

The Role of TVET in Accounting in Meeting the Demands of the Profession: A Study in Selected Organizations in Oromia Regional State

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Abstract

The demand for accounting profession is increasing from time to time because of the increase in complexity of the business environment. The enrolment of technical and vocational training institutions has gone up in the recent past. Specifically, TVET colleges play great role in training middle and lower level accountant in Ethiopia. The study tried to identify the knowledge and skill gap as compared to actual work environment. Data were collected from former graduates, employers and other pertinent officers. Descriptive statistical tools and schematization were utilized to arrive at appropriate conclusion. The finding of study further found that significant number of TVET graduates do not possess the relevant knowledge, skills and values required by employers. Specifically, TVET graduates have big limitation with respect to generic skills such as communication, numeracy and personal skills. Employers want employees having good technical skill, good communicators, problem-solvers, innovators and who are updating their knowledge and expertise continuously. Therefore, it is recommended that Both TVET colleges and industries linkage have vital roles to play in bridging the skills gap and in reducing unemployment of TVET in accounting graduates in the region and the last suggestions of the researchers were the employers' wants employees who are creative problem-solvers and innovators who are constantly updating their knowledge and expertise.

Keywords: Accounting Profession, Knowledge, skills, TVET in Accounting

1.1 Background of the Study

The context and rapid development and ever-changing needs of the global business environment have resulted in evolutionary changes in the skills required by accountants to add value for their clients. Accounting education and training has been under attack for many years resulting from rapid technological advances and growing market globalization (Lin et al., 2005). The function of today's accountant has changed from mere book-keeping of business operations to the provider and interpreter of diversified information to various internal and external users of financial information (Albrecht and Sack, 2000). Such developments require expanding the knowledge and skills of accountants to meet the changing demands stemming from the new business environment.

Some studies have examined the issue of what should be the knowledge and skills components of today's accounting education programs that can satisfy the demands for training future accountants at university level (Mihert & Bobe, 2014; Kidane, 2012; ROSC, 2000; Belete & Desalegn, 2011). In addition, the challenge of the existing TVET system was studied in general terms to some extent (Dadi, 2014; Krishnan & Shaorshadze, 2013; Solomon, 2011). But accounting education and training in particular was relatively ignored. Hence, there is increasing recognition by all stakeholders such as teachers, students, employers, governments and society the need and utility of conducting research within TVET colleges in order to position such institutions for the challenges of the 21st century.

Accounting education should provide students with basic accounting knowledge and ensure they have the ability to create measure and analyse information for decision making. To broaden graduates' skills, they promoted more training course opportunities should be given to students to enhance their communication and problem-solving competencies. De Lange (2006) surveyed 310 graduates from two universities in Victoria Australia and revealed they lack most of the generic skills desired by the professions, particularly interpersonal, communication and information technology skills. Turner et al. (2011) argue that accounting professionals and educators have been aware of the need to revise the curricula for decades. In designing the syllabus, accounting educators have to choose what to cover and how it aligns with the needs of the specific cultural and business environment (Allison, 2007).

The demands on both lecturers and learners in the accounting field are increasing constantly. The continued *criticism* in the literature indicates that current accounting teaching practices are still not fulfilling the needs of the profession. Much research has been done in the fields of improved methodology, subject content, and needed skills. Responses from both the business world and the profession, however, indicate that this research has not found much *practical application* (Albrecht and Sack, 2000; Dempsey and Stegman, 2001; Marino, 2006). Studies also support the claim that trainee accountants are lacking certain skills when entering the workplace (Coetzee and Oberholzer, 2009; Wells et al., 2009). In order to address this criticism effectively it is necessary to determine to what extent current teaching methodologies address the development of the skills required from

accountants. It further attempts to evaluate current teaching methodologies in TVET accounting against these skill requirements. This evaluation is done by way of a survey. This paper analyses the role of TVET in skill development with reference to Ethiopia.

The accounting profession is emerging and playing an increasingly important role in Ethiopia. Furthermore, Ethiopia's economy is being integrated into the world market at an increasing rate. Changes in Ethiopia's business and legal environment have brought a demand for more accountants equipped with up to date set of skills. A great amount of new skills is now considered necessary for accountants. This educational standard indicates the level of professional skills needed to perform the role of a professional accountant and classifies the skills under four competency areas: intellectual, interpersonal and communication, personal, and organizational.

There is an extensive literature on the job place skills expected of accounting graduates. The majority of these studies were carried out in previous period and focused on the importance of various skills as viewed by academics, employers, students or graduates and professional accounting bodies. As studies conducted by B. Bui and B. Porter (2010) they were suggested that accounting programs are failing to meet the expectations and needs of employers or are not in harmony with the requirements of the real world. The main objectives this study was to establish skills employers of accounting graduates expect and the skills the accounting graduates demonstrate.

1.2 Objective of the study

The main objectives was to examine the role TVET in accounting education and training has sufficiently prepared graduates with various skills to meet the challenges that they face in the actual work environment. Specifically, the study was:

1. To identify the relevance of TVET in accounting program to the actual work environment
2. To elicit the important skills required by employers from TVET in accounting graduates
3. To identify the needs knowledge and skill gap between the existing curriculum and the actual work environment.

