Assessing Higher Education Exit Exam in Ethiopia: Practices, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract: Ensuring quality and relevant education in Higher Education institutions is one of the challenges that remained to be solved. In a pursuit to rise educational outcomes in terms of quality and relevance, many countries currently aim to improve accountability in the school system. Many school systems provide educational outcome information. However, the Exit exam provides outcome information to be comparable across schools on an external standard. Exit exams have been argued to improve the signaling of educational achievement on the labor market and to increase labor-market productivity through increased human capital. The exit exam is intended to ensure all graduates from HEIs have developed adequate mastery of the core competencies articulated in the respective curricula thereby satisfying the requirements of the labor market and employability through the nationwide implementation of curriculum-based external exit examination. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the current practices, and challenges on the implementation of exit exams and put forward way for its enhanced implementation. Thus, desk review of different articles, documents, policies, manuals, and guidelines was made from global and local pieces of literature. Moreover, key informants from concerned institutions including National Examination and Assessment Agency, Health Professionals Competency Assessment Licensure Directorate, Higher Education Strategy Center, and Federal Justice and Legal Research and Training Institute) were interviewed to substantiate the desk review result. Results have shown that although institutions across nations or states in a nation call exit exam in different names, the purpose in one way or another is the same, improving students' achievement, enhancing graduates performance, improve quality of education and improve graduates' competence in their respective fields of study. It has been identified that exit exam has many strength including helping to ensure common standard knowledge and practical competencies, improving public trust, improving reliability and validity of assessment tools, a tool for quality assurance to benchmark any potential problem, and helping the faculty to perform an ongoing global assessment. Moreover, several concerns regarding the scheme of exit exam including efforts and costs to maintain the process, opposing arguments, exposing potential weakness in the education system, fear of impeding flexibility within curriculum, quality and trustworthiness of the employee, ownership, exam administration, and management and cheating were indicated. Consequently, establishing independent exit exam organization, online exam administration, awareness creation before full implementation of exit exam and cost-sharing are some of the recommendations forwarded.

Keywords: Higher Education Institutions, Exit Exam, Practice, Challenges, Prospects

1. Introduction

The perspective of taking "fitness for purpose" to conceptualize quality education in higher education has vividly become an increasingly difficult task. Of the many competing ingredients, educational achievement is still considered a major determinant attribute of individual success in the labor market and for overall economic growth [5]. By contrast, research studies indicate that central exit exams constitute an important feature of a system's institutional framework, which can hold students, teachers, schools, and administrators accountable for student outcomes [5]. One potential way, therefore, to enhance educational achievement and quality of education is the introduction of exit exams. It could influence these outcomes by certifying or "signaling" that graduates have mastered a certain set of

skills, giving them an advantage in both employment and earnings over students without such certification [8].

Exit exams loom large in most educational systems across the world. They play a significant role in many countries, providing the basis for certifying a student as having completed a formal course of studies in an educational system or for employment. It is a particularly important consideration in countries with scarce employment opportunities and non-existent unemployment supports [9]. In addition to serving their traditional functions of certification and selection, improve human capital (cognitive skills) and this improvement would have the potential to substantially improve the long-term economic well-being of a country [6].

During the past one and half decades, we have seen a significant expansion of the Ethiopian Higher Education system, harmonization of undergraduate curricula, introduction of modular teaching, continuous assessment, peer learning, and the establishment and operation of quality assurance mechanisms to enhance and assure the quality of higher education [10]. However, the expansion of higher education had not been accompanied by quality and relevance. Reduced quality of education is apparent across the higher education system in Ethiopia. The identified quality problems exist in the regular, continuing, and distance education (DE) programs as well as in public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The decline in quality of education is greater among the private institutions, continuing & distance education programs than the regular and public education programs [7].

The Higher Education Proclamation Proc. No. 1152/2019 provided that "… the teaching-learning process shall be continuously updated in its design, delivery methods, and instruments of assessment". In light of this, Universities in Ethiopia have taken various measures to improve the quality and relevance of higher education to the market demand and the country's development, including the introduction of criterion-referenced and continuous assessments [10].

