



Redefining Accreditation: Integrating Cultural Competence into Higher Education Standards

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ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates a comprehensive outlook of the significance of quality in education, accreditation process and organizational culture in Higher Education Institutions (HEI's). It emphasizes the progressing view of quality education and the indispensable role of accreditation as a sign of quality. The process of accreditation ensures that institutions comply with standards which benefits various stakeholders including students, parents and faculty members. The article also emphasizes the importance of accreditation in assisting students to achieve their ambitions and secure favorable career opportunities, predominantly in the global perspective. Additionally, it examines the importance of organisational culture, underlining its potential to foster a positive work environment and improve faculty productivity and overall efficiency. Through these understandings, this study offers a refined insight of the complicated factors that contribute to quality education and institutional success in higher education environments.

Keywords: Accreditation, Culture, Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), Stakeholders, Quality

1. Introduction:

John Affeldt, Managing attorney, Civil Rights Advocacy Group, Public Advocates, and USA stated "If education is going to be fundamental and meaningful... it has to deliver something of decent quality." "Quality Education as a Constitutional Right" is a grassroots movement of Institutions, organisations and individual who are united belief that there exists a difference of quality of education that are delivered by institutions to the students. Quality education influence student personalities, talents and their abilities enabling them to lead "full and satisfying life in the society" (CRC, General Comment 1, 2001: Para 9). The perception of quality education evolves over time, social, economic and environmental conditions (Laurie et al., 2015). Education must be widely available, acceptable, and flexible enough to fit different needs and situations and at the same time, it should be accessible to all. Almost all countries across the global have mandates of quality in education which are governed. Accreditation bodies, rankings bodies have been established in many countries who have developed standards and parameters for performance evaluation and assessment of the education Institutions. Accreditation standards and parameters are embodied in frameworks which are regularly updated in line with the global changes and industry requirements (Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2004). These agencies depute their own team of experts for a rigorous evaluation and validation of the self-rated assessment scores uploaded in the required format of the accreditation agencies by the participating institutions.

1.1. Accreditation:

Accreditation is a quality assertion manner under which services and processes of educational institutions or programs are assessed and confirmed by an external body to conclude whether valid and documented

standards are met. Accreditation is seen as a hallmark of quality, representing that an institution or program has been through a rigorous external evaluation by peers according to established standards and values. It indicates that the institution or program meets the minimum requirements set by the accrediting body (Manimala et al., 2019). The main objective of any educational institution is to offer high-quality education and contemporary facilities (Henard and Roseveare, 2012) to students, helping them in developing new skills crucial for their careers. Achieving accreditation from esteemed agencies is the primary step in warranting that institutions align with this goal. Accreditation serves to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders (Phillips and Kinser, 2018) - students, faculty, parents, and educators - by assessing and evaluating the institution's overall performance based on its offered programs.

Accreditation in higher educations are usually at two levels- one for the institutions delivering the education and the second one for the programme, department or school (which is the part of the higher education institution) that delivers the education (Gaston, 2023). Accreditation of the institution assess each part of the Institution and assesses its contribution to quality at different levels of contribution and at different levels of contribution for example in the area of governance, research, process and so on (Fomba et al., 2023). The Accreditation of the programs, department or schools within a University or Institution- assesses the entire college of institution which are affiliated to universities, or schools within the university or program within the university.

1.2. Accreditation Bodies

There are many international, regional, national bodies and program-specific bodies or association that conduct the assessment of Higher Educational quality – for both online education and offline education. In the United States, there are international and regional accrediting organisations. “The International network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education”, “The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education” are some of the International bodies including AACSB International (AACSB) a non-profit association that provides quality assurance parameters and accreditation process for business education for its member network. Association of MBAs is a body offers accreditation services for post-graduate business school programmes and is associated globally with business schools, MBA students, employers and communities. The world education accreditation council (WEAC) is another international body dedicated to online education and works towards providing, improving and setting quality assurance standards for online education. Some of the regional accrediting bodies in US are “Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges”.