1.3 Significance of the study

Technical Vocational Education and Training accounting students may benefit from the outcome of this study as the research is a good indicator for them to improve their knowledge and skills base during their accounting studies. The findings will serve as creates awareness for all concerned bodies about the alignment the accounting education to the needs of the industry and the community at large on the prevailing labour market and job opportunities in the fast growing economy and also it will provide information to those who are concerned in accounting education through identifying the skills and knowledge that should teach to accounting students to prepare them to the needs of the industry. In generally on a practical level, knowledge gained from this research will enable accounting educators to better prepare graduates for their roles in practice. Moreover, this study provides the solution and gives recommendations which will be helpful for the policy makers while making improvements in the accounting education system.

2. Literature Review

This study contributes to the current literature by providing recent results about the significance of the employer expectation gap skill and knowledge of accounting and extends literature by providing further clarification from employers on the qualities required from graduating accountants. In the literature there are numerous studies that have sought to identify the employers' needs.

Professional accountants in business are a key pillar in organizations helping to create and sustain value and growth. Their ability to continue to fulfill these roles in the face of constant environmental changes is vital to their continued relevance. Professional accountants in business are also the front runners when it comes to upholding the quality of financial reporting and providing the broader public with reliable financial information.

In many developing countries the role of accounting in different economic, social, and legal backgrounds is not emphasised in the university accounting curriculum, where courses devoted to this are not offered on a regular basis. Enthoven (1981) argued that the major deficiency in the accounting education and training systems of developing countries is its bias towards private sector accounting information users resulting in the lack of awareness by government authorities of the role and necessity of accounting. He further notes that accounting education programmes in developing countries tend to put more emphasis on financial enterprise accounting with little emphasis on managerial, governmental, and even macro (national) accounting.

The changes in the corporate world have led to new skill requirements for entry accountants. This may be because they are required to do more than replicate knowledge. According to Collett (2000), the need for accounting learners to have multi-disciplinary skills, which are applicable in practice has long been realised. Several research findings have revealed the challenges to accounting education. For example, Singh (2004) evaluated the accounting courses offered by the professional bodies and colleges in India and found that accounting education in India had failed to meet the changing nature of business. This is because accounting

education in India lacked coordination between academics and industry and remained fragmented. He concluded there was a need to update colleges' course curricula in accordance with current business' requirements. Yucel et al. (2012) carried out research on 245 students of Economics and Administrative Faculty of Uludag University. They found the major problem faced by students as future accountant candidates is lack of accounting course content and practices, which lead to estrange students from accounting professions. They further argued that creating "fully furnished" students with a lot of theoretical knowledge was not effective.

In line with this, Mgaya and Kitindi (2009) confirmed the widely held view that accounting education in Botswana is not producing graduates with the essential skill demanded by the job market. The problem, however, stems from the fact that in many countries and Botswana in particular, accounting educators do not have the opportunity to gain practical experience. Apart from the educators who join academics from industry, those who commence their careers within the academic institutions end up being instructors for most of their careers. Some do not even have the opportunity, or see the need, to obtain professional qualification.

According to study conducted by Crawford, et.al (2011) mention that it is not clear what skills are seen as being important by both students and employers. Accounting educators need to know the importance level of those skills in order to help them improve their courses and curriculum and prepare the accounting students to compete in the market.

According to the study of World Bank (2010), nowadays employers in many economies are seeking workers who possess behavioral skills such as teamwork, diligence, creativity, and entrepreneurship. In addition workers need personal attributes, like work ethics and problem- solving skills. Thirdly, workers are required to have technical skills, e.g. dealing with corruption and bribery, as well as self- improvement skills such as self-worth, confidence and motivation which are essential to thrive in today's rapidly evolving, technologically-driven globalized economies. Employers want creative problem solvers, innovators who are updating their knowledge and expertise. As per the Young Foundation (2012) Skills such as adaptability, negotiation and enterprise are becoming necessary and there is evidence to suggest that competencies within these skills have a fundamental role to play for learning to learn.

The study conducted by Radermacher et al, (2014), Computer science students is not always prepared for the careers ahead of them upon graduating from university. This skill gap is not limited to technical computer science skills such as programming but also to abilities such as communication and time management. In fact, Cranmer (2006) argues that skills needed by graduates to be successful in the labour market cannot be effectively developed in the classroom. He goes on to suggest that it would be more effective to expend resources on employer involvement in courses as this would better prepare graduates for the transition to the working industry. In line with this, the speedy and constant change in technological advancements as well as the ongoing globalization of economies has led to organizations altering their internal structure and mode of operation which then leads to a change in the skills required from personnel and hence a skill gap amongst recent graduates Hernández - March et al., (2009).

In spite of, the dissatisfaction with the skills and knowledge demonstrated by accounting graduates entering the workforce has been of concern by employers for a number of years Cory and Pruske, (2012). As per De Villiers, (2010) A question that often comes to mind is how academics can help accounting learners meet the set of skill demands both at recruitment and in their advanced accounting careers. Also this idea investigated by Kavanagh & Drennan, (2008). An understanding of the broad and complex set of skill demands of employers is therefore essential. Accounting departments of most universities strive for continuous improvement in their accounting curriculum to provide a quality education.

