Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)
p-ISSN 2520-0348, e-ISSN 2616-793X
Vol. III, No. I (Winter 2018) Page: 263 - 278
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2018(III-I).16
DOI: 10.31703/gssr.2018(III-I).16

Impact of QEC Leaders' Intellectual Competencies on Quality Enhancement of Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract *This study investigates the impact of QEC Leaders' intellectual competencies on Quality Enhancement of Higher Education Institutions – HEIs and Universities. Quantitative data from QEC Officials of public & private sector universities in Islamabad is collected. QEC Leaders' intellectual competencies were measured by adapting Leadership Dimension Questionnaire (LDQ) from Dulewicz and Higgs (2005, 2008). Quality Enhancement was measured by using Quality Enhancement Questionnaire (QEQ) developed by HEC QAA (2006). A survey questionnaire based methodology was used to collect data from QEC Leaders of public and private universities of Islamabad. Correlation and regression analyses were used to test research hypotheses. Findings imply that QEC Leaders' strategic perspective significantly contribute towards Quality Enhancement generally and specifically towards Implementation of SA Mechanism. Furthermore, QEC Leaders possessing strong vision and imagination competencies have significant influence on Empowering QEC and high ranked QEC to contribute in the Quality Enhancement. Leadership competencies are the basic elements contributing for betterment of performance of an organization and quality enhancement. A vital role is played by the QEC Leaders for achieving organizational objectives and goals to enhance quality of Institutions and provide conducive working environment which ultimately encourages the attitudes, behaviors and motivates the followers. This study was limited to examine relationship between QEC Leaders' intellectual competencies and Quality Enhancement of HEI's in Islamabad. Further research is suggested to validate this model all QECs of Pakistan.*

Key Words:

Quality Enhancement, QEC Managers, Leadership, Intellectual Competencies

Introduction

People learn intellect from life experiences and understanding goals as well but

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intellectual leadership is often confused with sensation (Yaverbaum and Sherman, 2008). Yaverbaum & Sherman (2008) explained intellectual leadership in terms of establishing a directional sagacity to provide clear, quantifiable, malleable, and meticulous help in order to achieve departmental and organizational goals. Intellectual leaders are not only required to exercise their science or art either separately or in groups but are also required to foster those who may outspread and contest their philosophies. Such leaders can be abetted by the culture and surrounding environment. 'Intellectual leadership' today requires strong speculative and decision-making cultures.

Similar to the leadership skills and behavior, intellectual leadership competencies contribute to enhance the probability of organizational success. Many researchers underscored the importance of competencies necessary for leadership. Evolving leadership competencies are required to be adopted by Quality Assurance leaders. In this paper we take QEC Directors as leaders. These QEC Directors should have few administrative capabilities for better progress in modern organizations. In QECs, administrative style indicates utilization of an individual's energy for leading other individuals.

The intellectual leadership competency is anticipated to attain high-performance outcomes with enhancement in Quality of HEI's. For example, in QECs, utilization of the intellectual leadership competencies in comparison with that of the emotional and managerial leadership competencies can help QEC Leaders to achieve positive outcomes, enhance quality, empower QEC, implement self-assessment and internal audit mechanism and contribute in QEC high ranking. There are number of research studies conducted on managerial and emotional competencies but limited research has considered exploring intellectual competencies in the context of quality enhancement of Higher Education Institutions. Moreover, practitioners of QECs are seeking for the specific competencies of QEC leadership to be utilized for all five dimensions of Quality Enhancement as mentioned in the model of this study. So, the objective of this research is to explore the impact of QEC Leaders' intellectual competencies on quality enhancement of HEIs.

Literature Review

Intellectual Competencies

Literature reveals that intellectuals have been esteemed and despised alike over time, eon and culture (Reuschling, 2008). An 'intellectual' is seen differently by different people (Simplican, et al., 2015). From the times of ancient Greece through China, Russia and Korea, intellectuals have been oppressed and impeached for views that contest prevalent values, ideas or political power alliances (Roberts and Wood, 2007). Similarly, in Scandinavian region, intellects are viewed as valued and contributing members of the society (Sidanius and

Pratto, 2001). The reaction or instinct towards intellectuals are rooted deep in the character of a society (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2001). Competencies, on the other side, informally articulate that a group of people has the "ability" or the "acquaintance" to do certain things. Managerial sciences treat competency as a process conceded by competent persons to carry out effective actions.