One way to improve student learning in a way it links with the labor market and economic growth is the introduction of exit exams throughout higher education institutions [10]. In this case, the redesigning of the assessment based on key learning competencies requires the introduction of nationwide quality indicators for placement and exit tests administered in the Ethiopian Higher Education system. It is recommended in the Education Roadmap that following such excellent practice, it is important to institutionalize exit exams for all first-degree graduates and put as a requirement accreditation of graduate programs in five years after the establishment by an independent body. To this end, the higher education policy and Strategy, introduced in the 2020 exit exam as one of strategy in its policy issues. In its policy, strategy II, page 20, says, *"HEIs should establish education quality centers that develop and manage entrance and exit examinations to quality students for admission laborer education institutions and to ensure graduates competence to the labor market"*.

As part of this reform, the graduate exit exam has already been introduced in HEIs of Ethiopia for health and medical sciences and law graduates. However, the effect of exit exams to improve quality and relevance in higher education institutions has not been supported with empirical evidence. Even in fields of study where exit exams are introduced, there is the contention that test results serve as simple records with no defined role in recruitment or deployment processes. This demands research to formulate policies and strategies to extend the qualification role of exit exams to the labor market needs beyond higher education systems. Moreover, how such exit exams would be institutionalized for all first-degree graduates is not yet worked out. Thus, this paper tried to examine the practice, challenges and prospects of exit exams in areas that have already been introduced and looks into the possibility of institutionalizing exit exams into the higher education assessment system.

2. Methods and Materials

The study employed qualitative analysis of policies, official reports, foreign experiences, academic materials, and data collected through interviews with key informants. In particular, it involves key informants' interviews from the concerned institutions that directly perform the exit exam preparation, administration, and providing feedback process. In the interview process representatives of the National Education Assessment and Examination Agency, Health Professionally Assessment and Licensure Directorate, Higher Education Regulation and Quality Agency, Higher Education Strategy Centre, and Federal Justice and Legal Research and Training Institute were involved in the study. The data collected from the desk review were discussed with respected topics in line with the research objectives. Data from key informants were transcribed, translated, and embedded in each concept of the desk review to achieve the following research objectives.

a. Identify the purpose of the exit exam.
b. Examine the necessity of exit exam.
c. Examine the effect of exit exams.
d. Examine the process of exit exam planning, administration, and correction.
e. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the exit exam.
f. Explore the challenges facing the implementation of the exit exam.
g. Examine the views/awareness of various stakeholders about exit exam.

3. Result and Discussion

Hereunder data collected through desk review from different country's experiences and literatures to gather with the information collected using key informant interview is presented and discussed.

3.1. Purpose of Exit Exam

Lessons have been taken from different countries about the

purpose of the exit exam. In addition an interview was conducted with key informants. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, the exit exam is given in the college of technology. The primary purpose of the exit exams here, therefore, is to assess students' educational achievement in the courses in their major area of program study. The exam is supposed to measure the learning outputs of the program as a whole, not the individual courses. An exit examination tests students at the end of their program of study for the attainment of the program's intended learning outcomes.

In India, exit exam focused on medical sciences, they call it as National Exit Test (NET) is designed to ensure uniformity in the level of training in the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) course (more so in private medical colleges), quality control for medical graduates from foreign medical colleges intending to practice in India, and abolishing the need to take multiple entrance examination and/or multiple counseling processes for admission in PG courses.

In Ethiopia, exit exam is being given in law school and health sciences. For instance, the candidate manual developed by Health Professional Competency Assessment and Licensure Directorate (2019), indicates that the sole purpose of competency assessment is to identify health professionals who possess the minimum basic knowledge and experience necessary to perform tasks on the job safely and competently, not to select the "top" candidates. It is also to validate safe and effective medical practice, job-related skills, and knowledge to provide an independent assessment and documentation of competency. Therefore, competency assessment is very different from academic or employment examination. Moreover, Law school also stated the purpose of exit exam from the problem they faced and identified plenty of problems that had plagued legal education in the country. As a result, the exit exam comes to the system as a solution to rectify these bottlenecks, together with the newly designed curriculum introduced and it is a mandatory requirement to obtain an LL.B degree.

