INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IQMS) AND CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION - A REVIEW

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Abstract
There are challenges to quality assurance process in Higher Education Institutions in the world. These challenges are crucial to continual improvement in the quality assurance process. In this study, the challenges in East Asian nations, Africa, and European nations. Each continent demands a detailed study in this regard. The Quality Assurance Process is embedded with skills, knowledge, and competence to equip a vibrant society. There are approaches which advocate inclusive growth. Integrated Quality Management System offers consistent approaches to take forward to continual improvement in quality assurance process in higher Education institutions.

Key words: *Challenges, Continual improvement, Quality Assurance Process, Integrated Quality management System*

1. INTRODUCTION

The paradox of social backwardness stems from poverty and illiteracy and the removal of them exercises innumerable strategies and coordination between institutions and individuals. Mere planning without policies and effective implementation does not yield adequate social development. The development of humanity is the most important priority of national policy of every country. Developed nations have finance and resources unlike poor nations and backward economies. The purpose of higher education is to achieve human sources development and training.

The globalization and liberalization have offered opportunities for developing economies to engage in international cooperation and participation. It has opened up enormous opportunities for dialogue and learning. Economic development is linked to social and human development while the aims of higher education policies are socio-economic development through human resource development. This is only scope of quality assurance in higher education institutions and the policies are dynamic and vibrant. Higher education is dated back to 10th century but the western form higher education has begun in 20th century in Africa (Jowi, 2009; Sawyerr, 2004; and Wagaw, 2001). Globalization has direct influence on the competence of human resources of higher education institutions and it determines the employment market to them. Accreditation and recognition are the main challenges in the internationalization of higher education in a country. Africa and other third world countries must integrate their higher education into the global standards. It is a challenge to them.

The Quality Assurance plays an important role in higher education but, the challenges are multiplying in the internationalization and globalization. Africa faces challenges in establishing policies, attitudes, actions and procedures to meet the internationalization of quality Assurance higher education institutions (Ogachi, 2009; European Commission, 2009).

The East Nations including China and Japan face several challenges in quality assurance in higher education institutions. Mostly, the challenges are associated with low participation of students, complex evaluation process, and the absence of international approach (Futao Huang, 2017). The Member States of European Commission face serious problems in respect of accreditation and the evaluation systems of Higher Education institutions. It has another challenge in terms of selection of alliances for funding (University World News, 2020).

2. EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

East Asian countries have adopted to state controlled higher education. Central government or colonial powers have been controlling higher education beginning from 19th century. The changes have emerged slowly but firmly after 1990 as a result of international standards in higher education and domestic demands. The need for quality assurance has become accepted norms for introducing quality assurance procedures in higher education. The quality assurance is understood as a measure to achieve improvement in higher education. The global completion has induced the need for global standards in higher education and it has resulted to quality assurance reforms in most of these countries. One of the results is the emergence multiplication of institutions and organisations to improve quality in higher education. The second is the priority for improving quality in higher education. The third aspect is to allow the traditional quality assurance practices continuing with higher education reforms.

East Asian countries these organisations that are regulating higher education are affiliated to the ministry of education or ministries at a central government. China follows a centralized system of Higher Education Evaluation Center of the Ministry of Education in 2004 and the budget support is drawn the Ministry of Education. The authorities of Higher Education Evaluation Centre are appointed by the Ministry of Education.

China has 2880 colleges and universities with 36, 99 million students which account for the largest higher education system in the world (Wu Yan, 2016). China adopts three features of quality Assurance, and these include 'Student Centered', 'Outcome-Based Education' (OBE), 'Continuous Quality Improvement' (CQI). It promotes Student Centered education system. The QA of China proposes to increase the responsibility and autonomy of HEIs. They follow five levels to achieve it. The five levels include fitness for educational purposes, responsiveness to public demands, supportability of faculty and educational resources, effectiveness of quality assurance system, and satisfaction of students and employers. China adopts 'five-in one' approach to build national higher education quality monitoring and evaluation system. This approach has become inevitable to meet the challenges of diversified Higher Education system, and growing international standards of quality assurance in higher education. The 'five-in-one' evaluation system integrates self-evaluation of higher education institutions, institutional evaluation through eligibility evaluation and audit, programme accreditation, monitoring of educational quality data provided by the institutions and reports, and multi-stakeholders which are Higher Education Institutions, the government, Quality Assurance agencies, students and employers). It adopts multiple approaches and it includes Self-Evaluation, Institutional Evaluation which consists of Audit, and Eligibility Evaluation, Programme Accreditation and Evaluation, International Evaluation, and Regular Data Monitoring.

