

**EFFECT OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ON QUALITY CULTURE IN
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN TANZANIA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at assessing the effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture in higher education institutions in Tanzania. The hypothesis that the study intended to analyze is that internal quality assurance has no effect on quality culture. The study was designed using explanatory hypothesis-testing survey with quantitative approach. The study used a population of higher education institution in Tanzania and a sample from seven higher education institutions. The sample included 350 respondents from seven different higher education institutions in Tanzania. Data were collected using survey questionnaires and secondary data. Findings revealed that internal quality assurance mechanisms such as self evaluation, benchmarking, academic audit, peer review and external examination have an effect on quality culture in higher education institutions in Tanzania. The study concluded that internal quality assurance has an effect on quality culture in HEIs. The study recommends that internal quality assurance mechanisms should be supported by different stakeholders in order to assure involvement of commitment of staff and students in implementation of quality policies and quality programs in HEIs in Tanzania.

Keyword: Internal Quality Assurance, Quality Culture, Higher Education Institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In different parts of the world, scholars have studied quality assurance (QA) in higher education institutions. For instance, QA in HEIs in China (Ghaffar & Abrizah, 2017; Wang, 2014), in Vietnam (Ha, 2017), in Taiwan (Hsu, 2017), in Ethiopia (Kahsay, 2012), in Sub-Saharan Africa (Materu, 2007), in Botswana (Pule, 2014), in Tanzania and Mozambique (SIDA, 2015), in Kenya (Odhiambo, 2014); however, to maintain quality of higher education institutions in Tanzania is still a big challenge despite the existence of quality assurance mechanisms (Nyamwesa et al., 2020). In 2016 some HEIs were deregistered and others had their approval revoked due to poor quality education. Different scholars have explained quality in different ways. According to Juran quality is defined as “fitness for purpose” and Crosby defined quality as “conformance to specifications” (Elassy, 2015). Quality education may refer to inputs, that is, numbers of teachers, teacher training curricula, and learning materials. Secondly it may refer to processes, which is the amount of direct teaching time, extent of active learning. Thirdly, it may mean outputs, that is, test scores, examinations, graduation rates, and lastly it may refer to outcomes, that is, performance in subsequent employment. Furthermore, in some quarters, quality education

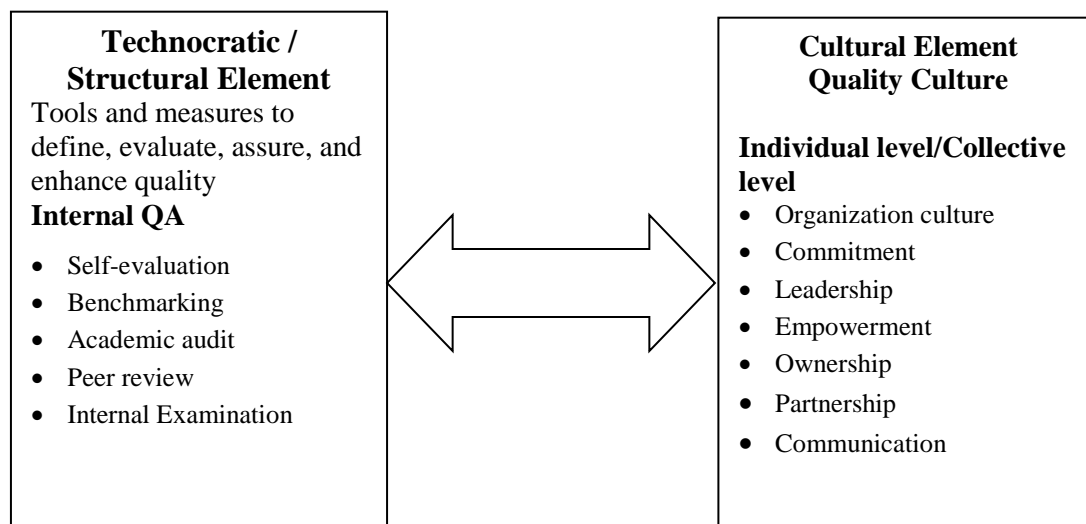
may simply imply the attaining of specified targets and objectives (Tshabangu and Msafiri, 2013).