When reading the above objectives sated by different fields across nations, though the name differs, their purpose of exit exams are related to better student achievement, favorable labor market outcomes, and higher economic growth. Better academic test results are related to significantly higher labor market earnings (Woessmann, 2018). In the first place, according to [5]. the goal for implementing exit exams is to encourage students to put effort into their learning [1]. Exit tests are intended to generate improvements in student achievement by establishing a concrete hurdle that students must clear to graduate. They are also intended to spur achievement by improving the way schools educate their lowest-achieving students.

3.2. The Necessity of Exit Exam

Is the exit exam really necessary and has to be continued? These are the basic questions raised by professionals and participants. A study conducted by HESC [7] on the law exit exam, Ethiopian Lawyers Association, and few of the deans and instructors, students, and previous graduates of law are completely against exit exam. They believe the exit exam is against continuous assessment and a flawed system. Some instructors were against exit exams and argued that taking exit exams as a requirement of graduation means grades given for the last five years are valueless. Moreover, sitting a single shot exam on a day (bad day) determines the fate is not appropriate. Does this argument; justify the necessity of an exit exam? To get justification for this question, different countries' experiences were reviewed analyzed hereunder.

Experiences from different nations across the world and states in a nation show that exit exams loom large in most educational systems. They play a significant role in many countries, providing the basis for certifying a student as having completed a formal course of studies in an educational system or for employment. It is a particularly important consideration in countries with scarce employment opportunities and non-existent unemployment supports [9]. Exit exams in addition to serving their traditional functions of certification and selection, improve human capital (cognitive skills) and this improvement would have the potential to substantially improve the long-term economic well-being of a country [6]. Studies compared student achievement in exit exam and non-exit exam educational settings [6]. The findings support the view that students in education systems with curriculum-based external examinations have higher levels of achievement than students in systems without such examinations.

In Canada, there was an exit exam before the 1970s and discontinued in the early 1970s. However, they reestablished again the curriculum based exit exam that had been discontinued in the early 1970s. These reformers argue that 'curriculum-based external exit exams systems' (CBEEES), based on world-class content standards will improve teaching and learning of core subjects through;

a. Produce signals of student accomplishments that have real consequences for the student.
b. Define achievement relative to an external standard, not relative to other students in the classroom or the school.
c. Are organized by discipline and keyed to the content of specific course sequences.
d. Signal multiple levels of achievement in the subject.

The experience of the United Arab Emirates tells us that the exit exam is highly important in higher education as it serves as a point of reference for program enhancement. The students taking the exam realize the importance of the exam when it is seriously taken. These types of exams will motivate students to work harder and help teachers identify and address students' weaknesses. Moreover, Indian and Saudi Arabia experience in medical sciences ensures the necessity of exit exam as "it qualifies the graduate as a competent physician with the ability to practice medicine as a general practitioner anywhere in the nation or outside the nation.

By providing information on the outcomes of the

educational process, central exams can also improve the monitoring of the behavior of teachers and schools. In a principal-agent framework, this reduces inefficiencies in the educational process and raises educational outcomes [4].