Yet, there are challenges. The expected quality assurance is not realized in higher education institutions. The innovation and creativity are not achieved in majority of the Higher Education Institutions.

3. EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The European Higher Education Area was established in March 2010 on the tenth anniversary of the Bologna process in the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. There are 49 countries which have resolved to establish reforms on higher education. The key principles in the reforms are freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent student union, academic freedom, and free movement of students and staff for making the higher education institutions continuously more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanism in the European Higher Education Area. The Lisbon Recognition Convention, known as the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education of the European Region, was held on 11 April, 1997 and there were 54 countries which had participated in the Convention under the collaboration of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO. This is the first legal agreement on credential evaluation in Europe. It has established two agencies dealing with the Recognition of Qualifications of higher Education in the European Region, and the European network of information Centres on academic Mobility and Recognition. The efforts of Bologna Process began in 1999 and continued until 2010 on the establishment of EHEA (European Higher Education Area).

The main higher education qualifications in Europe are Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Doctorate/ PhD.

The EHEA has been largely successful in shaping the higher education in Europe as shown in the latest Bologna Process Implementation Report (University World News., 2020). However, there are challenges to the vision of EHEA. The Vision states that the students, staff and graduates are free to move for study and work in European Higher Education Area. The first challenge is the recognition of qualification. It is not found universal. The second challenge is the language. There are restrictions to work due to local languages. The third challenge is the non-recognition of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and other fundamental values. The fourth problem is the absence of socially inclusive higher education. The fifth challenge is the covid-19 pandemic which has starved the mobility of students for study and work. Australia has lost US D 15.5 billion income from international students as the admissions have declined from 120000 to 17000 (University World News, 2021a).

Due to the low mobility of international students to Australia, there is economic loss of Australian dollar 20 billion as the revenue from accommodation and hospitality expenditure has declined by 36 %.

The changes in information technology, globalization, digitalization, in 1980s to 1990s and global financial crisis in 2010 have enormously influenced higher education in Europe. The first challenge is to

The European Union has taken initiatives at the Gothenburg Summit in 2017. The most important change is the bottom-up approach to build inclusive and cohesive societies strengthening competitiveness. It has been decided to strengthen strategic partnerships in the European Union between higher education institutions and to identify 20 European Universities by 2024 which will allow students to gain degrees by combining studies in several countries in European Union. This approach addresses the bottom-up networks of universities in European Union. It is considered that students shall learn two minimum European languages in addition to mother tongue. The purpose is to promote student mobility and it encourages participating in educational and cultural activities through a European Student Card. It is important to increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and cultural heritage in European Union. Recognition of the skills challenges to modern learning of digitilisation, cybersecurity, media literacy and artificial intelligence is the priority in higher education. Another area of importance is the promotion of lifelong- learning-based and innovation-driven approach to education and training (European Council, 2017). In order to identify 20 European universities there are two calls to invite higher education institution with a vision for 2025 and beyond. The selection process includes five aspects which are relevance of the proposal (25 points), geographic balance (20 points), quality of the proposal and implementation (20 points), and sustainable and dissemination (20 points). The selection process ensures competitiveness and the evaluation process are carried out by three external experts with diverse profile, and the views are reviewed by the European Universities, Evaluation Committee. The ranking list is prepared by order of quality for final decision on the applications to be financed. These selected universities will have education at degree, master, and doctoral level. There shall be European curriculum to gain degree from the learning in several universities. There must be innovative pedagogies with interdisciplinary approach to develop entrepreneurial skills and civic engagement. The staff members move between the partner institutions to teach and do research for the benefit of students in training them with forward looking skills (European Union, 2019).

