

Challenges Facing Quality Application in Higher Education Institutions in Sudan

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Abstract— This paper aims to review the main challenges which are facing quality application in higher education institutions and universities in Sudan. These challenges became as obstacles, in ensuring the quality of the output of the educational process, so as to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, and meet the needs and requirements of labor market, locally and internationally. So the paper has stated the constraints and challenges in these institutions and provided some suggestions to deal with them.

Keywords- Education; Higher education; Quality; Sudanese universities; Quality challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a quick quantitative and qualitative development going on, in the field of higher education. The numbers of higher education institutions are increasing, including various programs and specialties, with developed techniques and educational patterns.

Knowledge is growing necessary in life and essential for the progress of contemporary societies. It is considered as an economical free standing. So there is a great need for developing knowledge and working hard to make good spending on it.

In spite of the current situation of knowledge society and the great development happening around, and its impact on higher education especially with regard to consolidate the concepts of competitiveness in the open market. And the phenomenon of standards for the quality of institutions and programmes not only at national level but also at the regional and global.

The lack of attention to the quality of programmes and institutions at the national level may lead to the failure of these institutions by civilization and progress, which in turn leads to perish completely and replaced by cross-border education institutions. This will necessitate the need to reformulate the curricula, teaching methods, the quality of management and financing. Also to revitalize the role of the state in the provision of these services and work for appropriate change to suit the global context and its requirements.

The fact is that, the graduates from higher education institutions are not competing for jobs with local Sudanese market specifications, but with world markets. This requires a radical change in the content of curricula, teaching methods, and training in higher education institutions to ensure high quality and characteristic of the teaching programs, according to international standards. Which may

lead to output that can meet the requirements of sustainable development.

II. QUALITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Quality has received considerable attention in most countries of the world as one of the fundamental pillars of education systems that must keep pace with global changes and adaptation. It is also considered as the starting point of human resources scientifically qualified to participate in the development of different dimensions, and confront the negative impact caused by the engines of change down to practical solutions that will benefit the communities.

In order to achieve this, the quality assurance process should work to apply advanced methods so as to improve the higher education, activation of existing practices with its development, and achieve the highest possible level at the output of higher education institutions to satisfy the local, regional, and global needs.

The application of the quality assurance standards can help in achieving the following benefits:

A. *The continuous development of the educational institution message and its objectives*

The application of quality assurance standards causes the higher education institutions to review their messages and objectives which will enable them keep pace with the rapid changes in the globalization and the knowledge economies, and meet the requirements of comprehensive development. Particularly that the quality assurance standards are not a specific ceiling but are constantly evolving, which makes educational institutions pursue this development and seeks to achieve all its levels.

B. Optimal investment of financial and human resources

The higher education institutions suffer from wasting of manpower. And the financial resources are either incapable of achieving the requirements and implementing the programmes or they are drained in areas not serving the educational process directly. Therefore the applications of quality assurance standards are considered as best method for using the human and financial resources optimally.

C. Achieve community involvement of higher education institutions

The message of institutions is not only concerned with educational goals, but goes beyond that to include the broader surroundings. Which is called the community and humanitarian role. Thus, the quality of education will influence directly through its outputs (students). These students are considered as inputs for other operations and roles such as scientific researches, practical advices, help decision-makers, contributing to propose solutions to social problems, economic, political, environmental, technological, industrial and others. This would limit the effects of global change engines.

D. Develop skills in higher education

The quality assurance standards required of workers in educational institutions: High levels of professionalism, continuous training, better use of modern technology, and provision of leadership skills, reflected on the performance and work productivity and contribute to development in various dimensions.

III. THE MECHANISM FOR MEASURING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The process of measuring the quality of higher education institutions can be carried out through a number of actions, beginning with a study of self-assessment in accordance with the adopted quality assurance standards. Then setting up a committee of experts whose task is to study the self-evaluation of educational institution. This is considered as a main step in measuring quality been achieved in the educational institution. The committee of experts will ensure that the educational institution provides proofs, evidence, and all the necessary information for issuing judgments on the degree of achievement of the institution's quality assurance standards. Through descriptive gradients with several levels of performance, on the subject of item so gradually.