A number of studies have been conducted on managerial competencies of leadership (Lowin and Craig, 1968, Ranganathan and Shivaram, 2015) as well as on emotional competencies of leadership (Galvin, Gibbs et al. 2014). A little research, however, is observed for the intellectual competencies of leadership as discussed subsequentially.

Meredith and Mantel (2012) explicitly defined three leadership competencies: a) Intellectual, b) Managerial, and c) Emotional which explicates on the type of personality the leaders possess. However, all or a combination of these competencies confer on effective leadership to meet today's dynamic organizational requirements (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2005) as "effective leaders are differentiated from other leaders through the exercise of a relatively small range of skill or competence areas." Table 1 depicts intellectual competencies assessed by different authors.

Table 1. Summary of literature on intellectual competencies of leadership

IV - Leaders' Intellectual Competencies			
	Strategic perspective	**Critical analysis and judgment**	**Vision and imagination**
Dulwicz & Higgs (2003, 2005, 2008)	□	□	□
Liu, Pirola-Merlo et al. (2009)	□	□	□
Ofori, 2013	□	□	□
Omar & Fayek, 2014		□	
Davis, 2014	□		□
Pham, Pham, & Pham, 2016	□	□	

Intellectual competencies of leadership are theorized in three sub-dimensions:

a. ***Strategic perspective:*** uplifts the Leader's performance, planning, comprehension, and assessment instinct about meeting standards. Müller, Geraldi et al. (2012) Recommends that persuasion, confidence, and

accurate data have a significant influence on intellectual leadership and the success of the department.

b. ***Critical analysis and judgment:*** organizes data, evidences and statistical information gathering from diversified resources. These competencies segregates leaders' practicalities and views, difficulties and resolutions by engaging arbitrators with unprejudiced perspectives to give professional views on virtuous and morally apposite preferences, and an open environment for dialogue on beliefs, prospects, and decree.

c. ***Vision and imagination:*** facilitate leaders to construct the intellectual governance because a vibrant vision helps team members to concentrate on departmental goals and objectives. It is believed that creativity and imagination with correct mindset and utensils can render operational and effectual results. Vision helps in eliminating problems likely to be encountered and to comprehend their effect on the business and successful completion of the project. Imagination and novelty pave the way for leaders in crafting novel philosophies. Besides, vision and imagination can also alter the way businesses are done which eventually leads to incipient trends and prospects in pertinent career choice.

Mostly leaders can't lead a large number of supporters without having the competencies, abilities and competencies because the functioning of an organization depends on the skills of a leader who can implement its strategies effectively and efficiently. Leadership is a conditional essence of relationship between a manager and his supporters (Müller & Turner, 2007). Sometimes, the leader may take abrupt decisions regarding organization and employees without any consultation but such leader must be capable of such promising and devoting position to enhance organizational efficiency. In most of the organizations, performance is directly linked with achievement of organizational objectives as well as strategy implementation (Randeree & Al Youha, 2009). Organizational performance is dependent on successful completion of departmental goals and measured through several dimensions like efficiency, affectivity and outcomes (Boyatzis, Boyatzis, & Ratti, 2009). Nonetheless, performance of an organization and quality enhancement is specifically determined by level of skills its leader possess while implementing strategies.

Enhanced quality of a dynamic organization is a result of combining different leadership competencies linked together to enhance leadership abilities (Yahyazadeh-Jeloudar & Lotfi-Goodarzi, 2012). Intellectual, emotional and managerial competencies should be inculcated in leaders to achieve enhanced quality and organizational performance. A significant relation has been observed among leadership and organizational performance to achieve organizational effectiveness (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010).