Experiences of the world tell us most countries in the world use exit exam to enhance quality education for their students [5]. Moreover, they are recruiting graduates in psychometrics and testing to assist in the development and administration of these examinations seeking higher test standards. The driving force that initiates countries to apply exit exam in their programs are;

a. *The increased number of HEIs and students*: The exponential increase in the number of HEIs in a short period necessitates a mechanism to ensure high-quality graduating students both from universities/colleges. However, the exit exam is not the only safeguard to ensure the high quality of the curriculum, instruction, and learning outcomes.

b. *Lack of consistency in assessment methods*: The lack of consistency in using valid and reliable assessment methods across nations is an area of potential concern.

c. *Planned, delivered, assessed, and hidden curricula*: The planned curriculum is what the planners have agreed to include in the curriculum for feasibility and relevant reasons. The delivered curriculum is the delivery of the planned curriculum, matching different instructional methods. The assessed curriculum is what students learn because they expect it will be assessed. Ideally, the planned, delivered and assessed curriculum should overlap perfectly. Mismatch, however, indicates the presence of a hidden curriculum, which could potentially impede the achievement of the planned educational objectives.

d. *Completing the standardization process*: The standardization of the assessment of students before they entered into professional practice.

e. *The increase in the proportion of international students*: HEIs in Ethiopia will have expanded international scholarship and foreign students. As a result exam exit is needed for standardization.

Therefore, the exit exam is taken as one way of enhancing the quality and relevance of education. On one hand, exit exams could be expected to positively influence student achievement through several interrelated pathways including, pressuring teachers to align curriculum to national content standards. Moreover, the threat of diploma denial may also motivate students to work harder to reach the standards set by the state [8].

On the other hand, regulatory mechanisms to assure the quality of education such as accreditation and quality audits were not well established. Regulatory agencies were not effectively discharging their responsibilities. There is a shortage of trained personnel and an absence of explicit program-specific standards for audit and accreditation. The inspection is infrequent and inconsistent and poor mechanism of follow-up. Besides, there was no mechanism to verify the competence of new graduates with professional degrees.

Under such a scenario, the necessity of an exit exam is justifiable.

3.3. The Effect of Exit Exam

When a policy or strategy is developed, the developer and stallholders expect an outcome that is different and better. To this end when the exit exam is initiated, higher education institutions expected an education outcome that has quality and relevance. Consequently, the experiences of different nations and programmers are reviewed and analyzed.

Extensive empirical literature studies have been conducted on how central exams affect students' educational achievement. Evidence from several international student achievement tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) reveals consistent positive associations between central exams and student achievement across countries (Woessmann, 2016). However, the association between central exams and student achievement is robust to including continental fixed effects, thus casting doubt on this particular theory.

In German central exam affects the learning outcomes of students and their labor-market performance. The different mechanisms ultimately rest on the observation that the exit exam provides information that would otherwise not be available. Models of educational signaling and screening stress stated that central exams improve the signal of educational achievement for employers and institutions of higher education [2, 3]. This in turn creates stronger incentives for students to increase their learning effort.

In this regard, Bishop [4], reported that exit exams can improve the monitoring of the behavior of teachers and schools by providing information on the outcome of the educational process. Moreover, the exit exam may decrease collective peer pressure against learning because they make a collective strategy to lower standards in a classroom futile, which again increases learning outcomes. Human capital theory predicts that such improvements in educational outcomes, in turn, increase a person's productivity in the labor market, thereby improving labor-market outcomes.

The experiences from Canada also give a lesson on this issue. According to them, CBEEE affects the academic achievement of students by shifting attention from relative achievement towards measures of absolute achievement. It is to say if students are evaluated relative to an outside standard, they no longer have a personal interest in getting teachers off track or persuading each other to refrain from studying. Much of the ultimate effect of CBEEESs on student achievement derives from the changes they induce in school priorities and teacher pedagogy.

Experiences from the United Arab Emirates also advocate the effectiveness of exit exams. Exit exam results could be used as a monitoring tool whose outcomes could be used for feedback, evaluation, and review processes. The monitoring can be seen as part of the implementation process of the curriculum. It is at this stage that departments have the responsibility to verify that student performance is consistent

with the established goals and objectives of the university curriculum. In this issue, Higher Education Strategy Center [7] researched to explore the views of deans, instructors, previous graduates of law school, employers, exam settlers, and exam correctors on the effect of exit exams and education quality [7]. Most of the study participants reported exit exam is the best option to ensure quality legal of education, even the only option for some to bring effect on educational achievement.

