

QUALITY CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES: PERSPECTIVE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT. Quality assurance and accreditation have become an essential part of higher education quality management all over the world. To ensure sustainable high quality education, it is essential to develop an internal quality culture in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The main objective of this study is to establish existence/non-existence of quality culture by using Internal Quality Culture (IQC) framework. The study will also identify the main impediments in the prevailing organizational culture of a HEI. The framework highlights four dimensions of IQC; Planning, Support, Execution and Assessment. Different indicators for these quality culture dimensions are analyzed by comparing the perspectives of three main stakeholders i.e. faculty, students and management. The results indicate that successful development of quality culture requires commitment and active collaboration of all the stakeholders. Moreover, the changing and conflicting requirements of the stakeholders influence the quality improvements efforts.

Keywords: Quality, Quality Culture, Higher Education, Quality Management, Quality Indicators.

1. Introduction. Higher education has become essential for the socio-economic growth of developing countries. Provision of quality higher education has thus become a critical issue in these countries. Pakistan is a developing country with a large higher education sector which caters for 7.4 million students enrolled in 132 HEIs [1]. In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) is committed to quality assurance and the enhancement of higher education sector. The quality improvement in HEIs requires continuity of strategies, actions and efforts as a prerequisite. Quality Assurance and its management is a great challenge to practitioners seeking workable guidelines, evidences of good practices and tools that will facilitate the process [2]. The main challenge for quality education management is to ensure continuous improvement while taking into consideration differing interpretation of educational processes according to the goals and needs of the stakeholders and changing and conflicting requirements of all the stakeholders. The quality management principles have been conceptualized and have been widely implemented all over the world as Total Quality Management (TQM). These quality principles basically represent an organizational culture that uses effective planning, systematic management and active collaboration of all the stakeholders to achieve the mission of the institution [3]. Quality culture is commonly misunderstood as a system of internal quality monitoring. It is important to realize that quality culture is not a process or set of procedures, nor it can be imported and imposed [4]. Quality culture needs development rather than assurance and innovation instead of standards compliance. Development of quality culture requires structural, procedural and behavioral changes at organizational level. Incorporating a cultural change in an organization is a difficult process which involves long term [5]. The quality culture within an organization requires total commitment and devotion to quality of all the stakeholders. Mutual respect, trust and cooperation is the shared responsibility. The IQC framework suggested by [6] embeds quality culture

