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Challenges Encountered by Quality Management System ISO 9001:2015 Implementation at the Universities

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ABSTRACT

In higher education, great transformation is underway. This study describes the challenges of ISO 9001:2015 implementation. This study used a qualitative approach. Public and private universities' QEC directors were chosen as a population. Fourteen QEC directors were chosen as the study's sample from fourteen universities. One respondent was chosen through purposive sampling from each university. Interviews that were semi-structured were used to get the data. Data analysis was performed using the software QDA Miner Lite once the data had been collected. It was determined that the challenges include a lack of funding, lack of awareness, a lack of staff and faculty involvement and cooperation, a lack of human and financial resources. IPE integration and implementation will offer a platform. If HEC establishes standards and issues orders for notification for international accreditation, the university may be included in quality management system practices on a global level. Giving universities incentives and rewards, providing adequate training for employees, hiring newly trained, dedicated employees, providing universities with special funding for ISO certification.

| KEYWORDS | ISO 9001:2015, Public and Private, QEC Directors, QMS, Universities |

Introduction

A great transformation period is underway in higher education. According to Perellon (2005), the primary goal of national policies for higher education quality assurance is immediate accreditation. This procedure might be seen as a significant step in the commercialization process. Higher education commissions are aiming to ensure a high level of quality through sophisticated quality, according to Rezgui et al. (2017). The managerial structure fits into their academic heritage of adhering to rules and regulations. According to Stefanovic et al. (2009), it is obvious that implementing quality policy and QMS will result in significant benefits at low costs. Businesses utilize ISO 9001:2015 to demonstrate their capacity to continuously deliver regular complaints, product services, and consumers while also demonstrating ongoing improvements. The ISO 9001 standard is known as the Quality Management System. The ISO 9001 standard, which is widely accepted, offers enterprises a framework for creating, implementing, maintaining, and improving their QMS. To demonstrate that it has the ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and legal requirements, an organization must demonstrate that its quality management system (QMS) complies with the requirements of ISO 9001. Because so few universities have adopted ISO 9001:2015, researchers have looked into the issue. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the issues and challenges that academic institutions have encountered when implementing ISO 9001:2015. The effectiveness and efficacy of processes, reputation, and competitiveness can all

significantly improve in institutions that adopt ISO 9001:2015. Unfortunately, challenges and issues that arise throughout the implementation process may obstruct these advantages and result in poor implementation. To ensure a successful implementation and reap the rewards of ISO 9001:2015 in universities, it is crucial to recognize and address the challenges and issues that arose throughout the implementation process. This study will be important for the government to evaluate the value of certification and also challenges. As well as the study will be beneficial for researchers who are interested in studying ISO certification and learning about its challenges.

Literature Review

Competition in the education sector increases the demand for education to seek strategies for getting competitive advantages. Institutions must create a product that benefits customers and offers value (Kimani, 2008). In this case, quality is crucial and the main focus (Becket & Brookes, 2006). The company must establish benchmarks and measure success against them. Both domestic and international trade require standards (Barrier, 1994). The creation of standards for quality management and environmental management depends heavily on the international organization for standardization (ISO, 2000b). "quality management system (QMS) is a set of interrelated or interacting elements that organizations use to direct and control their activities to meet customer requirements, improve their effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to enhance their performance in achieving their objectives" (ISO, 2015) is used to describe the concept of a QMS.

Globally, higher education environments are defined as being dynamic and tumultuous. Change is being fueled by both domestic and international pressures in both individual nations and higher education institutions. The concerns of quality management are now on the agenda of institutions, the federal government, specific programs, and academic departments as a result of these changes. Despite the advancement brought about by discussions and research. The fact that quality is a multifaceted construct is one of the reasons there is no general agreement on the best way to manage quality in higher education. Particularly in the context of higher education in particular (Becket & Brookes, 2006). The establishment of appropriate standards gounderwayay in 1992. The ISO 9004-2 standard was released. Higher education institutions were putting in more effort to implement the ISO 9000 quality management system. In this regard, ISO 9001:2008 emphasizes customer satisfaction more heavily. Pertaining to a scholarly setting. Numerous benefits come with ISO registration, including the establishment of a quality management system foundation, the construction of a quality system through contract performance assurance trade, the elimination of customer surveys, the provision of registration, the improvement of documentation, traceability activities, the enhancement of credibility, and the certification of documentation. The ISO registration process has certain difficulties. Gatimu (2008) also conducted a study on the strategic advantages and disadvantages of manufacturing companies adopting ISO 9000 QMS. Nyambura (2007) conducted a study on quality management practices in the University of Nairobi. Raising awareness of quality helps organizations feel more confident about their QMS. It is the initial and most crucial step for the adoption of quality standards, (Mehfooz & Saeed Lodhi, 2015). Implementation of the procedure will be aided by staff and faculty members' collaboration and involvement. Several certifications were stopped due to financial issues (Zgodavova et al., 2017). According to Hussein et al. (2017), universities' QMSs are helpful for obtaining ISO 9001:2015 certification.