As per MOE (2010) defines the term by combining definition as competence is the possession and application of knowledge, skills and right attitudes to perform work activities to the standard expected in the workplace. Most definitions are interrelated to each other. The only difference is the scope and also put competence in to four dimensions such as task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills. Task skill is the requirement to perform tasks. A worker needs to have the skills, knowledge and attitude to do the job. A worker is also required to understand why the job should be done in a certain way.

As study conducted by Abdulkadir, (2011) TVET accounting education prepares its graduates for employment in the work-place, typical existing business enterprises as well as the acquisition of knowledge relevant to employment. The TVET in accounting education program basically equips the individual with skills and abilities. The relevance of the program has to do with its practical acquisition and application of basic skills for real life situations. An important characteristic of the TVET in accounting education program is that its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. It is unfortunate that products of TVET in accounting education end up rubbing shoulders with products of other program. It has the consequence of decreasing employment in both government and private organizations. The products of seem to lack the necessary entrepreneurship skills, most especially accounting skills, to set up and maintain their own businesses.

As per the study of Morshidi et.al (2009), graduates today also face great challenge in meeting the market

demand based on skills, quality and also qualifications. Discourse on employability issues took on board issue relating to the “quality” or rather the lack of quality of local graduates. While many graduates are being churned out from overseas as well as local higher education institutions on a yearly basis, there is a limited supply of those considered by employers to be of “quality”.

According to Knight and Yorke (2006), employees should possess certain employability skills in order to get employed and retained by the employers. This shows that employability skills influence the employability of an employee, thus, indirectly influence the satisfaction of the employers. The term employability skills is utilized to mean a set of accomplishments that involve abilities, comprehension and individual characteristics that make an individual more inclined to secure and be successful in his/her picked occupation to the benefit of him/herself, the workforce. Meanwhile, the skills needed in an accounting profession have been reviewed by the Accounting Education Change Commission. (AECC) which stated that, the skills are such as intellectual skills, communication skills, and interpersonal skills (AECC, 1990).

Several studies identifying essential skills in the accounting profession have been carried out within the last decade. Line, et.al (2005a), investigated the required accounting skills and knowledge from both students and accounting instructor perspectives. Respondents agreed that the most important skills are professional behavior, technical knowledge, communication and critical thinking. Their results revealed that the participants were not satisfied with the way skills and knowledge is delivered. An analysis of contemporary systems by Arnold and Sutton (2007), stresses the failure of current accounting instruction in delivering the skills and knowledge essential to be successful in the present situation. Lin, et.al (2008b) examined, through a survey, the required accounting knowledge and skills in China using factor analysis (37 skill and knowledge variables). Six (six) areas were identified as the most important: core accounting knowledge, business skills, personal characteristics, business knowledge, basic techniques and general knowledge.

Recently, Jones (2011) investigated communication skills required by accounting employers and found basic writing skills as the most important, the second being effective documentation. He revealed the following written communication skills as the most important: effectively organizing sentences and paragraphs; writing clearly and precisely; spelling correctly; preparing concise, accurate, and supportive documents; documenting work completely and accurately; using correct grammar; conscientiously editing and revising documents; and effectively using email.

As per study by Daggett and Liu (1997) surveyed 92 employers of new accounting graduates about their work force readiness finding them to be least prepared in writing, presenting, and interactive skills, and best prepared in the competencies of entering, retrieving, and analyzing data. But, as per study of Hassalet *al.*, (2005), the challenge of delivering graduates with a more extensive skill set is highlighted in a recent European study. Their finding to similar employer demands for skills beyond the necessary technical accounting skills, but reported at the same time that employers were unsympathetic with claims from universities that they had limited capacity to deliver on these greater demands.

As per study of Seedwell Tanka, et.al (2015) conducted a survey in Australia on accounting knowledge and skills desired by the employer and their level of satisfaction with skills demonstrated by entry level accounting graduates. The survey found that the computing techniques, written communication, and reporting skills are required by employers. In contrast, employers perceive accounting graduates to be highly skilled in measurement skills, reporting skills, and research skills. Furthermore, as far as technological skills are concerned, employers indicated that the students are better trained in world processing and knowledge of communication, software skills, yet employers expect more knowledge of accounting packages and spreadsheet competencies for entry-level graduates.

In a study conducted by Rasul&Mansor, (2013) in Malaysia in 2013 to determine employers’ employability skills expectations of technical students of 107 employers in the manufacturing industry, the findings of the study revealed that the following skills are considered very important to be possessed by technical students. The skills include thinking skills, ability to relate effectively with customers, leadership skills, ability to work safely, relating with others from a diverse cultural background, working with new ideas, problem solving, and other personal qualities such as integrity.