Universities, Institutions and Colleges, like any other government and business organisations are governed by statutory boards such as- academic council, senate, executive council and syndicate bodies (Trivedi, 2024). The members of these statutory boards- numbers, type and qualifications are mandated by the accreditation bodies by which these universities, institutions and colleges are constituted. Additionally, in many countries there are government ministries that govern the educational institutions through various legal acts approved constitutionally and amended as need to meet the dynamic needs of global education standards and norms.

1.3. Evolution of Accreditation in Indian HEI's:

Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is quite a recent development in India, since the country's higher education sector was mostly controlled by state-owned universities in the past. (Manimala et.al, 2020). In 1994, government initiatives began by setting up autonomous accreditation agencies to assist HEI's. The standard system categorizes HEIs as "Accredited," "Awaiting Accreditation," or "Not Accredited." On January 2024, in India, the “National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)” through its press release dated 27th January 2024, informed a major reform in the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions(HEIs) in India. IT stated that that under its new accreditation system, the accreditation of universities, Institutions and colleges across India will follow a binary category system of either “accredited” or “not accredited” along with levels between one and five to encourage the Institutions to reach higher levels. The level one would be the “Institutions of National Excellence” and level 5 institutions would be recognized as “Institutions of Global Excellence for Multi-Disciplinary Research and Education (Report on the Overarching Committee, 2023). This change, they stated was necessary to be “consistent” with the vision of the new education policy 2020 which was released earlier in 2019-2020. This change of the accreditation pattern in India makes it possible for all Institutions to align themselves with NAAC and continuously improve their higher education quality and raise their quality bar(British Council,2024, India to unveil new higher education accreditation system, para.3)

2. Accreditation, Quality and Excellence in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Accreditation plays a big part in improving the quality of education, promoting institutional autonomy, and improving accountability. It helps HEI's upscale themselves against best practices, helps in identifying areas for improvement, and improve their overall performance (Javed and Alenezi, 2023). Accordingly, the ongoing accreditation process can assist HEIs in fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement (Hoare and Goad, 2022). It enables them to conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to identify areas for improvement, learn from their weaknesses, and strike a balance between

accreditation parameters. This approach helps institutions adapt to the ever-evolving criteria set by accreditation agencies.

Accreditation benefits from a student's/ parents/ or ward's perspective enables them to determine the proper match of their individual goals with the vision, mission of the accredited institutions (Kumar, Shukla and Passey, 2020). Simply put, if the accredited institution be able to enable them to realise their goals by their enrolment? Post the pandemic students, parents, guardians assess these through their own metrics(Daniela et al., 2021)- such as- quality of existing students, pass and failure percentages in the concerned program/school/department or University, faculties- quality, qualification, programs offered and placements in industry/corporate attained by the alumni or senior students. Accreditation will hugely benefit the organizational culture of HEI's in several ways:

- **Focus on Quality:** Since accreditation emphasizes on the importance of overall quality(Fakhrurrozi and Hamdani, 2022) on an institution which includes teaching, research as well as administration, this emphasis on quality will further lead to create and maintain a culture of excellence within institutions(
- **Continuous Improvement:** The process of accreditation forces institutions to constantly improve their processes(Romanowski, 2022) thereby helping institutions foster a culture of continuous innovation and excellence since institutions are always on the lookout for different ways to improve their programs and services
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Accreditation makes it mandatory for institutions to be transparent about their processes and answerable for their actions and performance. This will force the institutions to create a culture of transparency and accountability(Kumar , Shukla and Passey,2020) in the institution
- **Professional Development:** Accreditation necessitates faculty and staff to involve in professional development activities (Gaston, 2023). This focus on professional development can help form and maintain a culture of learning and growth within the institution.
- **Student-Centric Approach:** The accreditation process stresses the importance of student success (Almuhaideb and Saeed, 2020). This will help create a culture of student-centric approach within the institution, where the needs and interests of students are prioritized.

2.1. Student Perspectives and Accreditation:

Due to the increased globalization during the recent years, the potential student's perspectives about education have changed drastically. The present students are particular about accreditation and the quality of education to secure promising career opportunities in order to meet the prospects of the employers in the global level (Eaton, 2012). In order to pursue further studies, prospective students tend to compare various options of universities based on accreditation. This proves that accreditation process is an imperative factor for the stakeholders of the university including the students (Sutan et.al, 2018). According to John (2019) there is a growing concern regarding accreditation, what it means to students and how it impacts the quality of the academic programs.