Overall, exit exams are related to better student achievement, favorable labor market outcomes, and higher economic growth. Better academic test results are related to significantly higher labor market earnings [5]. In the first place, the goal for implementing exit exams is to encourage students to put effort into their learning [1].

3.4. Preparation, Administration of Exit Exam and Scoring

When the exit exam was planned as one of the education quality improving mechanisms, it has the following characteristics [1]; first, they are set or controlled by an agency external to the schools from which students come. Second, the administering authority is usually a national or state government or agency or, if it does not administer the examinations, it will have an oversight function. Third, the examinations are based on prescribed syllabi in curriculum (or subject) areas. Fourth, examinations involve the application of a common test administered under controlled conditions, in which students do not have access to books or other material and are separated from the classroom situation. The examinations are usually administered on fixed days to many students at the same time. Fifth, there is a heavy emphasis on objective items involving multiple-choice, essays and practical tasks.

The MoH in Ethiopia established a national licensing examination (NLE) for university graduates including a written exam and OSCE. The written exam was piloted with over 15,000 graduates. Pass rates ranged from 21% for health officers to 81% for anesthesia in the 2015 cohort of exam takers. Post examination analysis revealed that the NLEs were of appropriate difficulty level, and had very good reliability. The MoH is planning to require that new graduates must pass NLE to get employed [11].

Saudi Arabia Experience also gives a lesson on exit exam administration, and it should be conducted and maintained by an independent judicial body. Such an organization, especially at the initial stages of such a project, would likely benefit from consulting experienced organizations in conducting such examinations. Additionally, they suggest recruiting medical education experts in psychometrics and testing to assist in the development and administration of these examinations seeking higher test standards.

The United Arab Emirates also shares its experience exit exam preparation. A set of questions is normally identified covering the fundamentals and highlighting key concepts in engineering in the past year's course. These questions stress the fundamental knowledge that any engineer should possess before starting practicing. By default, fewer advanced questions are introduced to distinguish between the smart and the average students. The number of questions varies from department to department but is normally kept identical among all years. Moreover, some exams are the same as in the past taking into consideration that even no single question will be known or revealed for the next student batch.

The score on this exam should reflect the student's performance. This exam tests the student on knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained throughout the study of the courses of a specific program.

Regarding the administration of the exit exam, it is administered in hard copy using paper and pencil. However, the worldwide trend is now on computer-based and online exams [1]. This is because:

a. Multiple versions of the exam can be distributed without having to manually monitor which students got which tests.
b. Quickly evaluation of the performance of the group is possible.
c. Less time and effort are needed.
d. Question styles on exams, including graphics can be mixed and made more interactive than paper-based exams.
e. Human errors in grading can be eliminated.
f. Save paper.

The use of computer-based exams or online exams goes under this trend of e-learning and e-education systems. This offers the opportunity to display each question with its multiple-choice options along with the percentage weight of each multiple-choice option. This helps in detecting how many students have chosen the right answer and how many have chosen each of the other choices, as depicted.

3.5. The Strengths and Weakness of Exit Exam

a. Strengths of Exit Exam

The exam serves to provide the departments, colleges, and universities with detailed up-to-date feedback, which helps develop the program and its courses. Once the students take the exam, the results are analyzed, examined, and discussed extensively to identify points of strengths as well as weaknesses and pinpoint any areas for development in the academic programs or even the introduction of new programs and courses. Thus as a consequence, those detailed results will allow colleges and departments to identify domains where the students excel and those which need improvement and better assessment. Based on the global and local experiences and interviews conducted with key informants, the following strengths of the exit exam are identified.