4. AFRICA

African universities attach priorities on increasing PhDs and the nations are treating it as one of the national strategies. The World Bank and Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda have declared in 2014 that Africa needs to increase number of PhD programmes. There are challenges to improve the quality of Africa's doctoral education. The policy which is aiming to increase number of lecturers and professors to doctoral education in Africa would increase scientific research output, has not achieved the results. This is a theoretical proposition. The second aspect of this policy is that it will improve the quality of teaching in Africa. For these two aspects of policy have no empirical findings to support. There are three crucial factors which influence the quality of teaching and these factors include knowledge of the discipline, knowledge of the pedagogy methods, and human relations qualities (University World News, 2021b). Governments and leaders must have strong faith in achieving scientific research and innovation through doctoral programmes in Africa. Now, in Africa obtaining doctoral degrees is a social recognition to them. A careful planning of doctoral programmes is essential and the doctoral programmes have to be linked to development plans of Africa. It is important to have strong and effective masters' degree programmes to prepare for doctoral programmes. External quality assurance agencies are weak and ill organised in most of the African countries in PhD programmes. These agencies are yet to develop efficient framework on quality assurance process due to lack of funds, infrastructures, and sound management practices. The Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) cancelled 66 doctoral degrees of Kampala International University which had awarded in 2011 and 2012 after accreditation in 2009. The irregularities in awarding 118 doctoral degrees of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology were discovered by Kenya's Commission for University Education (CUE). The quality and competence of supervisors influence the quality doctoral degrees and it is a challenge in Africa (University World News, 2016).

Ethiopia has achieved excellent growth in expanding higher education institutions. The Ethiopian education admission policy of 70-30 for engineering and natural sciences, and social sciences and humanities needs to be addressed in terms of globalization and international standards (Teklu Tafase Olkaba, 2016). There is disproportionate linkage between global technological development and higher education institutions in Africa. The serious challenge is the good governance and decentralization of higher education institutions in Africa.

5. INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IQMS)

Integrated Quality Management System aims to integrate the best tools and techniques of quality management system to solve the challenges to Quality Assurance in higher education institutions. Three pillars of Kaizen are 5 S, standardization, and waste elimination. Five S and Kaizen are Japanese concepts and both of them aim to achieve continual improvement. The fundamental concept of Quality Circle is to gain continual improvement. ISO aims to achieve continual improvement. The main features of Six Sigma represent teamwork, discipline, high morale, Quality Circles, and suggestions for improvement. Total Quality Management advocates superior service to gain long term customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Six Sigma, Kaizen, ISO, and Quality Circles are better motivated for continual improvement unlike total quality management even though the total quality management is less complex in practice. Integrated Quality Management System promotes Quality Assurance process improvement in higher Education institutions. It offers opportunities for participation at the gross root level as there is bottom-up approach. There is a regular waste elimination through change management through continual improvement.

6. CONCLUSION

The challenges in higher Education are broadly classified into three and these are men, material, and process which are known as MMP. Men include human resources who are students, teachers, the members of society, the members of Quality Assurance, and other stakeholders. There must be continual improvement in competence, knowledge, skills and research. They have to identify challenges of Quality Assurance for remedial measures including elimination of obsolete methods, skills, technology and pedagogical methodologies. The process improvement is strengthened in ISO methods, 5 S, Bottom –Up improvement of Kaizen, adapting to 6 steps of Kaizen Approach and Process-oriented thinking for generating new ideas and methods, Cost-Effect analysis of Quality Circles, Cost Benefit analysis of Six Sigma and others. The Material includes infrastructure, laboratory and workshops, library, and others. In respect of effective institutional management of higher education , the Six Sigma suggests two financial measures keeping in view of the importance finance to improve quality assurance process. One of them is the forward looking measures on future projects and the second relates to the backward looking measures on the current projects. To measure it , it proposes Returns on Investment, Return on Assets, and Cost Benefit Analysis. These formulas assess the success and feasibility of projects to improve Quality Assurance Process. The Six Sigma expresses serious concerns on seven wastes which are directly related to the performance of investment. The ISO proceeds with Quality Policies and their continual improvement. It studies the performance process for continual improvement through regular audits as it is found in the audits of Quality Assurance process. The Centre of Excellence indicates the bench mark excellence in every aspect of Quality Assurance Process in Higher Education Institutions.

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