Therefore, majority of students have a positive perception on the accreditation of HEI's. This is because, accreditations is viewed as a mark of quality and excellence, showing that HEI's oblige to the standards set by accrediting bodies. Hence, a few reasons why students perceive accreditation positively are as follows:

- **Quality Assurance:** Students trust that institutions that are accredited are more likely to deliver good quality education and better prospects for their future careers.
- **Employability:** Degrees earned by students from these accredited institutions are valued by employers which potentially lead to better job opportunities as many institutions have hiring policies and look for model employers to collaborate with them(Mattar, 2022)
- **Trust and Credibility:** Students are likely to trust accredited institutions since it shows that the institution has been assessed to meet certain high standards.
- **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** A few programs which provide financial aids and scholarships require the students to join accredited institutions. This can be a motivating force for students to choose accredited institutions over non-accredited institutions.
- **International Recognition:** Degrees awarded by accredited institutions have more value and international recognition, furthermore these degrees are accepted more widely and are accepted globally.

2.2. Accreditation and Overall development of HEI's:

In higher education, an institution's quality status depends on its academic performance and teaching methodologies. By following best practices, institutions can provide their students with the best education and maintain their reputation (Ravikumar, 2021). In India, the performance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is assessed solely by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). As a recognized External Quality Assurance (EQA) agency of the Government of India, NAAC operates autonomously as an Inter-University Centre of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in New Delhi. The Council was found in 1994 and is headquartered in Bangalore. Its operations are well-thought-out and are considered as the gold standard for evaluating the quality of HEIs in India.

Therefore the impact of accreditation on the overall development of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is multi-faceted:

- **Quality Enhancement:** The strong focus on quality improvement contributes to the complete growth of the institution.
- **Institutional Reputation:** Accreditation improves the status and integrity of HEIs. A constructive accreditation status can interest students, faculty, and funding, leading to added development and growth.
- **Stakeholder Confidence:** Accreditation inculcates a culture of guarantee in stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, and the community.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The ecosystem of continuous improvement that accreditation agencies create, contributes to the complete development of the institution by classifying and addressing areas for improvement.
- **Global Recognition:** Accreditation can lead to global recognition of HEIs. This can open up prospects for international conglomerates, exchange programs, and research collaborations, contributing to the institution's overall development.
- **Resource Allocation:** Accreditation requires HEIs to assess their resource allocation and management practices ensuring effective use of resources, supporting the institution's development.

In most countries, universities, institutions invite student's enrolment not only at the national, regional level but also at the global level showcasing their international /regional accreditations as their marketing tool. Global students not only bring significant financial benefits to the institutions but also helps to diversify their student population. Distance and online education resulting from technological innovations in education has further created ample learning opportunities for students irrespective of their geographical location. In addition, increased job opportunities in developed countries like USA, UAE, Australia and Canada has lured global students towards them. These trends suggest that higher education has evolved from traditional knowledge giving learning organisation to career development and advancement centres today necessitating the Institutions to evolve themselves as a global player. The real challenge here is to evolve while keeping their mission, vision and values strong but navigate changes in areas that make real difference when it comes to global sustainability. A strong culture thus builds on strong values and this is what makes the difference.

3. Accreditation and Culture

Culture is a combination of customs, religion, artefacts, beliefs and values which shape people's worldview in their lives. In any institution, culture is made up of values, beliefs and practices of the employees and is at the core of organisational environment laying down the core values and objectives characteristics pertinent to the institution (Anh, 2024). The cultural dimensions that are critical for success are participation, compatibility, adaptability and mission (meybodi et al., 2023). In a study of Covid-19 as external trigger of change in HEI and the role of administration in combating its impact, Muller et al., (2023) pinpoint that digital transformation at organisational level should have a transparent information culture) as it initiate and acts as a basis for efficient changes. Further, the authors considered both the barriers and the resources of higher education for the transformational changes similar to resources of private organisation. And these could be effectively used to bring about desired changes. The barriers are inherited as a structural asset of 'traditional public administration' (p, 91) but the authors contend that in spite of the existence of these barriers of HEIs as inhibitors, the HEI's resources can play the role of promoting the required changes –both long-term and short-term. The presence of manifold resources such as good technical support team, technical infrastructure, management support could serve as core resources to bring about organisational culture changes whenever required. A positive work culture is critical to an institution's continued success in all its endeavor. A positive work culture is a powerful catalyst for flourishing work environment where there is deep faculty/employee engagement (Radu, 2023). Such work environment thrives on learning, inclusion and overall wellbeing among its employees where the core values and goals are aligned.