In summary, overview of the review on studies conducted both at the domestically and globally levels show that in one way or the other way, school graduates are deficient in some skills needed for their actual work environment. In other words, the college of TVET seems not to be preparing these graduates properly for employment as there is existence of a gap in skills acquired and skills required. More so, there were very few studies conducted on the role of TVET in meeting the demand of profession in Ethiopia, particularly in TVET colleges found in south western part of oromia region. It is also observed in the literature reviewed that few of the studies conducted at country levels considered policy document on the type of skills recommended alongside graduates and employers. This appears to be a major gap in the methodologies as adopted in most of the studies, and that is the major gap which this study intends to address.

3. Research Methodology

This study is designed to investigate the role TVET in accounting in meeting the demand of the accounting profession in Ethiopia particularly west Oromia regional state. Thus, this study used a mix of descriptive and explanatory survey design. Data will be collected through the survey of TVET graduates in accounting and employers. It is very difficult to incorporate the whole graduate in accounting from TVET colleges in the study since they are very much dispersed throughout the region. Hence, multi stage sampling methods was employed to select representative TVET colleges in Oromia region. First the whole oromia region is divided in to four clusters for the purpose of this study which includes; West oromia (Jimma, Buno Bedele, Illu Ababa Bora and the four Wellega zones), Central Oromia (the four shewa zones), East Oromia (Arisi and the two Hararghe zones) and south Oromia (Bale, Borena and the two Guji Zones). Because of its proximity, the researchers selected west Oromia for this study. Therefore, the researchers to select TVET Graduates in accounting (accounting employees at entry level) by using a Judgemental sample during the period of the study. TVET Graduates in accounting from Jimma TVET college, Agaro TVET college, Mettu TVET college and Nekemte TVET college who are working in accounting firm, Audit firm, small and micro enterprise, Taxation firm and other organizations with accounting related workforce. The questionnaires were administered using a convenience sample during the period of studies. A total of 122 responses were received out of the total of 150 questionnaires distributed, which is a reasonably acceptable proportion. They were distributed and collected by researchers, who waited for the respondents to complete them, thus a 76.2 % response rate. The sampling is collected from survey covering 15 employers are selected from Jimma town, Agaro town, Mettu town and Nekemte Town, who are employers in Accounting firm, Audit firm, banks, insurance companies, Taxation firm and other organizations with accounting related workforce. The research results were first presented as an analysis of the quantitative data obtained from closed ended question section of the study questionnaire. The closed ended questions section of the survey reports on the findings related five closed ended questions on challenges of TVET graduates in actual work practice. The Likert scale was anchored by “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (5) to measure the perceptions of employees (TVET graduated. Since the study is descriptive in nature, the collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentages using SPSS. The qualitative data was based on open-ended responses of one hundred and twenty two (N=122) respondents who anonymously completed the survey questionnaire. Content analysis was carried out where their responses to each of the items in the questionnaire were organized in themes. In-depth interview was held between the researcher and the employer, the researcher led the session by asking the interviewee some probing questions based on the skills which were deemed necessary to be possessed by TVET graduates and what opportunity they have. Data generated from employers in this study through structured interview were analysed in stages using the thematic method.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Demographics Characteristics of the Sample

The study collected demographic data from former graduates of TVET in accounting working in different industries and employers of different types of industry through questionnaire and interviews in the selected towns. Out of 150 questionnaires distributed to former graduates, only 122 (75%) were properly filled in and collected back and interview of 15 Employers. SPSS version 20 was used to make analysis.

The sample data of the graduates of TVET in accounting regarding to gender 64.75 % of respondents were male and 35.25 % of respondents were female. This implies majority graduates in TVET in accounting participated in the study were males. Regarding age was normally distributed that majority (59) of the respondents in the study were aged between 19 and 25 years. The result also indicates that 30 respondents fall in the age below 18 years. 28 respondents fall within the age interval of 26 - 32 years and the remaining five are above the age of 32 years. This shows that the bulk of former graduates who participated in the study were young. The sample data of respondents which accounts for 54.10 percent have experience of below 5 years. This implies that respondents easily remember what skills are needed in the work place and the attention to be given in TVET in accounting courses and they can respond to the questionnaire genuinely. Besides, 41.8 percent of sample respondents had a work experience between 5- 10 years and they are expected to know what skills are required from accounting graduates to meet needs of the industry. The remaining sample TVET graduates in accounting (4.10%) have experience of eleven years and above. Regarding to qualification of education 79.51 percent of respondent were diploma holders while those who have Degree were 14.75 percent (14.74%). This indicates that all respondents are diploma holders and above. So they can understand the skills that are important for career success in the industry and the level of emphasis given to the development of those skills in their diploma courses. The sample data of the graduates of TVET in accounting over 63.11% of the respondents are single. 33.61% of respondents' are married which implies most of them are young graduates who did not established family and planning to continue their further education for professional development.