Material and Methods

Kurt Lewin's change theory, which he created in the 1950s, forms the foundation of this study. This theory proposes that the three types of change that can occur in an organization are unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The ISO 9001:2015 standard is primarily responsible for changing the organization's policies, procedures, and processes. The study's secondary goal is to look at any issues or challenges associated with the adoption of ISO 9001:2015 in academic institutions. The methodology for this investigation was qualitative. By obtaining the status from each university website, the study obtains the list of IPEs universities as the example frame that complied with public and private institutions with non-ISO 9001 certifications. Director of QEC from both public and private universities were chosen as the study's population. In order to properly represent Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the study's sample was composed of 14 QEC directors from 14 universities. From each university, one respondent was selected. Purpose sampling was used. Because QEC directors had extensive knowledge and awareness of the quality management system, the researcher decided to interview them. Each interview took between 30 and 35 minutes. Two people were involved in a pilot interview. Interviews that were semi-structured were used to get the data. Interviews with the assistant director and deputy director of QEC took place in the absence of the director. Personal visits and online data collection through Google Meet were done at the sample universities. To answer and communicate inquiries at their offices, an interview was performed at the QEC director's office. For the research questions, a guide for interviews was created. The software used for this purpose, QDA Miner Lite, was used to enter and analyze the data. The process of coding and theme development continued. Direct quotes were chosen since they are a good way to capture participants' opinions. The researcher considered important factors while choosing example statements, including repute, the proportion of respondents who expressed the same views, and tone of voice to gauge the degree of emphasis. Moreover, word clouds were employed to interpret the qualitative findings.

Results and Discussion

With a 100% response rate, fourteen QEC directors were interviewed. Twelve men and two women were present. Five were directors, six were deputy directors, and three were assistant directors. The first was postdoctoral training, which resulted in eight master's, three doctoral, and two M.Phil. degrees. The majority of them have more than five years of managerial experience.

1. Do you follow any specific model of quality assurance/quality management at your university?

Figure 1 Word Clouds for a Quality Management system

One of the respondent says that

"There is no specific model we strictly follow the self-assessment manual of HEC and their requirement".

Both sector heads of QEC were grateful for the steps HEC had taken to implement the quality assurance system.

Additionally, they consistently adhere to IPE's postgraduate and degree review programs.

2. Are you aware of the existence of ISO 9001:2015 international standards related to QMS?

Figure 2 Word Clouds for Principles

One of the respondent says that

"Yes, this system is a requirement of a quality management system. When an organization needs to demonstrate the quality of this ability and constantly provision of products and services also focusing on customer satisfaction. Its focus on quality management system".

All participants are aware of the seven ISO 9001:2015 QMS guiding principles.

3. From your point of view what are the key challenges behind the low number of certifiable universities of ISO 9001:2015?

Figure 3 Word Cloud for Challenges

One of the respondent says:

"Resources in availability is challenge it includes human and finical resources. Another challenge is the commitment of top management. Because without the support of top management, QMS cannot be implemented".

Another respondent says that:

"Shortage of funds and improvement plans at the department level, which need immediate attention. Resistance to change in university is stronger than in other organizations. Another challenge is a lack of awareness. Lack of awareness about the process of implementation of quality and involvement of staff and faculty members and their level of cooperation".

Other challenges were a lack of staff members and top management involvement in ISO 9001:2015 requirements, an inappropriate system of rewards, lack of planning, lack of training, time management, workload, and an inappropriate culture for implementation of ISO 9001:2015. As a result of HEC accreditation, university management confuses the use of ISO 9001:2015 to replace QMS with ISO 9001:2015. As a result, accreditation is also a problem.

4. How can universities adopt ISO 9001:2015 for becoming part of quality management system practices at a global level?

Figure 4 Word Clouds for Initiatives

One of the respondents says:

"It is strongly recommended that attractive salary packages with educational facilities should be provided. A proper service structure should be approved so that they feel satisfied".

Another respondent says that:

"Involvement of HEC is essential for international accreditation.