3.1. Institutional Culture and Sources

Organizational culture epitomizes the pool of governing values, norms, philosophies, approaches and traditions of a company (Piwowar-Sulej, 2020). Similarly, every higher education institution (HEI) will have its own culture with its own sets of values, assumptions and norms that are established and communicated to all its stakeholders. Each of these facets of organizational culture can be reformed and adjusted to make a successful and sustainable culture Fostering (Sustainability in Higher Education. n.d.).

Organizational culture refers to the way people within an organization relate to each other, their work and the environment. Organizational Culture is about how an organization operates, how things are done, relationships among people and employees with respect to their job as well as the external environment. The finest businesses usually give due weightage both to strategy and culture. Such organizations tend to build a culture that stimulates their teams. Thus, it is crucial to understand different factors that make up an organization's culture since Organizational Culture is what sets a business apart from its competitors (Mandal, 2022)

Organizational culture can be originated from various sources, such as the opinions and assumptions of the founders of the organization, and the learning experience of participants of the organization (Pathiranage et al., 2020). According to Flamholtz and Randle (2012), a new culture for their organization can only be created

by the founders. The founders are capable of shaping the operational strategy and orientation of an organization in its early stages giving them a chance to set up a culture for an organization that is planned out (Andish et al., 2013). More so, the original business strategy or direction will be derived from the operational assumptions of the company's founder which might have been influenced by their upbringing or life experiences (Toma & Marinescu, 2013). Owners could choose to impose their personal understanding and cultural beliefs upon employees and other stakeholders (O'Reilly et al., 2014). This way, Steve Jobs was able to build an efficient organizational culture at Apple Inc. through his personal experience and assumptions imposed on his employees (Kaliannan & Ponnusamy, 2014; Toma & Marinescu, 2013). Furthermore, through its corporate culture Apple actually made it possible for its founding father's vision to become a reality. According to Schein (2010), Apple Inc. provides a good example of how personal values and expectations of a founder affect mostly on an organizational culture.

3.2. Accreditation Concepts, Quality and Institutional Culture

Accreditation and institutional culture are two important concepts in the field of education and organizational management. For example in nursing the accreditation can be considered at global level, regional level or national level. Each level of accreditation will have different parameters, standards and assessment bodies would be different. At national level the national accreditation board for hospitals and healthcare providers is responsible for the accreditation and standards assessment. The accreditation bodies at national levels on their part conducts workshops, seminars and other initiatives to create, promote good practices and ethnic diversities throughout the institutional culture. Therefore institutional support activities from accreditation bodies improvise quality centered culture in the institutions. The process of accreditation involves concepts depending upon the accreditation body and the context of accreditation-program or domain. Institutional autonomy, institutional structure and institutional culture of the institution play an important role in the management of these concepts. Some institutions are closely monitored by the Government or concerned ministry while autonomous institutions have a greater amount of freedom and brings in changes and steer their practices independently while affiliated institutions and colleges have to adhere to an already set of standards and criteria and have no freedom to change or innovate but to follow. In the digital era, many institutions follow the culture of evidence where their structures, procedures, processes and academic activities are evidenced in all their digital platforms to improve their visibility and student learning. These practices not only serve as a marketing tool to enlist potential student admissions but also serve as a showcase evidence of student diversity. Some of the concepts involved are

Quality Assurance: Most of the accreditation parameters for educational institutions are quality assurance-internal and external quality assurance. The internal quality assurance are intra institutional practices of Institution that monitor, control and improve the quality of the various process of the program, department and institutions. Consequently, the term internal and external quality culture comes into being- which is the integration of the institutional culture with the internal quality assurance process, procedures laid down to capture, monitor, and control and improve the process and the external quality assurance required to be maintained for accreditation. This integration ensures that the members share the same core set of quality values and approaches towards the academic program, department, school or the institutions. The external quality assurance practices of the institution are the parameters laid down by the external independent body which determines and assures that the parameters, standards and quality assessment rule, regulation are compiled by the institution under assessment. These two quality poles – external quality parameters and the internal quality parameters adherence lies with the Institution undergoing the assessment. The internal quality assurance parameters are self-regulatory while external parameters are mandatorily for compliance.