For interview analysis the employers were asked to indicate initially their characteristics such as sex, age,

qualification, and work experience. The sample data employers of graduates of TVET in accounting, among the respondents, the numbers of female respondents were relatively small 4 (27.7%) compared to male participants 11 (73.3%). Furthermore, one respondent (6.6%) was less than 24 years old and the second age groups 24 - 35 years were 9(60%), however the third age group (greater than 35 years old) respondents were 5(33.3%). The sample data employers of graduates of TVET in accounting indicates more than half 8(53.3%) of the respondents were diploma holder. The other group of respondents were 4 (26.6%) bachelor degree holders and only 3 (20%) were master's degree holder. This indicates that more participants are from diploma and bachelor degree holders. Regarding their work experience in the companies reported by the majority 7(46.7%) were 4-10 years, service year below 5 were 3 (20%) and other group of respondents were 11-20 years 3 (20%), lastly, the long year of experience above 20 years were 2 (13.3%) respondents, suggesting that about 75% of respondents have more than 5 years of experience in the companies which enable them to provide valuable response for this study.

4.2 Relevance of TVET in Accounting Program to the Actual Work

The actual work environment requires profound knowledge in the area of accounting, finance, auditing and taxation. Further, it also requires technical skills such as the skill to use computer in accounting work and soft skills including language, numeracy and working in a team. The last important dimension of in the actual work environment is ethics and value. The existing accounting program needs to acquaint the graduates with this knowledge and skill dimension.

Table 1: Perception of Respondents on TVET in Accounting Program

No	Items	OBS (N)		SDA	DA	Ne	A	SA	mean	St.dev
1	<i>The competences I have taken at TVET college have adequately prepared me to use software currently in use in the actual practice</i>	122	Fr	11	24	18	50	19	3.3443	1.21812
			%	9%	19.6%	14.8%	41%	15.6%		
2	<i>I have good understanding of principles and concepts of accounting during my entry into workforce.</i>	122	Fr	13	25	23	35	26	3.2951	1.30282
			%	10.7%	20.5%	18.9%	28.7%	21.3%		
3	<i>There is widening gap between the academic preparation of graduates skills and the needs of the industry</i>	122	Fr	20	36	24	27	15	2.8443	1.28578
			%	16.4%	29.5%	19.7%	22.1%	12.3%		
4	<i>Lack of industrial attachment affect practical skills of graduates</i>	122	Fr	12	28	21	40	20	3.2213	1.25647
			%	9.8%	23.8%	17.2%	32.8%	16.4%		
5	<i>The subject matter presented in the content of the programs has increased my knowledge at workplace</i>	122	Fr	6	31	15	43	27	3.4426	1.22676
			%	4.9%	25.4%	12.3%	35.2%	22.1%		
6	<i>The programs integrates theoretical basic concepts with real-world applications</i>	122	Fr	11	33	23	36	19	3.1557	1.23997
			%	9%	27%	18.9%	29.5%	15.5%		
7	<i>The program is adequately preparing me (through cooperative learning and communication skills), to work in cooperation with others in my line of work.</i>	122	Fr	9	26	21	42	24	3.3770	1.22864
			%	7.4%	21.3%	17.2%	34.4%	19.7%		
8	<i>The modular contents of the core training/curriculum was relevant to my needs and interests</i>	122	Fr	5	32	30	35	20	3.2705	1.14298
			%	4.1%	26.2%	24.6%	28.7%	16.4%		
9	<i>The qualification of TVET match with the industry</i>	122	Fr	15	32	28	35	12	2.9754	1.20236
			%	12.%	26.2%	23%	28.7%	9.8%		

No	Items	OBS (N)		SDA	DA	Ne	A	SA	mean	St.dev
	<i>standards for employment</i>									
10	<i>Your knowledge in field of study is applicable in work place</i>	122	Fr	8	28	23	40	23	3.3443	1.21131
			%	6.6	23	18.9	32.8	18.9		
11	<i>Your level of qualification and/or the field of qualification are different from that required to perform the job adequately.</i>	122	Fr	21	40	21	24	16	2.7869	1.30624
			%	17.2	32.8	17.2	19.7	13.1		
12	<i>Do you think you have adequate knowledge about TVET in terms of its importance and fields</i>	122	Fr	15	17	24	39	27	3.3770	1.30687
			%	12.3	13.9	19.7	32	22.1		
13	<i>In the curricula and teaching learning process; knowledge, skill and attitude are integrated</i>	122	Fr	11	26	23	41	21	3.2869	1.23636
			%	9	21.3	18.9	33.6	17.2		

As one can see from Table 1 above, former graduates' have given opinion to the item that 'the competences taken at TVET College have adequately prepared me to use software currently in use in the actual practice'. The result shows that 56.6% of the respondents tend to agree with this opinion and 28.6% of the respondents tend to disagree. The mean score is also greater than three which confirms that respondents tend to agree with this opinion. For the item that 'I have good understanding of principles and concepts of accounting during my entry into workforce', the results shows that 50% of the respondents tend to agree with this question and 31.5% of the respondents tend to disagree. This implies that, though majority of respondents seems benefited from the TVET training, there are significant number of respondents who are not satisfied with the competences given at TVET colleges. This result is in line with the finding in study one of the same mega project in which trainee and trainers have suggested some additional competences that need to be included to the existing competences.

Graduates of TVET in accounting responded to the item that 'there is widening gap between the academic preparation of graduate's skills and the needs of the industry'. The results show that 34.4% of the respondents agree or strongly agree to this question and 45.9% of the respondents disagree. TVET graduates responses to the question that lack of industrial attachment for TVET trainee affect practical skills of graduates shows that 49.2% of the respondents agree and 32.9% of the respondents tend to disagree. The result shows the graduates have limited practical experience while they were in TVET colleges as a result of lack of proper Cooperative learning.