QA in higher education involves systematic review of educational programmes and processes in order to maintain and improve their quality, equity and efficiency, and to improve teaching and learning with the ultimate goal to support the best outcomes for learners (European Commission, 2017). In practice, quality assurance involves a system of QA units within education authorities, buffer organizations, list of recognized accrediting bodies, Regional Accreditation Associations, specialized and professional accreditation, and strong traditions of institutional autonomy (UNESCO, 2017). Quality assurance is conceptualized as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that input, process, output and outcomes fulfill expectations of stakeholders and meet threshold minimum requirements in terms of criteria and standards (TCU, 2019).

Although quality assurance mechanisms such as assessment, accreditation and audit are now a routine in the majority of higher education institutions in the world, the active attachment and involvement of staff and students in these processes is still limited; the ideal involvement of student and staff in such processes is often referred to as quality culture which means the social processes intended to characterize well-functioning quality systems (Harvey & Stensaker, 2007). A quality culture (QC), therefore, can be regarded as a specific kind of organizational culture encompassing shared commitment and responsibility for quality, grass-roots involvement of staff and students and an adequate balance between top-down and bottom-up improvement initiatives (EUA, 2006). Quality culture also refers to a specific aspect of organizational culture, which is defined as the social glue that helps to hold an organization together. It is an attitude and set of values employed by an institution to improve the levels of quality in its service (Lee Harvey & Bjørn Stensaker, 2007). The concept of QC has two elements: structural or managerial elements and psychological or values elements (Bendermacher, *et al.*, 2017; Jawad *et al.*, 2015).

Although different studies have been conducted on higher education institutions in Tanzania (Istoroyekti, 2016, Mgaiwa, 2018; Komba *et al.*, 2013 and Maduekwe, 2015; Mosha, 2018; Ndyali, 2016), there is still a gap in literature since so far there are no studies that have been conducted to assess the effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture in higher education institutions in Tanzania. This is the gap that this study tried to bridge by analyzing the null hypothesis that there is no effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture in HEIs in Tanzania.

Conceptual Framework



Adapted from EUA, 2006

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research philosophy adopted is pragmatism which looks at the truth as a consensus among people living in the same community. Therefore, this study presents the consensus of the views of respondents concerning the attributes of HEIs as they perceive them in their natural settings.

This study used the hypothesis-testing or explanatory research design. This involved testing tools and instruments developed and tested in other settings to the context of Tanzania, Therefore, this study used mainly quantitative approach. The quantitative approach was used in relation to data collected using cross-sectional survey. The unit of analysis consisted of individual views of members within higher education institutions.

This study was conducted in Tanzania, specifically in Dar-es-Salaam region. According to Todd *et al.* (2019), Dar es Salaam is among the fastest growing cities in the region and in the whole world. It is the former capital city of Tanzania, but nowadays the capital city is in Dodoma region. It is the leading commercial center and economic hub in Tanzania and is expected to be a mega city in 2030. The major factor for growth is migration. The population of Dar-es-Salaam was estimated to be 5,373,623 people (URT/NBS, 2013).

This study used a population consisting of members of Higher Education Institutions located in Tanzania, specifically in Dar-es-Salaam region. This population includes academic staff, administrative staff, students, workers, and owners of HEIs. The study used purposive sampling and stratified sampling. The sample size is the total number of respondents involved in the study.

In this research, the sample is determined using Stevens (1996) formula (Greener, 2009) in equation 1, which shows that

$$N = 50 + 8 m \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where N = Sample size; m = No of independent variables. In this study the minimum sample was $N = 50 + 8 (13) = 154$ respondents

The sample involved members from the University of Dar es Salaam, Kampala International University, Ardhi University, Dar es Salaam College of Education, College of Business Education, Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology, and Tumaini University.

This study used a sample of 352 respondents above the minimum sample size determined.

Primary and Secondary data were collected using documentary review and structured questionnaires.

Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists – SPSS.

Effect of IQA on QC was represented using equation

$$QC = a + b_1SA + b_2BM + b_3AA + b_4 PR + b_5 AS + \alpha$$

Where QC = Quality Culture; SA = Self-Assessment; BM = Benchmarking; AA = Academic Audit; PR = Peer Review; EE = External Examination; a = transect, α = unknown

In this study, variables were measured using Likert scale with 5 items: from 0 = not sure, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. The measured items were used to calculate the average and the standard deviation. The results were then be interpreted as shown in Table 3.