Standards, Criteria and Indicators: The accreditation bodies establish standards, criteria and parameters to evaluate the process, procedures and policies from four dimensions- academic, managerial, pedagogical and employment related. The academic standards, criteria or parameters focus on traditional academic values, programs disciplines, courses offered, delivered and involvement of professional bodies offering certifications. Standards are threshold values which institutions undergoing the process of accreditation should be reach. The standards can have levels for evaluation purpose. Higher levels for high performing institution with a base minimum level applicable to all institutions. In academics these standards are the expected outcomes concerning student's competencies, knowledge, skills attained and attitudes expected from an outgoing graduate. While the standards are linked to learning outcomes of the curriculum design, the criterion draws the basis upon which the evaluations are done- for example- the criterion of teaching, criterion for student learning, research, infrastructure, student support structure, financial resources, student's admission, management governance, best practices etc.,. The criterion are specifically established for different type of Institutions, programs, department and school based on accreditation levels-global, regional or national levels. In the criterion established the pre-determined standards would be prescribed to provide a stimuli for the institutions for quality improvement and assurance. Most of the standards are numerically formulated to provide for objectivity in evaluations.

In addition to standards and criterion, there are indicators which are operational tools which describe the status of an object of evaluation at a particular point of time in the HEI. These indicators are statistical parameters such as faculty and student ratio, research h-index, cost per students etc. Performance indicators indicate objective assessment of the HEI's performance enabling to compare and benchmark the HEI under evaluation

with others. These indicators facilitate comparison over time, goals, regions and competition and forms a useful evaluation tools to describe the HEI's quality in terms of teaching, research, student outcomes, placements, governance.

Peer Review: As a valuable quality assurance tool, this is a part of the board process of accreditation. The ultimate goal of peer-review is to solicit expert opinions to improve quality. Self-assessment, and external peer assessment of the self-study report prepared by the concerned Institutional on the standards and criterions and site visits by the expert's team are a part of the assessment process. Peer –review are the judgements sought to assess the self-declared quality of standards, criterions and indictors are in line with the accreditation bodies requirements and established thresholds. This collaborative process which relies on the online or offline judgement, opinions, reviews of experts-within and external to the HEIs are guided by predetermined benchmarked. This process creates trust among the academic community members, validates the HEIs credibility and reliability and at the same time, enable HEIs to improve their performance from constructive stakeholder's feedback.

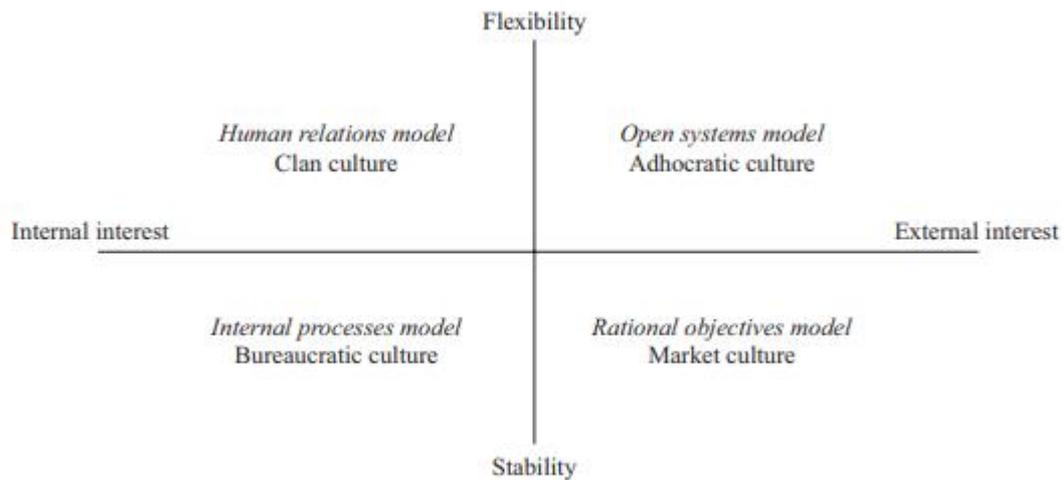
Period of Assessment- The main goal of academic assessment and accreditation system is to improve HEIs performance by having a periodic assessment. The external review by the accreditation bodies and the quality assurance are periodic in nature for every five to ten years depending upon the education policy or laws stipulated in the country or region. This periodic evaluation is conducted to ensure that the standards and criterions upon which the HEIs was assessed and accreditation are still met if not improved upon. If the institutions do not meet the standards set, the HEIs or the program or department or school that was accredited may slip down in the accreditation rankings or levels set. Therefore accreditation and period of accreditation are signals for a HEIs to embark upon continuous improvement in their internal and external quality parameters to scale up their accreditation rankings and levels.