Table 1 shows the TVET graduates responses to the question that the subject matter presented in the current programs has increased knowledge at workplace. 57.3% of the respondents agree with this statement and 30.3% of the respondents tend to disagree regarding this question. The TVET graduates responses to the question that is the content programs integrates theoretical basic concepts with real-world applications shows that 45% of the respondents tend to agree and 36% of the respondents tend to disagree with this question.

The TVET graduates responses to the question that the program is adequately preparing me (through cooperative learning and communication skills), to work in cooperation with others in my line of work shows that 54.1% of the respondents tend to agree and 28.7% of the respondents tend to disagree regarding this question. This implies TVET institution should improve their capacity to provide generic skills such as communication, numeracy, team work. etc to improve the flexibility of graduates since detailed skill needed tend to differ by industrial sectors and individual enterprises.

Table 1 shows the responses to the question that the modular content of the core training/curriculum was relevant to my needs and interests. The results shows that 45.1% of the respondents tend to agree and 30.3% of the respondents tend to disagree regarding this question. The TVET graduates responses to the question that the qualification of TVET in accounting match with the industry standards for employment shows that 38.5% of the respondents tend to agree and equal percentage of respondents were disagreeing regarding this question. Further, respondents were asked about the relevance of knowledge and skill at TVET institutions to the actual work environment. The result was summarized in table 1 below.

As table 1 depicts, the majority (61.7%) of the respondents agree to the question that the knowledge in field of study is applicable in work place and 29.6% of respondents tend to disagree. The result implies the majority of TVET graduate found that knowledge and skill acquired from TVET colleges were useful in the work place. The level of qualification and/or the field of qualification are different from that required to perform the job

adequately was one of the items to be investigated. This question is answered by those graduates already employed. The descriptive statistics shows that almost 50% of employees reported that field of qualification is not different from that required to perform the job adequately, whereas 32.8% reported that level of qualification or field of study of qualification are different from that required performing the job adequately. This indicates that majorities of the respondents were engaged in their field of study in the actual work environment.

Table 1 shows the student's responses to the question do you think you have adequate knowledge about TVET in terms of its importance and fields? The majority of respondents replied 54.1%; they think they have adequate knowledge about TVET in terms of its importance and fields, where as 26.2% of the respondents disagree they have adequate knowledge about TVET in terms of its importance and fields, as reported by 19.7 % (24) of the respondents were undecided that they have adequate knowledge about TVET in terms of its importance and fields.

As we can see from table 1 former graduates responses to the question that in the curricula the knowledge, skill and attitude are integrated, the majority of respondents 50.8 replied "agree", i.e., curricula and teaching learning activities knowledge, skill and attitude are integrated, whereas 30.3% of respondents replied "disagree", i.e., curricula and teaching learning activities knowledge, skill and attitude are not integrated. However, 18.9% of graduate respondents reported "undecided", the results suggesting that curricula and teaching learning activities knowledge, skill and attitude are integrated.

4.3 The Gap between the Curriculum and the Practice

The data collected from open-ended questionnaires from respondents regarding obstacles of TVET in accounting curriculum as compared to actual work environment indicates that 33% of respondents mention that challenges comprised a number of critical areas, like lack of alignment between curriculum and industrial needs; lack of adequately trained manpower; lack of training materials for workshop practice. About 37% of former TVET graduates said, no enough materials in my field of study, the materials used in the college were different from the work place, no qualified teacher, excess number of students in a class, no enough practical training, more of theoretical courses & no sufficient time allocated to the courses, and no enough library and poor staff development. Further about 25% of respondent highlighted the following factors as hindrances to the curriculum performing for actual work environment. These includes lack infrastructure and update regulation of financial report; overcrowded classroom; lack of training facilities, lack of financial resource, shortage of trained teachers and trainers, and inadequate linkages with Industries. Five percent (5%) of respondent of TVET graduated in accounting did not filled the questionnaires may be due to lack of knowledge and lack of time.

This finding confirmed the findings of Osami (2013) who argues that one of the challenges confronting the success of technical education is the engagement of teachers with inadequate practical experience. The result of this study is consistent with Legg-Jack (2014), challenges of effective development of the required employability skills in Technical College graduates due to the following factors: lack of training facilities, building infrastructure and modern equipment; overcrowded classroom; and poor administration of technical education due to absence of qualified personnel.

TVET graduates in accounting asked that the question to what extent the curriculum keep up with scientific developments and modern process? While almost sampled TVET graduates of respondents further indicated that the curricula of technical education are not keeps up with scientific developments and as per requirements of job market. This shows it requires restructuring and revising according to new trends and needs of job market. Technical and vocational education colleges in the region are facing lack of professionally trained staffs; lack of infrastructure facilities, not adapting the latest financial reporting regulation that matches job market needs is not satisfactory. As discussed above respondents were of the opinion that; to cope up the challenges brought by the rapid technological knowledge advancements and changing global scenario it is necessary to equip the graduate students with latest knowledge and skills. According to the above respondents consider that, curricula of TVET in accounting should be reviewed and revised periodically to meet the requirements of rapid knowledge advancements.