1) *Exit exam helps to ensure whether the graduates have achieved at least a common standard of knowledge and practical competencies.*
2) *Exit exam helps to improve the public trust and confidence in the Healthcare and Judicial activities of professionals.*
3) *The results of the exit exam are a reliable, transparent, and valid measure of candidates' qualifications for jobs.*

4) *The exit exam/licensure can be used as a tool for quality assurance to benchmark and to correct any potential problem or deficiency in the curricula or methods of instruction.*

5) *It also decreases the time constraints of the faculty to perform an ongoing global assessment.*

To sum up, the exit exam is hoped to help enhance the quality and standards of education in the Ethiopian higher education institutions. It also determines if the student has both technical (knowledge and skill) and ethical competence. Therefore, all programs better think and prepare themselves and their students; they will implement exit exams as major criteria to certify/get their degree so that they will get employment.

b. Weaknesses of the National Exit Exam

Works of literature from global and local perspectives and key informants in the interview session also tried to identify the limitations of exit exams and some are presented below.

1) *Standardization of assessment (exit exam) will come up with standardization of the curriculum and may eliminate creativity and innovation in instructional skills.*

2) *Implementation of the exit exam in a national way may stratify schools into the explicit league which makes it determinant for the morale of staff and students.*

3) *Onetime assessment is not as comprehensive as ongoing assessments.*

4) *The dependability and trustworthiness of students and who involves in the exam setting and administration process.*

5) *The presence of committed and responsible invigilators during exit exam administration time.*

6) *The misbehavior or ineffectiveness of campus securities to discharge their responsibility during the exam time.*

3.6. Challenges of Exit Exam

According to the literature reviewed in other nations and in Ethiopia to evaluate exit examination system [4, 6, 7], and interviews conducted, exit exam is hoped to help enhance quality and standards of education. It also determines if the student has both technical (knowledge and skill) and ethical competence. Depending on how the school's students perform in the exit exam, particular challenges are identified as follows.

1) Efforts and costs to maintain the process: The planning, writing, revising, scoring, and analyzing of these examinations are very complex and tedious processes that require the allocation of quite a significant amount of time, money, and personnel. This is the strongest barrier against the implementation of such a system.

2) Opposing arguments: The natural resistance to change is expected from both administrators and students. For instance, research conducted in Ethiopian law school HESC [7], reported, the Ethiopian Lawyers Association and few of the deans and instructors,

students, and previous graduates of the law were completely against it. They believe that the exit exam is against continuous assessment and it is a flawed system. Instructors argued that if the exit exam is a graduation requirement, the five years evaluation is valueless. Therefore, determining the fate of a student by a one-shot exam like the law school's exit exam is appropriate.

3) Exposing potential weakness in the education system: Colleges might resist this call for change fearing that they will be exposing the weaknesses of their schools publicly. However, the potential embarrassment can be avoided by keeping the results of the schools' performance confidential for the first 5 years of implementing the system.

4) The fear of impeding flexibility within the school's curriculum: Educators might resist the change because they believe that national learning outcomes and a national standardized examination will restrict the flexibility of customizing their curriculum and choice of assessment methods.

5) Inadequate preparation of students for the exam is an emerging challenge and explained by different reasons like inadequate time for exam preparation, inadequate support and help from the law schools in terms of lack of orientation and dissemination of information about the exam, and lack of commitments in mentoring and giving due attention to the failure of their students.

6) Students' lack of motivation, commitment, and time as a result of their condition is another challenge regarding the non-regular program. These students join the program who are working and have other duties.

7) There is limited access to teaching and reference materials for such students in different universities. Especially, the case of the distance program is worth mentioning. Therefore, the content of courses and even the quality of the material differ from that of the regular or other non-regular programs.

8) Employers' and Other Stakeholders' Limited Awareness: the biggest challenges were the lack of awareness of potential employers. Some students (from the non-regular program) and higher education institutions top officials about the nature and consequence of exit exam and lack of uniformity about the consequence that failure should entail. There are several cases in which students who failed the exit exam have been given a temporary certificate of their degree, employed, and promoted without giving due regard to the exit exam results. And most employers do not use exit exams as a criterion in their recruitment and promotion procedures.