Table 1: Data processing matrix

| Variables | Description | Measurement | Interpretation of Means |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| External Quality Assurance | 21 items | Scale | If M=21-41.9 Low; 42 – 62.9 Moderate; 63 - 84 Excellent |
| Self-evaluation | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12-17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
| Benchmarking | 4 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent |
| Academic Audit | 4 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent |
| Peer Review | 4 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent |
| External Examination | 4 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent |
| Quality Culture | 56 items | Scale | If M=56-111.9 Low; 112 – 167.9 Moderate; 168-224 Excellent |
| Human Relations Model | 5 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent |
| Open System Model | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |

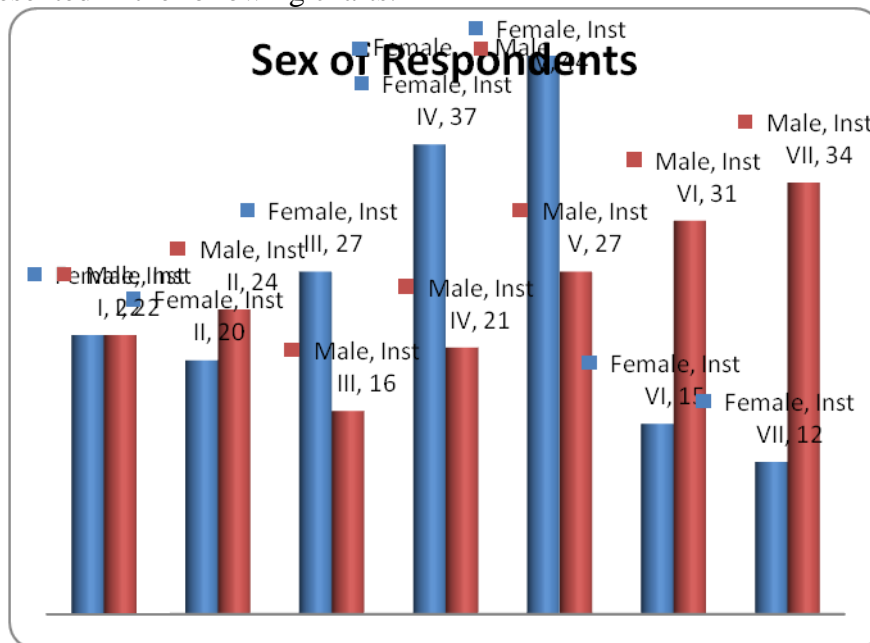
| | | | |
|------------------------|---------|-------------|---|
| Rational Goal Model | 5 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent |
| Internal Process Model | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
| Leadership | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
| Communication | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
| Empowerment | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
| Commitment | 5 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent |
| Ownership | 5 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent |
| Partnership | 6 items | Scale 0 – 4 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |

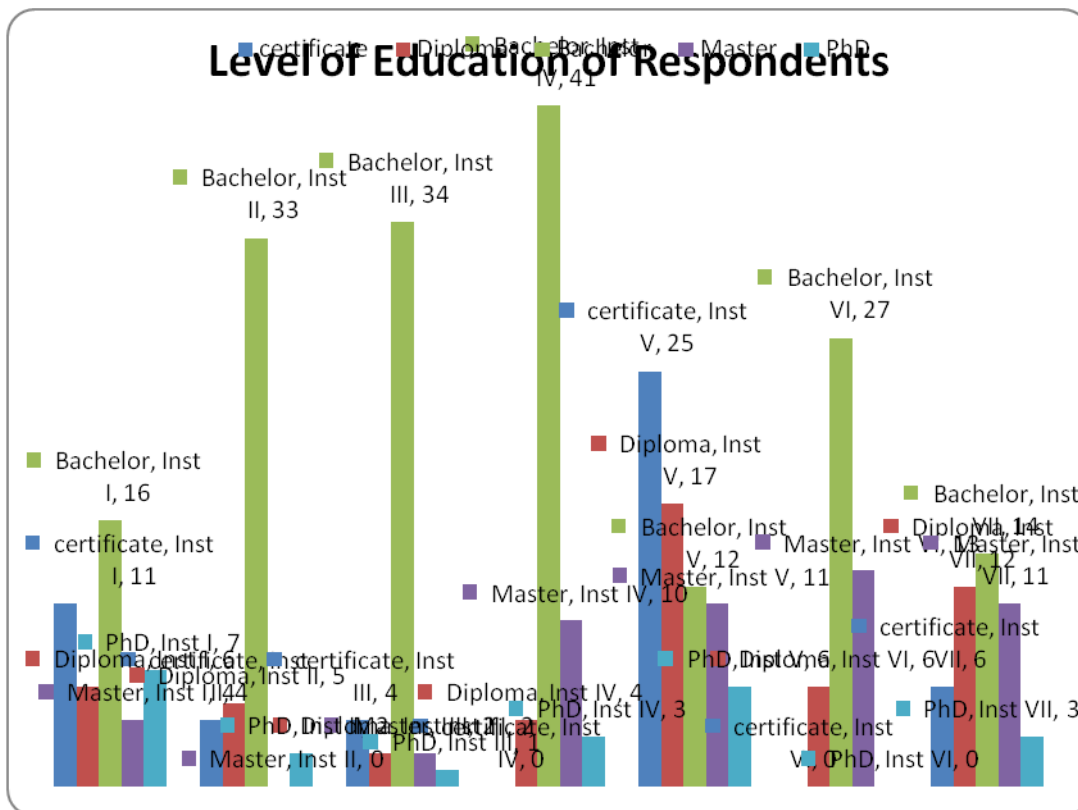
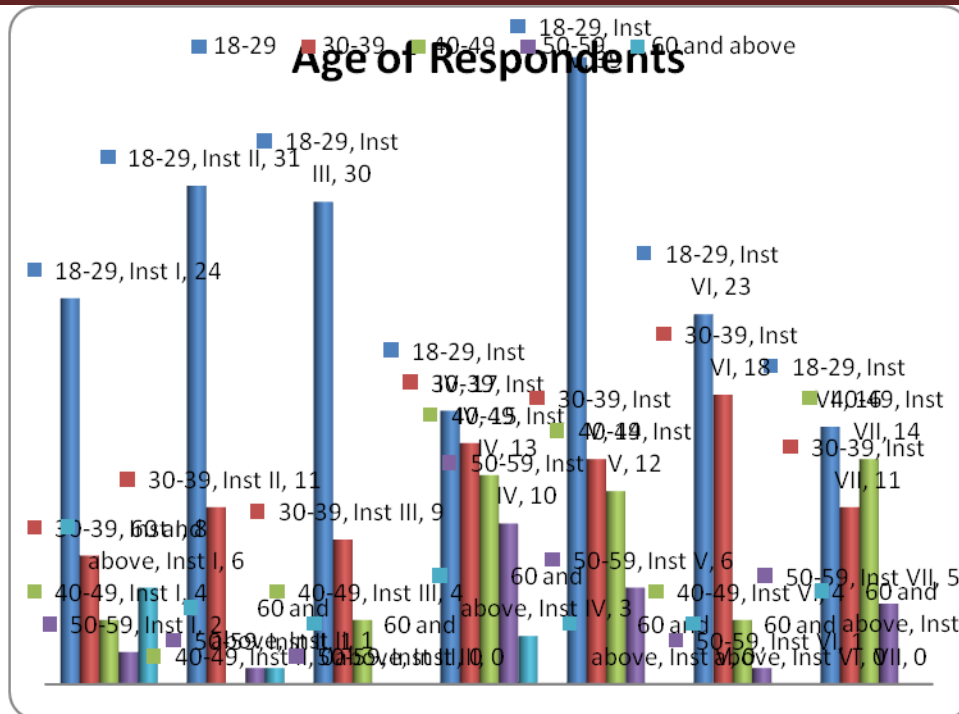
Source: Survey data, 2020