If the HEC orders notification or sets criteria for international accreditation then universities move towards ISO 9001:2015. Healthy competition among universities will motivate team members toward achieving set goals. Moreover, give rewards, and proper training to staff members. The new, devoted employees who have received training for the crucial task of QMS implementation must be given positions. Give awareness to universities and their benefits. Top management's proper planning, involvement, and

special funds are essential. In addition, attractive salary packages, training courses for better results, and technical knowledge are essential.

Discussion

In order to achieve successful outcomes, (Hussein, Hammoud, Bazzi, & Ali, 2014) noted that it is crucial to involve staff and academic members in the process. Another problem is time management. Moreover, (Hussein, Hammoud, Bazzi, & Ali, 2014) included this challenge. Top management faced resistance from both academic and administrative staff. The results of this investigation revealed various consequences that have not been adequately discussed in the literature. According to Bounabri et al., (2018), the success of QM 9001 in an organization depends on the support of senior management and employee comprehension. The outcome suggests a dearth of initiatives for training. Similar findings have been made by (Jadoon & Jabeen (2006); Kosgei, 2014). The lack of money was shown to be another problem. Moreover, this is consistent with (Suleman & Gul, 2015). Lack of financial and human resources in agreement with (Suleman & Gul, 2015). Furthermore, (Rania, 2012 & Ali, 2012) illustrates the lack the resources, shortage of qualified employees, and outside and inside experience of certain renowned universities for the ISO 9001 implementation. The following issue was a lack of planning. This finding is comparable to that of (Suleman & Gul, 2015). This finding is similar to that of (Mehfooz & Saeed Lodhi, 2015) regarding a lack of awareness. This finding reflects resistance to change comparable to the finding of (Bounabri et al., 2018). Availability of accreditation similar findings have been made by (Thandapani et al., 2011). Time management this result is comparable to that of (Hussein et al., 2014). Inappropriate culture for implementing ISO 9001 similar findings have been made by (Alalfy, & Abo Hegazy, 2015). The documentation of many critical performance categories offers a path toward ISO 90012015. Cultural change was viewed (O'Mahony & Garavan, 2012) as a crucial element for advancement. Some of the difficulties were brought about by organizational elements including the organization's strong opposition to change (Bounabri et al., 2018). Organizational leaders should concentrate on creating plans for the organization's members, such as awareness of change (Ruiz-Moreno et al., 2015).

Conclusion

1. It was found that both public and private universities adhere to the guidelines in the HEC self-assessment manual.
2. It was found that, with the exception of a few, all QEC directors in universities in both the public and private sectors were aware of ISO 9001:2015. Seven principles make up ISO 9001:2015.
3. It was determined that the best methods for raising awareness of the QMS in universities were seminars, workshops, webinars, training, and inviting various speakers and experts.
4. It was determined that heads of various departments conduct various surveys, including M.Phil. Ph.D. reviews, employer surveys, graduating student surveys, teacher evaluation forms, teacher evaluation forms for online teaching, student course evaluation questionnaires, faculty course review reports, student course evaluation questionnaires, and reviews of research student progress.
5. The implementation of integrated IPEs was found to be a platform for achieving ISO 9001:2015.
6. It was determined that the challenges include a lack of funding, lack of awareness, the involvement and level of cooperation of staff and faculty, the availability of human and

financial resources, the commitment of top management, the lack of staff training, the existence of accreditation, time management, and workload, a lack of planning, an unsuitable reward system, a lack of technical knowledge, and a lack of training.

7. It was determined that the institution will join worldwide ISO 9001:2015 QMS practices if HEC established standards and ordered notification for international accreditation.

Recommendations

1. To raise awareness of ISO 9001:2015, it may be recommended to hold more seminars, workshops, webinars, training sessions, and invite various experts and lecturers to universities.
2. It may be recommended that program evaluations be used proactively to address the implementation's risks and opportunities. In order to reduce persistent issues and challenges.
3. It may be recommended that institutions go towards ISO 9001:2015 if they strictly adhered to the requirements established by HEC.
4. Prior to the university's implementation, ISO 9001:2015 quality management system orientation is provided to all individuals, including program heads, document control officers, and coordination officers. Information transmission, document preparation, and procedure-based orientation are necessary.
5. It might be recommended that people in positions of leadership accept their positions with full responsibility, especially when faced with challenges.
6. An IPE's implementation and integration may offer a platform. Additionally, the documentation of various key performance areas offers a path toward ISO 90012015.
7. The university joins global QMS practices if HEC establishes requirements and issues orders for notification for international accreditation. Giving universities incentives and rewards, providing adequate training for employees, hiring newly trained, dedicated employees, providing universities with special funding for ISO certification, educating universities about ISO certification and its advantages, and demonstrating top management commitment to ISO certification are all crucial.

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