Quality Enhancement of HEI's

Higher education is a fundamental bridge where innovative knowledge is produced as Castells (2001) considered that if information is measured as the power for the rising worldwide, knowledgeable country, the higher education institutions are the chief authority foundation on which complete growth practice rely. The higher education institutions, around the globe, are constantly determined to attain and retain quality. Quality is core content of higher education. Higher education sector is the principal component of socio-economic improvement of the humanity (Badat, 2009).

Furthermore, competitiveness of the higher education institutions has turn out to be unavoidable for them to reconsider quality of services, to access the performances and policies on constant basis. That is why quality enhancement in higher education institutions has become vital component (Brink, 2010). Mishra (2006) explains that quality in higher education is an array of implications from principles to superiority where principles refers to minimal doorsill throughout which an educational institutions accomplishment is calculated in this logic of quality is fundamentally evaluation according to norm-mentioned principles signifying the opportunity at the least stage and further ahead.

Quality assurance encompasses strategies, measures, arrangements, and practices seeking to guarantee that an assured agenda or institute quality is being preserved and augmented (Dey, 2011; Ratcliff, 2003). Around Globe, Higher education foundations have understood the need to guarantee humanity that the measures they are keeping up are satisfactory and are equivalent globally hence quality certification is at the key of endeavors and activities they perform. Hence, "*quality assurance has become part of the foundation of many higher education systems*".

Raban (2007) categorizes the quality assurance of higher education approaches into two important categories explicitly entitled as "retrospective approach" and "prospective approach". Retrospective quality assurance is broadly a management based category rather than an educational one. This category is responsible for elevated concerns and the measures employed quality assurance from top to down and practical based set conveyed and executed by top administration. Similarly, prospective quality assurance approach is comparable to what human being does as a thoughtful practitioner. It is principally centered upon bottom to up improvement approach, in which measures to quality assurance are instigated at grass root level.

In order to evaluate the efficiency and comprehensiveness of quality assurance, Boyle & Bowden (1994) present foci of approaches which are encompassed as followings:

1. ***Idea, Chief Principle and Strategy:*** This comprises of fundamentals such as: excellent ordinate rationale or objective of the organization; core principles and ideology; premeditated strategy and explicit objectives at every stages; formation of quality strategy.
2. ***Leadership and Organization.*** Comprises an element like: idea and efficient leadership includes top level of management and senior managerial; efficient organization and deep sense of accountability; designation, confidence, and group working.
3. ***Human Resources:*** This comprises the fundamentals like strategies of Human Resource Management (HRM); worker participation in guiding principles articulation and activities associated to quality assurance; capabilities improvement of the workers through guidance and specialized expansion; attempts to make the most of happiness and confidence of the people; successful communication instrument; removing of barriers to improved performance.
4. ***Customer-Client Center:*** It comprises of fundamentals such as: awareness of desires; opportunities and requirements of the clientele; spotlight on customer fulfillment and associations.
5. ***Assessment and Continual Quality Improvement (CQI):*** In Quality assurance strategies and methods incorporate good quality assessment to promise conclusion excellence; creation and spreading of data to smooth the progress of managerial and administrative tasks. Assessment and employ of other practices of information to present evaluation and procedures for enhancement and responsibility as well as, performing of decisive indication, education and persistent enhancement are also included.
6. ***Arrangements, Strategy and Practices:*** This is a very widespread occurrence incorporating fundamentals such as: procedures and arrangement to sustain principal rationales; measures to optimize development and efficiency of product as well as incorporation and steadiness of strategies and practices.

The improvement made by each QEC, associated with the implementation of Self-Assessment procedure, is now being established annually with the assistance of a scorecard constructed particularly for the rationale (QAA, 2013). World Bank TESP Report acknowledged that Quality Enhancement Cell (QECs) present as a center point for internal quality assurance contained by Higher Education institution for enhancement of their educational, teaching and learning principles (QAA, 2011). Recent research studies suggested to identify leadership competencies affecting quality of higher education institutions in various aspects.