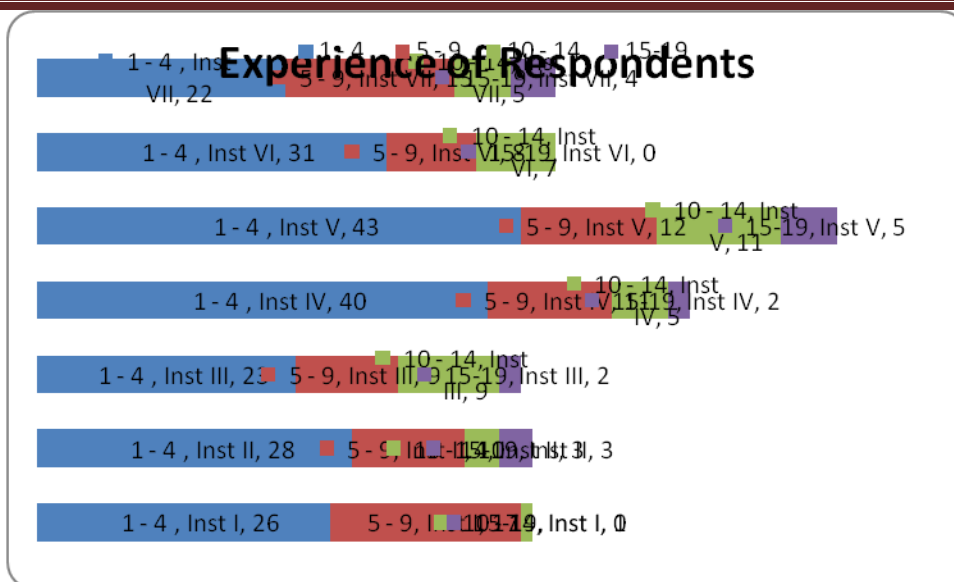
The validity and reliability were checked. This study ensured reliability by conducting pre-test or pilot study. It also ensured reliability by calculating the Cronobach alpha after data were collected. The Cronobach alpha computed was 0.87 which exceeded 0.7 and this showed that data were reliable.

3. RESULTS

This study considered demographic data which included sex of respondents, age, and experience. Results are presented in the following charts.







Furthermore, respondents were asked to give their views on the internal quality assurance in HEIs. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Perceptions of Internal Quality Assurance in HEIs

| S/N | Self-evaluation | Mean | SD |
|-----|----------------------|------|------|
| | Self-evaluation | 17.1 | 5.5 |
| | Benchmarking | 12.8 | 3.2 |
| | Academic Audit | 11.3 | 4.2 |
| | Peer Review | 10.3 | 4.5 |
| | External Examination | 10.4 | 4.6 |
| | Total | 62.0 | 18.8 |

Source: Survey data, 2020

Also respondents were asked to give their views on quality culture in HEIs in Tanzania. The results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Perceptions of Quality Culture in HEIs

| S/N | Quality Culture | Mean | SD |
|-----|------------------------|------|-----|
| | Human Relations Model | 14.2 | 5.4 |
| | Open System Model | 16.1 | 6.9 |
| | Rational Goal Model | 14.3 | 5.5 |
| | Internal Process Model | 17.1 | 6.8 |
| | Leadership | 16.9 | 6.6 |
| | Communication | 15.9 | 6.8 |
| | Empowerment | 16.2 | 6.7 |
| | Commitment | 14.1 | 5.5 |
| | Ownership | 14.3 | 5.8 |

| | | |
|-------------|-------|------|
| Partnership | 16.8 | 6.8 |
| Total | 155.9 | 54.9 |

Source: Survey data, 2020

Results obtained were processed using the table 1. The findings are presented in table 4

