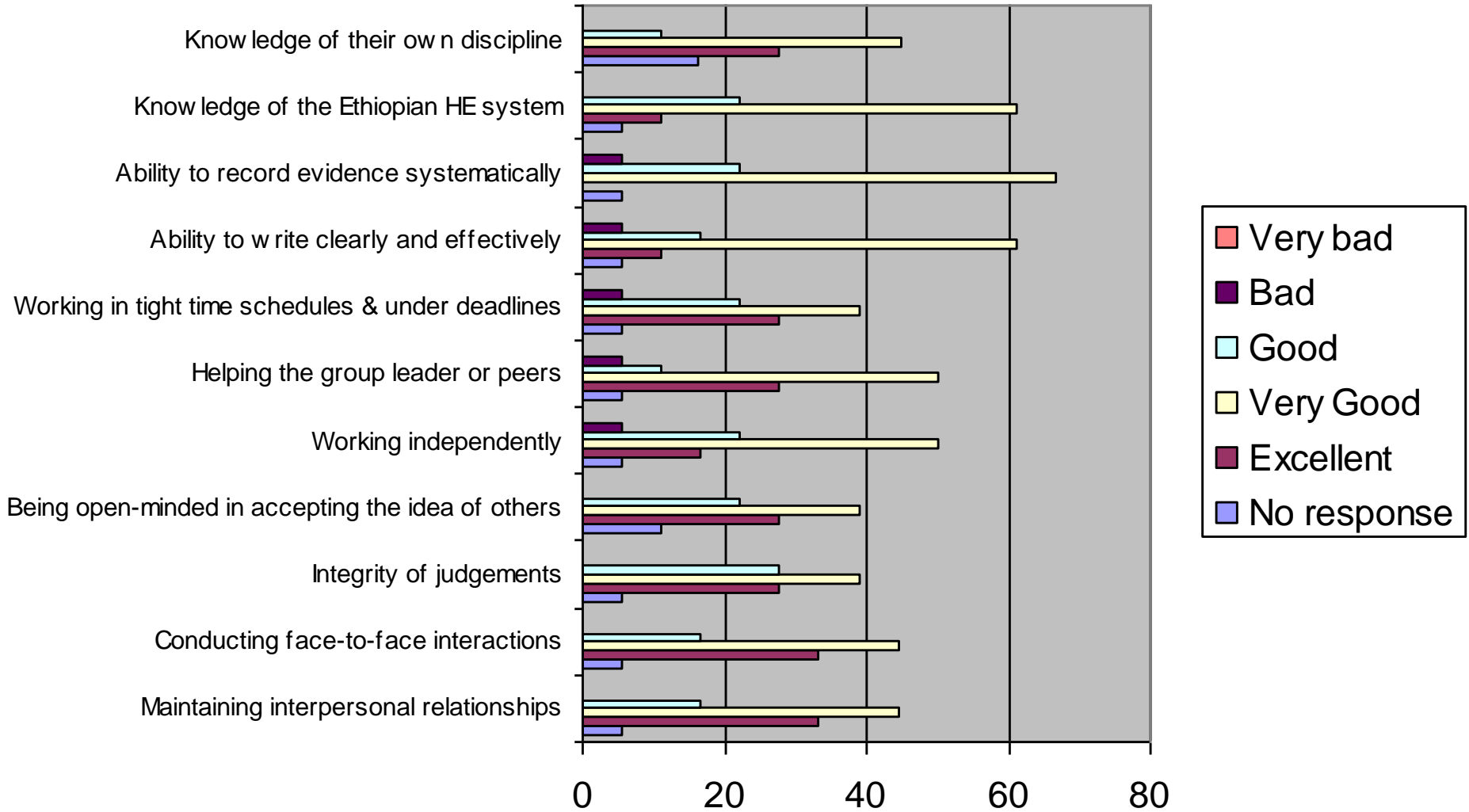
Reviewers' Perception of Audited HEIs



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- The majority of reviewers rated HEIs from good to very good in all of the criteria set
- ❖ However, the interview and open-ended comments indicated that HEIs are not free from problems
 - ❖ Should be serious about the audit business which should be reflected in the preparation of the SED
 - ❖ The need for making the necessary preparations as contrasted with acting for the sake of complying with HERQA's requirements

Reviewers' Perception of other Reviewers



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- The overall perception appears to tilt towards the positive in each of the categories
- The interview and the open-ended questions revealed that respondents underscored the need for additional training
- The need for secrecy, team spirit, group work, unbiased and objective assessment, adequate preparation, adhering to principles and procedures, and meeting deadlines was emphasized

4. Concluding observations

- Profiles and views of reviewers can not be neglected: “quality assurance based on team visits is no better or worse than the quality of the members of the team”
- **Positive elements:**
 - High level of rating in most cases for all parties involved.
 - Availability of clear guidelines,
 - Scheme for avoiding conflict of interest,
 - Availability of training for reviewers
 - Dedication of HERQA staff,

Areas of Concern:

- Limited pool of auditors
- HERQA's limited resources
- Lack of interest to serve in similar responsibilities in the future
- Lack of follow up with existing reviewers after their task is over

Any lessons to take or share.....???

Thank YOU!!!