These levels have been reached, depending on dimensions of the design, implementation and effectiveness of the item of interest and the degree

of its indicators on the enterprise position in term of evaluation and attention.

Accurate estimates of the degree of availability of items of quality assurance standards can be provided according to these narrative gradients. And each item will have its own degrees. At the end of this step the form of recording the scores deserved by the Enterprise to the various items of quality assurance standards should be filled. After that each degree of these scores should be put independently on a graphic page (profile), showing the degrees of the quality been achieved by the Enterprise. And then write the final report and submit it to the authority or related entity.

After getting the estimates obtained by the enterprise on the items included in the quality assurance standards, extract the degree that is deserved by the enterprise about every quality assurance standards, that is through finding the sum of the scores been obtained by the enterprise on each item of that standard. These estimates are used to determine the quality grade achieved and interpreted according to each item of quality assurance standards and each criterion, in addition to the possibility of translating these estimates in the form of graphs illustrating quality achieved by the enterprise.

Thus one can find out the weaknesses and strengths in the degrees of quality standards been achieved and the appropriate decisions, to determine the degree of its quality and building plans for quality assurance and improvement.

IV. CHALLENGES FACING THE QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

There are many challenges facing the quality in higher education institutions in Sudan, these challenges can be grouped as follows:

E. Massive expansion in higher education

There is a huge and significant expansion in universities in Sudan and an increasing numbers of students enrolled. In addition to the approach of the private sector investment and its involvement in higher education, and the emergence of new patterns of education, such as open learning and distance education. The educational institutions have been over the past few years relying on sufficient quantity of outputs without much interest in the adequacy of quality, which plunged the Sudanese labour market with large numbers of output that have caused an imbalance in the balance of supply and demand for labour.

The steady growth in student numbers in higher education institutions has not been accompanied by a parallel growth in buildings and equipment, devices and techniques, as well as the preparation

and qualifications of faculty members and also in student services, which entail adverse consequences in terms of the quality of graduates.

F. Weak demand for technical education

Sudanese labor market faces a clear inflation in the numbers of university graduates from different programs, significant shortages of professionals and technicians which led to the emergence of social and economic problems. The educational decision makers should reconsider the admission policies so that there will be a wider share in technical education.

G. The output of higher education not adapting the labour market needs

There is no harmony between national needs and requirements for licensing academic programmes. The absence of correlation between academic and practical learning outcomes skills. And the lack of institutional coordination methodology between the output of higher education and the requirements of the local and regional market.

H. The curriculums

The current curriculums have the lack of courses that help develop intellectual skills, such as analytical thinking, communication, leadership, and institutional initiatives, therefore, there should be a modernization by providing curriculum that stimulates the mind and illuminate the leading thinking and stimulate creativity.

I. Financial challenges

This aspect can be summarized with the following dimensions:

- The low budgets of universities and low spending on tertiary education and the difficulty of securing adequate and stable funding sources to maintain the educational level.
- Lack of financing the activities that aim to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for higher education outputs which prompted universities to rely on their own limited resources and so dented its output.

J. The low level of educational process

The major reasons are as follows:

First: Admission policies:

The challenges facing the admission policies are:

- Weak alignment between student performance in high school and their choice of specialization, where the rate of high school is the only factor taken into consideration for admission to academic programs, thereby restricting institutions in

providing inputs to the programs, regardless of quality achieved.

- Ignoring the quality factor in admission policies in universities, private colleges and admission programs.
- Customizing special admission policies for some social groups has led to a lack of uniformity in the criteria for admission.

Second: Teaching staff members:

Challenges related to faculty members in higher education institutions are as follows:

- The continuous imbalance in the ratio of students to faculty member in the year 2014: is about (52.8:1) in the formal universities and (46.3:1) in the private universities and colleges.
- Difficulties to provide faculty members with specialties and expertise.
- The absence of a clear policy of human resources capacity-building, such as training of faculty members, support for new members, and the lack of transparent and fair assessment system.
- Brain drain, as are many minds working in Sudanese universities working in neighboring States with higher salaries and incentives.