Table 4: Processing of Findings

| Vari ables | Mean | SD | Interpretation of Means | Conclusion |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|--|-----------------|
| QA | | | If M=43-85.9 Low; 86 – 128.9Moderate; 129-172 Excellent | |
| IQA | 62.0 | 18.8 | If M=22-43.9 Low; 44 – 65.9 Moderate; 66-88 Excellent | Moderate |
| SE | 17.1 | 5.5 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12-17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| BM | 12.8 | 3.2 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent | Excellent |
| AA | 11.3 | 4.2 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent | Moderate |
| PR | 10.3 | 4.5 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent | Moderate |
| EE | 10.4 | 4.6 | If M=4 – 7.9 Low; 8-11.9 Moderate; 12 - 16 Excellent | Moderate |
| QC | 155.9 | 54.9 | If M=56-111.9 Low; 112 – 167.9 Moderate; 168- 224 Excellent | Moderate |
| HRM | 14.2 | 5.4 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent | Moderate |
| OSM | 16.1 | 6.9 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| RGM | 14.3 | 5.5 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent | Moderate |
| IPM | 17.1 | 6.8 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| Lp | 16.9 | 6.6 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| Cn | 15.9 | 6.8 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| Et | 16.2 | 6.7 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent | Moderate |
| Ct | 14.1 | 5.5 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent | Moderate |
| Op | 14.3 | 5.8 | If M=5 – 9.9 Low; 10 – 14.9 Moderate; 15 - 20 Excellent | Moderate |

| | | | |
|----|------|-----|--|
| Pp | 16.8 | 6.8 | If M=6 – 11.9 Low; 12 – 17.9 Moderate; 18-24 Excellent |
|----|------|-----|--|

Source: Survey data, 2020

Correlation between internal quality assurance and quality culture

Moreover, the relationship between internal quality assurance and quality culture was assessed using the correlation analysis. Findings are presented in table 5

Table 5: correlation between internal quality assurance and quality culture

| | | SA | BM | AA | PR | EE | AS | QC |
|-----------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| SA | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .512** | .613** | .644* | .644** | .491** | .610** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 350 |
| BM | Pearson Correlation | .512** | 1 | .519** | .459* | .459** | .486** | .507** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 350 |
| AA | Pearson Correlation | .613** | .519** | 1 | .697* | .697** | .524** | .586** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 350 |
| PR | Pearson Correlation | .644** | .459** | .697** | 1 | 1.000** | .546** | .653** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 350 |
| EE | Pearson Correlation | .644** | .459** | .697** | 1.000** | 1 | .546** | .653** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 352 | 350 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| QC | Pearson Correlation | .610** | .507** | .586** | .653* | .653** | .744** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 |

Source: Survey data, 2020

Regression between internal quality assurance and quality culture

The regression analysis was used to assess the effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture. The findings are presented in table 6.

Table 6: Regression of Internal Quality Assurance and Quality Culture

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | |
| 1 | (Constant) | -2.965 | 5.496 | | -.539 | .590 |
| | Self assessment computed | .822 | .338 | .083 | 2.434 | .015 |
| | Benchmarking computed | .631 | .486 | .038 | 1.299 | .195 |
| | Academic Audit computed | .082 | .458 | .006 | .179 | .858 |
| | Peer Review | .292 | .520 | .650 | 15.940 | .000 |
| | External examination computed | 1.170 | .439 | .098 | 2.665 | .008 |

Source: Survey data, 2020

According to these results the following analysis can be done:

Self-assessment and Quality culture: It was found that the increase of self-assessment involves increase in quality culture. However, the magnitude of the relationship is represented by Beta = 0.083 which is relatively small. This means that by doubling self-assessment activities, the effect on quality culture will only increase by 8.3%. The degree of significance is also computed and it is found that it is 0.015; this shows that statistically, the effect is significant since the random error is estimated to 1.5% which is smaller than the Alpha value of 0.05 (5%) used in most statistical analyses.

Benchmarking and quality culture The computed values show positive relationship because the value in the table is positive. This implies that increase in benchmarking involves increase in quality culture. The magnitude was computed and found to be Standardized Beta = 0.038; this means that if the performance of benchmarking activities doubles, the quality culture increase by 3.8%; this is relatively small increase. The degree of significance shows p value equals 0.195; this value shows that the degree of random error is 19.5% which much bigger than the acceptable 5%. Therefore, this relationship is not significant at p = 0.05

Academic audit and quality culture: The value in the table is positive. This means that the increase in academic audit leads to the increase in quality culture. The magnitude was computed and found to be Standardized Beta = 0.006; this means that when the academic audit activities double, the quality culture increases by 0.6%; this increase is low. Furthermore, the significance level was found to be p = 0.858 which is equivalent to 85.8% of random errors; this shows that the level of random errors is very high and therefore the relationship is not significant.