These finding is similar to Maclean & Lai, (2011) in which in some parts of the world, the gap between TVET curricula and industrial requirement is very wide; in other words the relevance of such curricula to industrial development is minimal. Curriculum reforms should aim at achieving goals such as modernizing programs to reflect service-oriented economies, improving competencies thereby making it more pragmatic, as well as reflect the need of the modern society.

Considering important factors for skill development, what is the role of TVET Institutions? The results from the open-ended survey questions showed some key findings under theme. Almost all sample TVET graduate's in accounting views on the role TVET are summarized as follows:

- TVET is a great initiative by the government and will help to shape students with skills. There are some students who are not good in school but can do well in technical courses. If those courses are more practical and can help these students to create own jobs and have a decent living after school.

- TVET is good for the youths especially those with specific talent because it gives them a chance to practice and do what they can do best. Government should ensure there are enough training centers for vocational training.
- Technical and Vocational education gives an opportunity to young to find their potential. With the increasing unemployment among the youth in the country, the region is on the right track to addressing this challenge through TVET.
- Technical and Vocational education is a good idea because it involves imparting practical skills which enhance creativity and innovation which are a key to the growth and development of a nation.
- TVET is a good initiative since students get practical knowledge and are able to start their own enterprises.

4.4 Employers Interview Result and Analysis

To begin with, participants were asked what are the important skills expected from TVET accounting graduates entering into workforce should possess. Employers strongly argued that more emphasis should be given on generic skills such as communication, social, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Also they commented graduates do not possess self-confident, able to solve problems, basic accounting skill and take practical decisions on their own and professional attitude. Employer's today claim that graduates did not possess the relevant skills required by employers, financial transaction, computerized accounting system, Tax return preparation, Audit and Assurance service, cost accounting, fund accounting knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are necessary for effective performance of TVET in accounting graduates.

Interviewees stated that:

Miserably, the skills, knowledge and training that TVET students receive at many colleges do not prepare them adequately to meet the requirements of the employers and the job market. This mismatch . . . coupled with under-training in the critical skills of problem- solving, analytical thinking and communication – is blamed, at least in part, for the emerging high graduate unemployment and under-employment.

Other interviewees remarked that:

“As he stated more than 70 percent of employers is finding workers with a good work ethic and appropriate social behavior. Appropriate means too many of them: reliable, a good attitude, a pleasant appearance, a good personality”.

From the above mentioned, it is evident that TVET graduates do not possess the relevant skills required by employers in this study. In summary, the result of this study shows that there is a high skill should possess such as accounting knowledge, attitude, proficiency in communication skills at work in general, dealing with customers in particular, Self-confidence, honesty and truthfulness, analytical thinking and competencies expected to exist in the TVET graduates in order to employ them: This implies that employers are expecting graduates to be far more 'job ready' than is actually the case resulting in noticeable gaps between TVET graduating students' perceptions of what will be required of them at entry level and the expectations of employers.

According to Morgan (1997) and Jones and Sin (2003) the skills nominated as most important to their career related to personal and communication skills including self-motivation, professional attitude, oral and written communication, teamwork and values; analytic skills (including analytical and problem solving); appreciative skills including decision making and critical thinking) and leadership and interpersonal skills. Of interest is the perception by students that cultural sensitivity is a skill necessary for their future careers. This study is close to Kavanagh and Drennan (2008) who stated that graduates with good basic accounting skills gives higher satisfaction to employers. This is also supported by Albrecht (2002), on accounting education on the edge: He states that skills in critical and analytical thinking, technology, teamwork and communication are crucial for transforming the accounting profession in the future.

How well graduates are equipped with the required skills? The employers stated that skill equipped through

“More effort should be spent on improving the skills and professionalism of teachers, through Building trainers capacities, upgrading of their knowledge skill competencies, Development of TVET institutions, and link TVET institutions with the job market players, Developing relevant curriculum, and providing up-to-date methodologies for delivering TVET”.

This indicates that in order make the graduated well equipped skill; the teachers should promote a learner-centered approach for the improved capacities and competencies of students, as well as strength student-teacher relationships. Employer also further added:

TVET lecturers should be able to guide students in their careers, and be able to link the transition from class room to the work environment. Further, the TVET colleges should offer individual guidance to students to enhance their motivation to continue their studies.

Also adds some opinion, on the training system at TVET colleges has long emphasized on theoretical

knowledge, disregarding the importance of practical skills and appreciation of the actual work environment. While most employers expect to train new employees in company-specific procedures and to acquire them with the behavioral norms, standards, and expectations in their company as well as job-specific technical skills required, they are very clear that the college should take most of the responsibility for equipping young people with general employability skills.

Dris and Rajuddin (2012) studied Technical College graduate employability skills needs in Kano State, Nigeria and found that Technical College graduates lacked the skills needed by employers. It is on the premise that graduates must be equipped beyond technical skills that the Employers Association of Australia called on institutions of education and training to design a curriculum that captures both accounting skill and transferable skills. However, according to the study of Coll et al., (2006) universities typically seek to produce accounting graduates that are equipped with the right set of skills for employment but, the expectation of the desirable competencies of accounting graduates newly entering the workforce may vary depending on the stakeholder's point of view.