Continuous Improvement: The continuous improvement of quality or continuous quality improvement in HEIs are embedded in their internal quality assurance practices. Improvement in quality of teaching, learnings and students outcomes are the results of these quality assurance practices. Inputs regarding aspects of teaching learning, program structure, contents of courses, learning activities, pedagogy are taken to understand the areas or activities that require changes. The inputs from all stakeholders are considered to determine the quality opinions from, industry personnel, similar external HEIs, affiliated associations, student bodies, alumni, employers and benchmarking the curated curriculum is undertaken with top international universities. Inputs from the stakeholders are then deliberated in the academic councils, board of studies constituted for this purpose and then implemented through departmental meetings. This practice is conducted on a yearly basis after the closure of the academic year. Such practices not only ensures contemporary industry updates but also ensures compliance with global universities curriculum standards. But it is noted that institutional culture plays a vital role in embracing continuous improvement process implementation. For successful implementation, a culture that allows and embrace change, employees willing to bring about change without resistance are of prime importance. Again, there would be cost involved in terms of finance, upkeep and maintenance, training on new pedagogical tools, technology that HEIs must weigh against long-term benefits.

Recognition and Credibility: The benefits of accreditation are multifold. Highly ranked HEIs are serves as a benchmark for other institutions to follow, thus enhanced reputation are the returns of being ranked high by the accreditation body. Not only the HEI is highly recognized among academic community, but potential employer, industry partners would recognize the HEI for partnerships. Public confidence and trust increases along with stakeholder's pride of association. Both accreditation along with its concepts and institutional culture play crucial roles in shaping the quality, effectiveness, and overall success of educational institutions. While accreditation focuses on meeting external standards and criteria, institutional culture reflects the internal values, beliefs, and practices that guide the institution's operations and decision-making processes.

3.3. Influence of Accreditation on Culture

The cultural influence of accreditation can be approached with Quinn and Rohrbraugh's (1983) model, specifically its two main dimensions (Lejeune & Vas, 2009). The organization is faced with these standards which are defined by the competitive environment during accreditation. This meeting will open organizational culture to the outer world. Further, internal cohesion among individuals who strive for a mark of distinction could be enhanced through accreditation. Accreditation also aids in setting formal standards for internal processes (e.g., course evaluations, career planning, etc.). In other words, it supports internal integration and external awareness at once. Second, quality standards require organizational adaptation and obtaining new resources (e.g., financing, academic personnel, etc.). Improved flexibility and innovation in the organizational culture are accompanied by these revolutions within (e.g., new course programs, affiliation with other schools). Simultaneously, communication and documentation load tend to increase under accreditation effect that results into more administration. In other words, there remain both innovations as well as controls through accreditation. Thus, the competitive value framework dimensions (Quinn & Rohrbraugh, 1983) might be interesting enough to understand cultural influence of accreditation



Source: Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983)