Peer review and quality culture: The value in the table is positive. This implies that increase in peer review leads to increase in quality culture. The magnitude was computed and found to be Standardized Beta = 0.650; this means that if the performance of peer review activities doubles, the quality culture increase by 65%; this is relatively very high increase. The degree of significance shows p value equals 0.000; this value shows that the degree of random error is 0.0% which much smaller than the acceptable 5% represented by the Alpha value of 0.05. This shows that the relationship is significant.

Therefore, prediction of quality culture from internal quality assurance shows that only the self-assessment and peer review have a significant relationship with the quality culture. Among the two, peer review seems to contribute more to quality culture (65%).

Hypothesis Testing

The Hypothesis which stated that there is no effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture can be confirmed or rejected using the results of table 7 and table 8.

Table 7: Correlation between internal quality assurance and quality culture

| | | Internal Quality Assurance | Quality Culture |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Internal Quality Assurance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .740** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 352 | 350 |
| Quality Culture | Pearson Correlation | .740** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 350 | 350 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey data, 2020

Table 8: Regression between internal quality assurance and quality culture

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .807 | 4.571 | | .177 | .860 |
| | Internal Quality Assurance | .577 | .115 | .182 | 5.019 | .000 |

Source: Survey data, 2020

The results obtained show the following:

Effect of Internal Quality Assurance on Quality culture: It was found that the increase of internal quality assurance involves increase in quality culture. However, the magnitude of the relationship is represented by Beta = 0.182 which is relatively small. This means that by doubling internal quality assurance activities, the effect on quality culture will only increase by 18.2%. The degree of significance is also computed and it is found that it is 0.000; this shows that statistically, the effect is significant since the random error is estimated to 0.0 % which is smaller than the Alpha value of 0.05 (5%) used in statistical analyses.

Therefore, the first hypothesis is tested and it is confirmed that

H1: Internal quality assurance has a significant effect on quality culture in HEIs located in Dar es Salaam region

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of this study confirmed that internal quality assurance has a significant effect on quality

culture. This confirms the views of Eales-Reynolds and Rugg (2009) showing that developing a quality culture does not only involve compliance with quality standards but also enhancement of those standards using peer groups; it also depends on institutional audits and inclusion of external examiners accredited. These findings are similar to those expressed in this study. It also agrees with Kottmann et al. (2016) who showed that institutional quality cultures are developed when the systems support them by introducing national regulations on quality assurance and accreditation, and schemes to stimulate higher education institutions to develop innovation and having financial incentives to care for quality. These findings are in line with those proposed in this study. The results of this study also agree with Njiro (2016) who showed that quality culture involves all efforts to assure quality provisions internally and externally. It also argued that compliance with standards and guidelines from external quality agents is not enough and that HEIs should promote cultural factors such as values, rituals, and symbols accepted by those involved in quality delivery.

The findings of this study also corroborate the recommendations of the reports produced by EUA (2006) which showed that embedding quality culture in institution requires self-evaluation and that self-assessment is an important factor in developing quality culture in HEIs in Tanzania. Furthermore, results of this study are related to those by Chivasa et al. (2021) who showed that HEIs need to have quality consciousness by training staff members and inculcating in employees the quality mindset. Findings of this study are also related to those achieved by Rifa'i et al (2019) who showed that internal quality assurance has a positive and significant effect on the quality culture and organizational performance. It also showed that higher education institutions have to improve quality assurance and quality culture in order to improve organizational performance.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has rejected the null hypothesis that there is no effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture and has reached the conclusion that there is a significant effect of internal quality assurance on quality culture in Tanzania. This relationship helps to explain the phenomenon that internal quality assurance helps to maintain and improves quality culture and therefore helps to enhance performance of higher education institutions. This gives confidence that other factors being kept constant, the development of internal quality assurance mechanisms will continue to enhance involvement of staff and students in implementation of quality policy and quality programs in higher education institutions in Tanzania.

This study therefore recommends the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, and stakeholders from private sector and civil societies organizations, especially faith based organizations, should give credit to internal quality assurance mechanisms in order to enhance involvement and commitment of staff and students in implementing the quality policies guidelines and quality improvement programmes in HEIs in Tanzania. This will help to maintain the academic freedom of HEIs and to ensure the accountability of HEIs towards the public and clients concerned with higher education sector.

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