The researchers carried out interviews with employers whether TVET Colleges are preparing accounting graduates with all the skills and competences required by the industry? If not please explain areas of deficiency? From viewpoints employers' one of the issues raised was that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates find it hard to get jobs for lack of experience. This is attributed to the lack of practical and field experience provided to TVET students as part of their learning. The results also revealed that the employers do not have good attitude towards graduate skills and competences. The employers mentioned some of the graduate's deficiencies during their employment such as low level of proficiency in communication skills, graduate are unable to write and read Amharic and English languages which are the working languages of the banking sectors, marketing skills, accounting knowledge and attitude at work in general, dealing with customers in particular, Self-confidence, honesty and truthfulness, difficulties to apply theory into practice; and weakness in working under pressure.

Another participant's explanations for this is that many of the recent graduates who display the knowledge deficiencies most commonly identified during the interview process are far less likely to be employed at the company. It would also suggest the employers can effectively screen interview candidates based on whatever criteria they've established. Some of these deficiencies, such as oral communication and problem solving, were identified as problems that new hires experience on the job, indicating that not all companies evaluate interview candidates along those criteria. This result is close to Anthony et.al (2015), in their study result shows employers identified a lack of experience and of appropriate technical skills as major barriers to hiring locally. Other skill deficits included foreign languages and use of information technology, as well as "soft skills" such as communication, dealing with customers, and teamwork. The Occupations for which employers had particular difficulties hiring included technicians, process plant and machine operators, sales and customer service, and some skilled trades.

5. Conclusion Recommendation

The aim of this study was to identify the role of TVET in Accounting in Meeting the demands of the Profession. In this study, the researchers tried to examine relevance TVET accounting program to the actual work practice as well as the important skills required by employers from TVET in accounting graduates. It further identifies the knowledge and skill gap between actual work environment and existence curriculum. For this purpose, opinion of 122 former TVET graduates and 15 employers were used.

The study found that significant number of TVET graduates do not possess the relevant knowledge, skills and values required by employers. The results of an interview with employers found that graduates lack the knowledge and skill in recording of financial transaction, computerized accounting system, Tax return preparation, Audit and Assurance service and cost accounting. Further, employers complain that graduates have limitation in quantitative analysis, communication skill, problem- solving skills, critical thinking. Specifically, a manager in a banking sector complained that some graduate are unable to write and read Amharic and English languages which are the working languages of the banking sectors. With respect to value and ethics, employers complain that some graduates do not have positive attitude, cooperativeness, and honesty at work place.

Moreover, the qualitative data analysis revealed that some employed graduates were not able to demonstrate employability skill, knowledge into the job. Furthermore, the low competence of TVET colleges to measure the actual skills needed in the job market and predicting the number of graduates required from TVET colleges in terms of occupational categories, hinders the effective utilization of market opportunities and causes fragile implementation of competence based learning. The study also identified that the weak collaborative work culture among TVET colleges and that of industries limits the opportunity of exploiting the potential of all stakeholders that enables them to be successful in bringing about the expected output to meet the expectation of respective stakeholders and win their commitment in its real sense.

Interview results further found that the training system at TVET colleges has long emphasized on

theoretical knowledge, disregarding the importance of practical skills and appreciation of the actual work environment. The main reason were inadequacy in the facility of instructional materials which leads to focusing more on theoretical teaching leading to trainees lacking proficiency in their chosen fields of specialization. In order to overcome persistent mismatches between graduate qualifications and the needs of the actual work place, TVET in accounting programs should be structured to enhance directly the employability of graduates and to offer broad support to the workforce more generally. Inculcation of the relevant skills required by employers does not only mean to review the curricula and academic programs to align with industry, but also demands the provision of training facilities, equipment, infrastructure, qualified technical personnel and proper administration of TVET programs.

Both TVET colleges and industries linkage have vital roles to play in bridging the skills gap and in reducing unemployment of TVET in accounting graduates in the region. So, adequate synergies such as workplace partnerships like resource sharing, staff exchange programs and the enhancement of generic skills should be put in place to enhance the employment chances of vocational education graduates. The implication of the findings of this study if properly implemented by government organization, industries organization, and TVET institutions will help to produce viable TVET graduates that will contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the country economy which will be as a result of the impact of the skills and attitude benefited through the supposed partnership between industries and TVET colleges.

The conclusions from this survey TVET Graduates in accounting entering the workforce are expected to be trained more in decisions making, identify and solve problems, critical thinking, reporting and professional skills. The way to address the skills deficiencies would require accounting instructors to look beyond the Technical knowledge and skills required by the job and Communicate well verbally and in writing with superiors, subordinates and those outside the company. They need to incorporate competences related to how to obtain and process information including analyzing data and Proficiency with computers.

Future research could investigate accounting knowledge and skills needed by entry level accounting graduates to work in the ever changing marketplace since accounting graduates face unpredictable futures.

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