3.4. Accreditation, Culture and Change Management.

In an HEI, human resource is the most important asset for its success, brand development and continuance. Quality human resource becomes the core asset and assist in contributing to its competitive advantage. Alongside human resource, technology and digital infrastructure becomes an added value contributing to its accessibility, availability, and security for its teaching learning delivery operations. The HEI' environment therefore consist of a set number of identifiable elements (Tiemey & Lanford, 2018); each element is responsible to contribute synergic ally to the wholesome quality perception of the HEI. Institutional culture is embodied in the campus environment where the relationship between faculty, administrators, students, the working works, the process and procedure concerning admission, examination conduct, assessment and grading, clear daily practices of daily interactions. When Clifford Geertz definition of culture is applied to Institutional culture, the institutional culture is interpretive in the eyes of the beholder- students, faculty, administrator and other stakeholders involved. Thus a certain amount of subjectivity is smeared with understanding institutional culture. The intricate relationships and routines build the institutional culture becomes apparent when one moves from one Institution to another and comparisons are possible. It is also important to note that these relationships, routines and practices are dynamic in nature and any structural change in the management or a new collaboration or partnership results in a change in the Institutional culture.

Implementing change in Institutional culture requires effective change management where process, people, plans are effected. To take this forward Institutional leader and leadership plays a crucial role. One must acknowledge that actualization of an Institutional mission, vision, values and goals are attached to the leader's ability to inspire the people around them, provide required resources and lead by example. Another critical factor is the employee-buy-in. The people-employees, staff and faculty members should understand the need for change, personal and institutional benefits that change brings in. The leadership should engage the people and create a sense of ownership and commitment towards the new evolving culture through the change. Training, coaching, creating incentives initiative need to be considered to bring about the change in cultural beliefs, shared values, norms and behavior. Bendermacher(2017) pinpoints that quality values requiring alterations need to be enforced upon the members and the other aspects of institutional culture be managed or controlled to bring out quality changes and applications of new standards of practices.

4. Case studies illustrating the influence of accreditation on organizational culture in higher education

Case 1- "Using international accreditation in higher education to effect changes in organisational culture: A case study from a Turkish university (Collins, 2015)"

This case/study focuses on the experience of an intensive English language preparatory program in a Turkish university undergoing accreditation by a foreign institution. The study aims to assess the extent to which the accreditation project fostered changes in the organizational culture of the program. The study aims to assess the extent to which the accreditation project fostered changes in the organizational culture of the program. While most participants acknowledged the significant impact of accreditation, there was limited evidence of changes in organizational culture. The paper highlights the importance of considering the potential achievements of the accreditation process, given the controversy surrounding its effectiveness. The issue of culture is central to the study, as the impact of educational innovation is often measured by changes in teachers' beliefs and values.

In this study, a Turkish university's Prep class was one of the first programmes in Turkey to be accredited by the "Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA)". The author/s witnessed many improvements during the process. However, there were many instances where the author/s felt equally dismayed by the seeming failure of the accreditation process. There was a rising apprehension as to whether the accreditation initiatives will result to lasting changes in the culture of the Prep Class. This case was based on one question: Is the application of international accreditation in higher education an effective approach for fostering changes in organizational culture? In the process of seeking answers to this question, the author's goal was to link the Prep class's accreditation experience with wider concepts from research on accreditation and change management in education. Furthermore, through this study the authors aimed at sharing some findings that could assist many other institutions going through similar accreditation processes.

How did this accreditation help the school improve its culture?

- The accreditation process had a substantial effect on the exhaustive English language preparatory program in terms of administration and documentation of processes
- It led to improved transparency, more formal and effective feedback channels, and upgraded administrative processes
- Accreditation also delivered prospects for long lasting professional development for teachers and improved use of technology in the classroom
- The process helped promote overall professionalism

In conclusion, through this case, the authors established that while some areas were positively influenced by the accreditation process, there were a few other areas where not completely stimulated towards a cultural change. Therefore, the success of accreditation in development changes in organizational culture is also a point of conflict, as indication of major changes in culture may be limited.