Table 2. Summary of literature on Quality Enhancement

DV - Quality Enhancement					
	QEC Established	**SA Mechanism Implemented**	**QEC Empowered**	**Effective Internal Audit**	**High Ranked QEC**
Natalya, V., Ludmila, B., & Tatiana, S. (2008)	✓	✓		✓	
Iqbal, M., & Iqbal, M. Z. (2011)	✓	✓		✓	
Asif, M., Awan, M. U., Khan, M. K., & Ahmad, N. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zubair, S. S. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ullah, M. H., Ajmal, M., & Rahman, F. (2011)		✓		✓	
Hina, K., & Ajmal, M. (2016)		✓	✓	✓	
QAA, 2011	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Quality enhancement through QECs is viewed in connection with five dimensions, including QEC established, Self-Assessment Mechanism implemented, QEC empowering, internal audit and high ranked QEC. The first dimension of Quality enhancement is measured through the establishment, recurring budget and appointment of dedicated QEC staff. Secondly implemented SA mechanism successfully through spreading awareness about its importance, course evaluation by teachers and students, performance of Program Teams, corrective actions and their implementation. Empowerment of QEC is examined by measuring its association with international bodies, presence in statutory bodies, participation in QA events, and presence of QEC in print and digital media. Effective internal audit system is evaluated by examining the prevalence of effective internal academic audit system in line with HEC, mock audit and self-preparation of academic programs prior to accreditation visits, and effective implementation of findings of internal academic audit systems. High ranking of QEC shows quality enhancement, which ultimately contributing in university ranking. After review of literature, the study comes up with the following conceptual framework, highlighting intellectual competencies of QEC leaders and its impact on Quality Enhancement. Hence, the study hypothesized that:

H1: QEC leaders' intellectual competencies had impact on quality enhancement of HEIs.

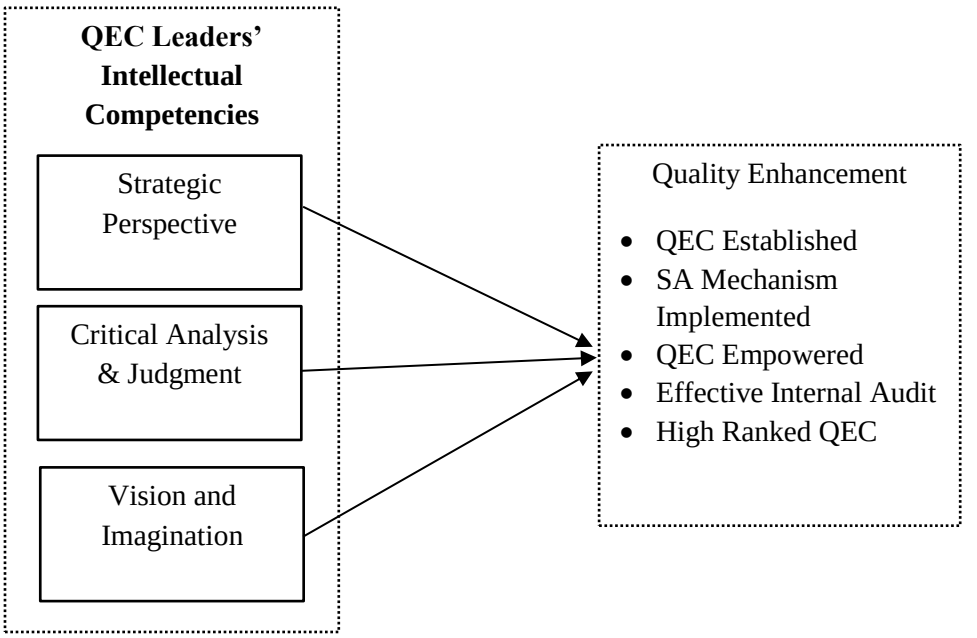

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Methods

Measures and Data Collection

QEC Leaders' intellectual competencies were measured by adapting Leadership Dimension Questionnaire (LDQ) from Dulewicz and Higgs (2005, 2008). Quality Enhancement was measured by using Quality Enhancement Questionnaire (QEQ) developed by HEC QAA (2006). All the constructs of QEC Leaders' leadership competencies and Quality Enhancement were measured on five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A survey questionnaire based methodology was used to collect data from QEC Leaders of public and private universities of Islamabad. The questionnaire was divided in three parts to get data on: a) demographics; b) intellectual competencies; and c) Quality Enhancement. Reliability of constructs was tested using Cronbach Alpha tests (Cronbach, 1951). Summary of validity and reliability for intellectual competencies and QE is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity of QEC Leader's Intellectual Competencies & QE