Third: Scientific research

The challenges facing the scientific research are:

- Focusing on theoretical research rather than focusing on applied research which investigating the payoff.
- Weak spending on scientific research.
- Most researches that provided by faculty members at universities were with the aim to upgrade and not with the aim to offer a research product that can be applied and provide a practical benefit.
- The actual research activity of faculty member at universities does not exceed (5%) of his/or her academic duties, because of the weight of the teaching burden.
- The absence of clear regulations and stimulating career scholar dedicated to research and development, may cause many researchers prefer to stay in universities, or go to other occupations for earning a higher return, or joining a convoy brain drain abroad.
- Weak collaboration between the sectors of agriculture, industry and higher education

institutions that might contribute to putting unrealistic researches which do not include value for the development of the national economy.

Fourth: Management

Challenges in management:

- The lack of harmony between the style of university management and the requirements of the development of modern higher education institutions, and the lack of strategic planning.
- Low balancing scholarship.
- Increased competition due to the entry of foreign universities and colleges on the local and regional levels.
- Complicated procedures faced by foreign students
- The weak guidance and counseling for students in universities and colleges.

Fifth: Perception of quality importance

It is as follows:

- Lack of vision, mission and clear objectives to direct the work of Sudanese higher education institutions. And to translate into strategic plans , academic approaches and syllabus contributing to desired learning outcomes for each specialty area.
- Failure to allocate sufficient budgets for investment in the field of quality assurance.
- No development of quality assurance systems at universities and colleges.
- The absence of a classification system for universities and academic programs.
- Some private higher education institutions increase attention towards profitability, while the norm is the discrepancy between quality standards and maximum profit.

V. MECHANISMS AND WORKING METHODS OF THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

- Institutional and community awareness of the importance of quality in the field of higher education.
- For the State to attract private investment and to encourage them to invest in the field of quality.
- Commitment to strategic planning method which focuses on the development of future concepts, to prepare for anticipated problems and develop capacity to address

and find solutions to them. And predict the effects of the resulting repercussions with attention to the effective implementation of the strategic plans, and follow-up its implementation and progress.

- The National Council (upper council) should exercise its oversight role and to follow the work of the self-evaluation units and centers, quality assurance and accreditation of universities while providing incentives for public and private institutions that are committed to quality assurance standards recognized internationally and disseminating national experiences in the area of quality assurance to all higher education institutions.
- To activate the mechanisms of student participation in assessment of academic programs and the application of quality systems at universities and take their opinions seriously, the literature of accreditation indicates that the views and perspectives of students is considered as one of the sources of evidence that the provisions are issued on its basis.
- Activation and application of decisions and regulations concerning the selection and appointment of faculty members and university staff with strict standards of efficiency and excellence in the selection processes without taking into account any other effects.
- Formation of quality committees in all departments and develop guidelines and follow up work periodically.
- Keeping up with the rapid changes in techniques and methods of teaching and the development of knowledge and skills with attention to quality in submission.
- Raise the level of scientific researches and the development of knowledge outside the framework of the promotion of science.

VI. CONCLUSION

The higher education quality assurance has an effective role in sustainability and meeting the global challenges by providing communities with efficient outputs that can meet the needs and requirements of the labor market, which requires clear mechanisms to link the change occurring in the fallout of the higher education sector in line with the requirements of the knowledge society.

The process of development and quality assurance in higher education institutions in our country will only be achieved with the availability of supportive infrastructure for change and development of

qualified human resources, material, technical infrastructures and renewable resources for education and learning that commensurate with the capacity of these institutions.

The success in achieving the objectives of the upgraded performance and quality assurance is dependent on the presence of active units for self-evaluation by institutions of higher education.

All educational institutions and its components should have a sincere desire to work and implement the standards that can represent a permanent strategy.

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