9) Quality of the Exam Questions: the lack of conceptual clarity, uneven representation of courses and topics of courses, lack of inclusion of oral examination to evaluate students' oral skills, the inclusion of an unnecessary and immense number of courses in the exam, and the unpredictability of the courses to appear

on the exam, the inclusion of memory testing questions, incorporation of questions having debatable issues in some exam questions and lack of procedure of standardizing the exam based on difficulty level during exam preparation are the main challenges raised regarding the quality of the exam questions.

10) Correction Process and Feedback: Shortage of time for correction, unsuitability of the venue and offices where the correction takes place, lack of commitment from the correctors; lack of proper supervision and follow up of the correction process and lack of timely and proper communication of the feedback are the major challenges.

11) Exam Administration and Management: Lack of institutionalized ownership of legal education reform program in general and an exit exam, in particular, is the governing challenge. As discussed earlier in the existing setting, the administration of exit exam is a shared responsibility that requires the collaborative contribution of different institutions. Failure of one institution has an impact on the overall administration. Hence, with the emerging trend of financing the exit exam by the respective universities coupled with distributed ownership of the exam by different institutions (HESC, NEAEA, MOE) and lack of legal expertise on the part of NEAEA and HESC; is a challenge manifested in failure to disseminate exam related information timely, the gross mistake in exam packaging, lack of corrective and retributive measures taken on cheating cases and most importantly poor record and documentation system of students' result.

12) Passing Mark: The fact that the passing mark is below the average (50%) most of the time (30/35%) creates psychological reluctance on the side of the students in the effort they employ for the exam during preparation and compromises the quality of the graduates. The criteria used to determine the passing mark especially of the minimum skill and knowledge is a general stipulation that made it inapplicable to determine the passing mark.

13) Reward mechanism: the fact that there are no separate certifications for exam result communication and lack of incentive and rewarding mechanism for high scoring students and universities at the national level is also a major challenge. This will affect the motivation of the students to perform better for the exam.

4. The Way Forward

Based upon the conclusions discerned, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1) Comparing law school exit exam and health sciences licensure exam, law school exam gives an additional mandate for schools. The mandate of schools is to teach the school curriculum and make students graduate instead of adding exit exams in the curriculum. Exit exams should not be related to getting the degree or not.

Like health sciences, an exit exam has to be given for the sake of licensing students to join the job market.

2) Existing preparation and administration is a complex and tedious process that requires the allocation of quite a significant amount of time, money, and personnel. Therefore it is recommended that some portion of the cost better to be covered by graduates, Or else when candidates number increases, the budget for this activity will get immense high and high and the government will be a terrible amount of cost.

3) There shall be a strict guideline on dependability and trustworthiness of students, the presence of committed and responsible invigilators, and the misbehavior or ineffectiveness of campus securities to discharge their responsibility during the exam time.

4) The exit exam is administered on a manual basis in Ethiopia. This system might threaten the safety of the exam. The use of computer-based exams or online exams goes under the trend of e-learning and e-education systems. This solves the problems related to examination, examiner, and campus security problems.

5) The NAEA/the will be organizing body in collaboration with universities has to organize rewarding system at the national level. This can create a sense of competition which enhances education quality, students learning, and their employability. Moreover, the NAEA has to issue a separate certificate for the exit exam result, especially for programs other than the fields of health sciences.

6) The government planned to apply exit exam for all undergraduate students in different fields of study in the country. Therefore, there should be an institution that takes and discharge the responsibility and accountability of exit exam whether in NAEA or another separate organ. Moreover, clear policies, strategies, and guidelines to lead the institute have to be properly prepared.

7) If the exit exam is conducted without due deliberations and preparedness, students might be failing multiple times. It may harm the psychology of students, parents, and society. The implementation process is better done gradually starting to form manageable levels to the desired level. Moreover, in the initial few years, it would be appropriate to set the level of exit exam relatively easier, to build up the confidence of students, parents, and society.

8) Across nations, exit exam is among the mechanisms that enhance education quality and relevance. However, a detailed assessment will be important from stallholders, students, parents, and society before implementing it in all HEIs.

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