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Strategic Perspective	0.86
Critical Analysis and Judgment	0.86
Vision and Imagination	0.82
Establishment of QEC	0.78
Implementation of SA Mechanism	0.85
QEC Empowering	0.86
Effective Internal Audit	0.89
High Ranked QEC	0.85

Demographics included questions about respondents and QECs. Respondents were asked to answer the questions based on their experience in QEC. A questionnaire was distributed among 70 QA officials of public and private HEIs of Islamabad. Total 52 responses (74%) received from the respondents; 43 male and 09 female QA officials participated in the survey. Participants possess Bachelors degree 8%, Masters Degree 65%, MS/MPhil degree 21% and PhD degree only 6%. QA officials having experience of QEC 37% less than 5 years, 52% with 5-10 years, 20% and 12 % with more than 10 years. Team size of QEC reported in this survey were; 48% QECs having less than 5 team members; 35% QECs with team members upto 5-10; and 13% QECs with 11-15 and only 4% QECs have more than 15 team members. The sector of HEIs was public 67%, and private 33%.

Findings and Discussion

Leadership competencies are the basic elements contributing for betterment of performance of an organization and success. According to Mastrangelo, R. Eddy, and J. Lorenzet (2014) proficient leaders are those who have the ability to inspire their followers. A vital role is played by the leaders for achieving organizational objectives and goals to provide conducive working environment which ultimately encourages the attitudes, behaviors and motivates the followers. Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) articulated that capable leadership encourages followers to participate, progress, and achieve departmental and organizational objectives. Leadership competencies govern organizational success, which are considered key contributors in improving organizational quality. Leaders intellectual competencies have vital role in accomplishment of the organizational

objectives and quality. Lacking of such leadership competencies affect organizational performance and may lead to failure (Higgs & Aitken, 2003). The study has found positive correlation between intellectual competencies of QEC leaders and quality enhancement of higher education institutions. The three dimensions of intellectual leadership have exclusive impact on quality enhancement that is highlighted in the table 4 and 5.

Conclusion

The effect of transformational and transactional leadership on organizational success is well empirically supported but less was known about the impact of intellectual leadership competencies on quality enhancement. To address this issue, this study examines the relationship between QEC leadership competencies and quality enhancement to make significant contribution in the existing body of knowledge. Finding implies that QEC Leaders' strategic perspective significantly contribute towards Quality Enhancement generally and specifically towards Implementation of SA Mechanism successfully through spreading awareness about its importance, course evaluation by teachers and students, performance of Program Teams, corrective actions and their implementation. Whereas, QEC Leader's critical analysis and judgment is significant predictor for the effective internal academic audit system in line with HEC, mock audit and self-preparation of academic programs prior to accreditation visits, and effective implementation of findings of internal academic audit system. QEC Leaders possessing strong vision and imagination competencies have significant influence on empowering QEC by striving for membership with international bodies, presence in statutory bodies, and participation in QA events, presence of QEC in print and digital media. Strong vision and imagination competencies contribute in achieving high ranked QEC further alleviating in the Quality Enhancement of their respective higher education institutions. This study was limited to examine relationship between QEC leaders' intellectual competencies and quality enhancement of HEI's. Further research is suggested to validate this model over the Pakistani universities for extended generalizability of the results. Moreover, future studies may consider examining the impact of managerial or emotional competencies of QEC leaders on various performance indicators of the educational institutions including employability and knowledge base. Moreover, examining the impact of senior managements' intellectual competencies in contrast with quality enhancement may be an interesting area for future research.