Case 2: *"Organizational culture and effectiveness in business schools: A test of the accreditation impact"* (Lejeune, C., & Vas, A. 2009)

The study focuses on the impact of accreditation on organizational culture and effectiveness in international business schools, specially observing those with EQUIS accreditation. Accreditation is a tool for improving institutions, but its direct impact on performance is discussed in the literature. The research aims to explore how cultural changes prompted by accreditation may lead to positive outcomes in organizational performance. The study uses an oblique questionnaire method with data collected from 31 EQUIS accredited schools, providing understandings into the correlation between accreditation, organizational culture, and effectiveness.

How does accreditation impact organizational effectiveness in business schools?

Accreditation can have a positive apparent impact on organizational effectiveness in business schools. Quality standards defined by accreditation, such as EQUIS, frequently align with scopes of organizational effectiveness. For example, EQUIS accreditation highlights the relationship between schools and the corporate world, which can benefit program development, faculty quality, social openness, community interaction, and resource acquisition. Earlier research has shown a positive impact of total quality management on performance, backing up the hypothesis that accreditation can improve organizational effectiveness. The study also found that EQUIS accreditation had a positive impact on some dimensions of effectiveness, such as programs development, faculty quality, social openness, community interaction, and resource acquisition. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the effect of accreditation on organizational effectiveness may differ subject to particular standards and norms of the accreditation being studied.

What are the key dimensions of organizational culture that are affected by accreditation?

Accreditation, such as EQUIS, can impact various dimensions of organizational culture in business schools. The study acknowledged that the cultural change brought by accreditation is associated with a positive impact on performance. Specifically, two cultural dimensions, adhocracy, and market were strongly correlated with effectiveness. Adhocracy culture emphasizes innovation, flexibility, and risk-taking, while market culture focuses on competitiveness, success, and results. These cultural dimensions were found to be surely associated with organizational effectiveness in the context of accreditation. Additionally, accreditation can lead to a wider openness of organizational culture towards the external environment, increased internal unity, validation of internal processes, organizational adaptation, attainment of new resources, and a balance between innovation and control. The impact of accreditation on organizational culture may vary depending on the specific accreditation standards and criteria being considered.

The study on the impact of accreditation on organizational culture and effectiveness in business schools draws several conclusions:

- **Positive Impact on Organizational Effectiveness:** Accreditation processes, such as EQUIS, have a seeming positive impact on various dimensions of organizational effectiveness, including program

development, faculty quality, social openness, community interaction, and resource acquisition. This suggests that accreditation can contribute to enhancing the overall effectiveness of business schools.

- **Cultural Changes and Performance:** The cultural changes made by accreditation, mainly in raising adhocracy and market cultures, are correlated with positive performance outcomes. This highlights the importance of supporting organizational culture with accreditation standards to drive improved performance.
- **Diverse Cultural Implications:** The study reveals that accreditation can lead to a wider openness of organizational culture towards the external environment, increased internal cohesion, formalization of internal processes, organizational adaptation, acquisition of new resources, and a balance between innovation and control. These diverse cultural consequences highlight the multi-layered impact of accreditation on organizational subtleties.
- **Variability in Cultural Impact:** The study suggests that the impact of accreditation on organizational culture vary subject to the particular standards. For example, different accreditation bodies may have diverse cultural outcomes, highlighting the need for a fair analysis to understand these deviations.
- **Need for Further Research:** While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between accreditation, organizational culture, and effectiveness in business schools, there is a need for further qualitative research to investigate further into how accreditation processes influence organizational identity, resources, and overall performance.

The study highlights the complex interaction between accreditation, organizational culture, and effectiveness in business schools, highlighting the significance of strategic arrangement, cultural adaptation, and continuous improvement to enhance performance results.

5. Conclusion:

HEIs experience cultural revolutions as a consequence of accreditation, which stimulates innovation and the use of best practices. HEIs regularly evaluate their curriculum, methods of instruction and infrastructure to ensure they meet the requirement of accreditation agencies. This encourages and motivates institutions to integrate cutting-edge teaching methods and practices into higher education by encouraging an attitude of innovation and never ending growth. The practice of accreditation boosts an institution's credibility and goodwill globally and nationally. By obtaining this momentum, a recognized institution validates to all its stakeholders that it upholds and advocates the highest standards of excellence. This accomplishment promotes a strong and productive campus culture by imparting a sense of pride and commitment among the faculty, staff and student fraternity.

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