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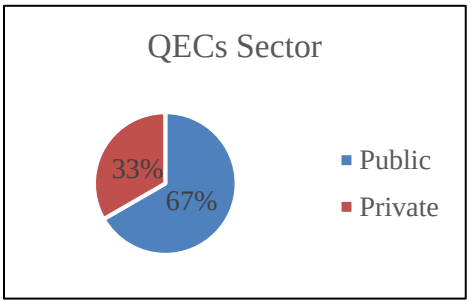
Appendix

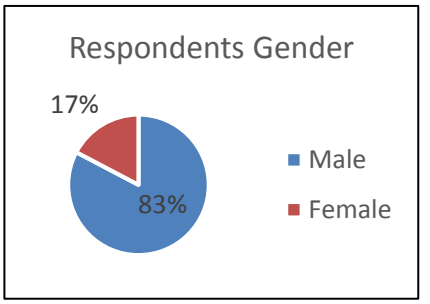
Table 4. Summary of Correlation Analysis

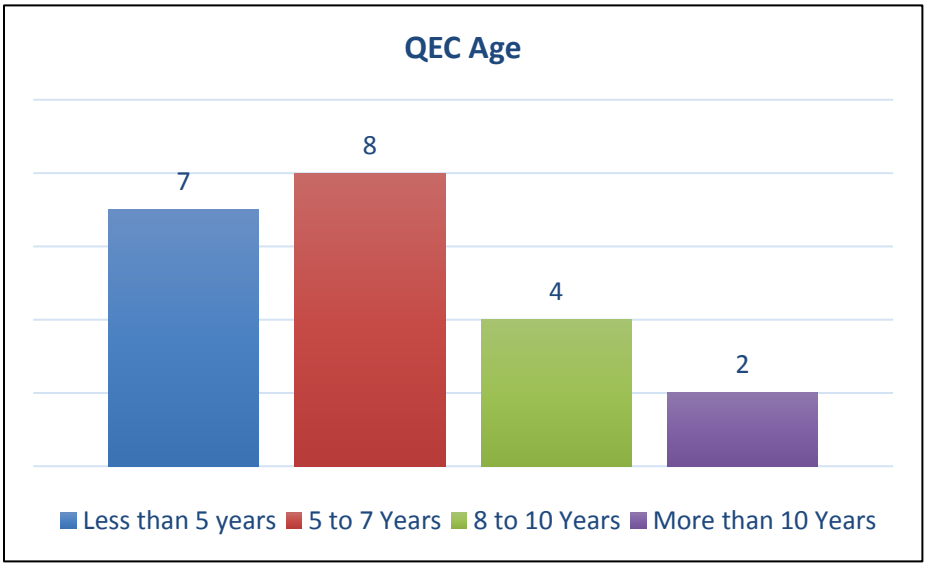
Sr.	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Strategic Perspective	3.92	.664	1							
2	Critical Analysis & Judgment	3.84	.732	.694**	1						
3	Vision and Imagination	3.83	.747	.523**	.639**	1					
4	QEC Established	3.36	.678	.330**	.342**	.270**	1				
5	SAM Implemented	3.60	.673	.302**	.314**	.228*	.682**	1			
6	Effective Internal Audit	3.56	.699	.342**	.293**	.252**	.635**	.588**	1		
7	Empowered QEC	3.54	.744	.332**	.354**	.310**	.594**	.658**	.546**	1	
8	High ranked QEC	3.63	.668	.386**	.360**	.407**	.480**	.609**	.513**	.807**	1

Table 5. Summary of Regression Analysis

Variable		Quality Enhancement										
Hyp	**IV**	**R**	**R^2**	**Adj R^2**	**F**	**Sig**	**T**	**Sig**	**β**	**SE**	**TL**	**VIF**
H1	SP	.407	.166	.158	20.489	.000	4.524	.000	.353	.071	.726	1.377
H2	VI	.353	.125	.116	14.671	.000	3.830	.000	.272	.071	.592	1.690
H3	CAJ	.401	.61	.152	19.707	.000	4.439	.000	.315	.071	.519	1.929


QECs Sector
33%
67%
Public
Private


Respondents Gender
17%
83%
Male
Female


QEC Age
7
8
4
2
Less than 5 years
5 to 7 Years
8 to 10 Years
More than 10 Years